

Entertainment

Journey through Hell to Hope

Sveva Caetani art exhibit
Provincial Museum (until March 1)

by T.T. Cristini

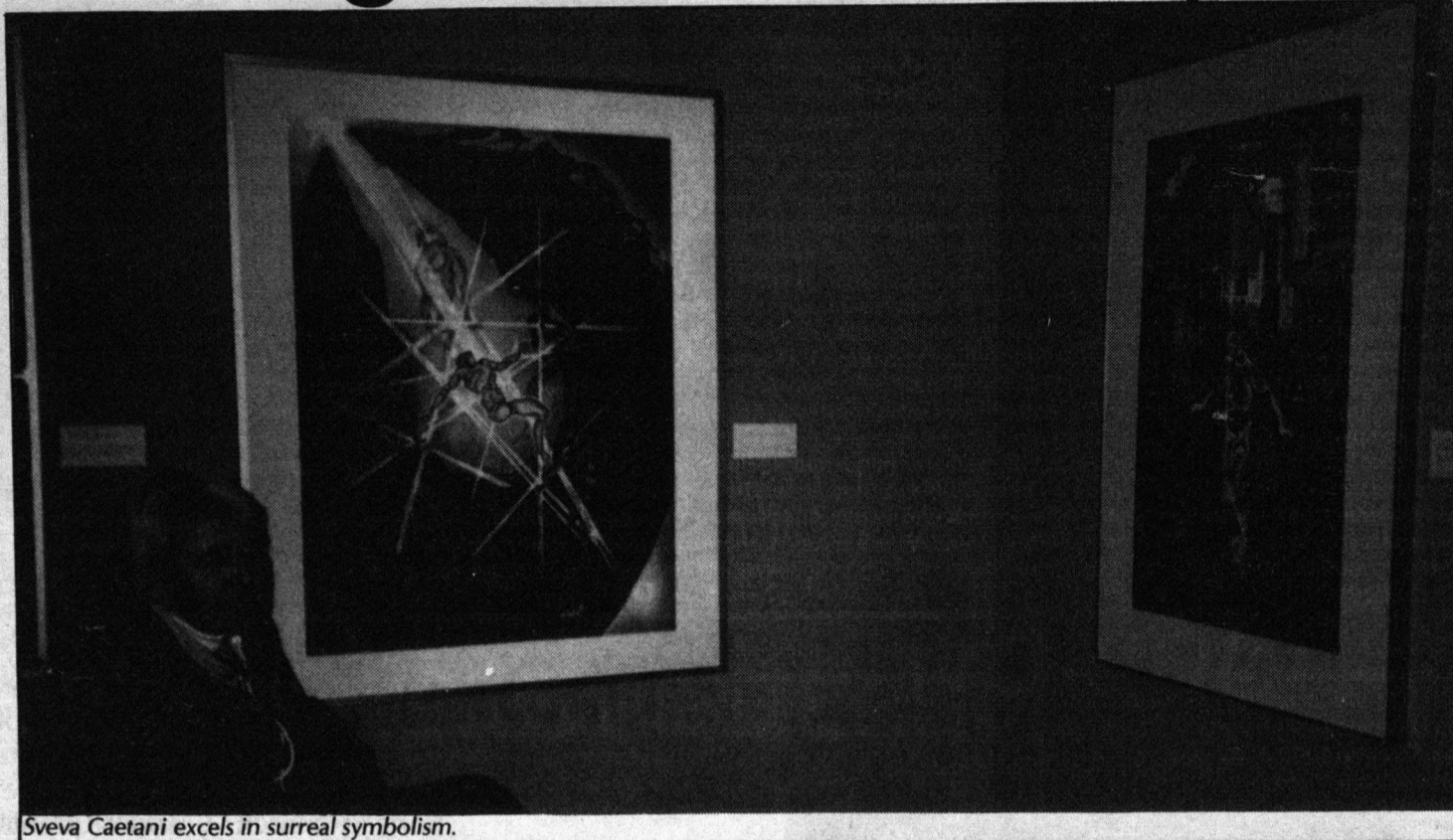
For a spiritually awakening experience, try visiting the Provincial Museum (until March 1) to view the exhibit entitled RECAPITULATION: A JOURNEY by Canadian artist Sveva Caetani. Caetani is an Italian-born artist from Vernon, B.C., who may truly be called a modern renaissance woman. Interested in everything under the sun and extremely knowledgeable in most subjects, she has synthesized her personal experiences as well as her eclectic readings into this series of watercolor paintings.

Even without knowing anything about the artist's fascinating background, anyone could enjoy the incredibly vivid colors and fluid images in her paintings. However, knowing something about Caetani herself certainly does add to a deeper understanding of her subject matter.

Doubtless, Caetani inherited the love of history, philosophy, and the arts from her father Leone Caetani, a renowned scholar specializing in Arabic history. He was also a deputy in the Italian Parliament prior to Mussolini's era, and had to leave Italy in 1921 because of his anti-fascist philosophy. After her father's death, when Caetani was seventeen, she spent 25 years in virtual isolation with her invalid mother, reading voraciously and becoming well-versed in literature, history and many other subjects.

Thus, her "Recapitulation" paintings reflect a modern mind and spirit. Her style defies classification as it is dynamic and changing over the ten years since embarking on this thematic work. Caetani's style might be considered surrealistic, symbolic and mystical. It is definitely innovative.

Sveva Caetani's "Journey" begins as she summons the spirit of her idolized father to guide her through a personal view of hell,



Sveva Caetani excels in surreal symbolism.

reminiscent of Dante's "Inferno". In this section, Caetani personifies the evils of the human soul: cruelty, envy, indifference, calumny, betrayal, etc. Then there is a short "Transition" section as father and daughter pause before entering Section III, "The Dead Seasons". Here Caetani portrays the love her parents shared, the family's dreams and disappointments, and the departure from Italy which Caetani's mother had never internally accepted.

