

Natives confused but white men no better off

Daniels, Christine and Christiansen, Ron *The White Man's Laws* Hurtig Publishers Paperback \$3.95 136 pp.

This book is definitely a departure from the norm. First-

ly, it is written from the native perspective. Secondly, it is very simply written (in story-book fashion) and yet deals in a sensitive and perceptive manner with one of the most complex and obscured

situations in modern Canadian life - the plight of the native Canadian in a foreign (substitute "white man's") environment.

A spokesman for Hurtig says that "we felt it was only fair to give the other side the chance to say what they wanted to say." What 'they' say in the book is poignantly clear and simple: the native is different from the white man...he should take pride in the difference and yet, at the same time, learn to live within the white man's system of law.

As Stan Daniels, President of the Metis Association of

Alberta, states, "It shows clearly the wide gap between Indian laws and the laws of modern society." But it is difficult to decide who would benefit the most from the message in the book - those Indians confused over life within the white man's system of law, or the white man wishing to understand the Indians' confusion. It can obviously be used by both... and should be.

The manner in which the book is laid out aids the layman and, I would think, the native in understanding the outlined concepts more readily. Each

printed page is twinned by a page with a simply-done colour illustration, and the entire book follows a basic story line.

The story presented is of an Indian child returned from the city who engages in conversation with his grandfather. During their conversation, the social and moral differences between the native and the white man are made quite clear. These provide us with an interesting cultural interpretation - one which is simple to understand and yet complex in its insights.

The book serves as a complement to such works as Hurtig's previous release by Harold Cardinal *The Unjust Society*. Its discussions of civil rights and legal procedure are handled in a simple manner and are designed solely as an aid to those Indians