Thus, father and daughter embark on a

voyage through the human condition, beginning with the section called "Areas of Fate". Here they view all possible human activity as well as the famous personalities and the nameless millions who have shaped world history in "The City" and two other paintings. They also witness the sobering spectacles of war, madness, corruption, consuming desire and the vanished gods of the past.

Fortunately, the next two sections deal with the more positive aspects of human

existence such as spiritual development, curiosity, childhood, poetic inspiration, music and mysticism. In "Journey's End", the daughter finally has to sever the bonds to her parents in order to travel the "Razor's Path" of her own life, experiencing creative achievement and learning to love. Eleven paintings in the series are still in progress and the final piece will not be shown until the whole collection is complete or the artist is no longer able to work. This painting is called "Tamam Shud" which in Persian means "It is Finished".

Canadian crime stories revealed to readers

Mob Rule, Inside the Canadian Mafia
James Dubro
Totem Book, Toronto

review by Ken Hui

James Dubro in *Mob Rule, Inside the Canadian Mafia* has accomplished a splendidly informative and compulsively readable portrait of syndicated crime. Aside from fictitious clichés such as *The Sicilians*, the book is the first indepth study of organized crime in Canada. Dubro's masterful survey of the subject deserves merit because it goes beyond depicting violence to encompass the wider context of the history of immigration in Canada. Dubro exemplifies the criminal activity of the Italian Mafia of the early twenties and that of Chinese Triads of the present as an unfortunate result of "alienation from prevalent culture during the periods."

Based on the celebrated CBC series *Connection* in which Dubro himself had worked as the Research Director, *Mob Rule* contains accurate accounts on organized crime in Canada. According to Dubro, even the underworld community acknowledges his efforts throughout the book. What *Mob Rule* emphasizes is that criminal activity is no longer manipulated by "any single Mafia but accomplished by a highly factionalized mob of different nationalities."

The present paperback edition of 1986 has an obvious advantage over the original hardcover one, in the additional information it provides. Dubro revises the book and paints a grey picture on last year's crime. Dehumanizing acts such as the manslaughter by the Hell's Angels, extortion by Chinese Triads, and homicides among the Mafia are included in this updated version. Moreover, the paperback edition is sold at a much cheaper price of \$4.95 (Can.) so that an average student can afford to buy it.

The conflicts between Toronto-born crim-



Yes, there is a Mafia above the 49th parallel, beyond Hollywood.

inal Paul Vope and Italian-born mobster Cosimo Comisso form the main bulk of this book. *Mob Rule* states plainly that unsuccessful immigrants are inclined to become outlaws, and struggle against the established crime syndicates of the city. Dubro also delineates the criminal career of Paul Volpe to illustrate "the life of an archetypal Canadian gangster." In describing Volpe's criminal activity, Dubro recaps the lost history of crime from the early sixties to the present.

In *Mob Rule*, the level of gangster activity is depicted to such massive proportions that the universally accepted motive of greed no longer serves. For instance, the irrational underworld member Cosimo Comisso once protested against the unsatisfactory service provided by a restaurant by blowing it up! In effect, Dubro simply points out the disrespect for human life shown by the

underworld.

Homicidal acts are also depicted in detail; *Mob Rule* exemplifies the murder of Domenic Racco as a result of the continual struggle for territory and supremacy. Racco suffered from his misconception that the successor to a Mafia don is immune to challenge. This demonstrates that the image of a self-disciplined Mafia only exists in cheap Hollywood-based fiction.

To the reader's surprise, the notorious Ku Klux Klan actually exceeds its activity beyond inciting hatred against persons of non-White descent in Canada. According to Dubro, Charles Yanover of Toronto in 1981 was involved in an attempt to mobilize mercenaries to overthrow the government of Dominica. The White supremacist regime failed to establish itself in the Caribbean island, and the police arrested Yanover for "conspiracy to commit an unlawful act".

Yanover must be a person fond of international adventurism because he intended to become the defense minister of the planned KKK government in Dominica.

Even worse, Canada was once the hub of international evil activities of the North Korean spies, funded by KGB, who were detected in the late seventies. Fortunately, the RCMP successfully stopped the plot undertaken by James Choi, a North Korean, to assassinate the president of South Korea.

Portrayals of criminal biker gangs are also included in *Mob Rule*. Dubro depicts the increasing competence of the Hell's Angels in the traffic of drugs and the smuggling of arms. Indeed, the police had raided Hell's Angels clubhouses in the operation 'Arrow' of '86. In retaliation, the Hell's Angels have taken legal action against the Quebec Provincial Police for slandering. Bloodshedding rivalries between the Outlaws and the Hell's Angels, the two main biker gangs, are undeniable facts in Canada.

Lastly, *Mob Rule* explores the criminal activities expanding Luen Kung Lok triads in Toronto. Dubro repeats the crown attorney's comment that Danny Mo, the triads leader, is "a dangerous individual with many gangland connections". Kung Lok's gang has been successfully exploiting its own ethnic community for economic gains. The Mafia-Triad conflict in Toronto is particularly evident when one recalls that Ceci Kirby, a Mafia hitman had once demonstrated "creative use of dynamite" in a Chinese restaurant during the late seventies.

In *Mob Rule*, criminal activity in Quebec and Ontario is emphasized, rather than that of Western Canada. However, the relative economic undevelopment in western provinces does not encourage the Mafia's uprising; and therefore Dubro is not biased in his sole deliberations about eastern Canada throughout the book.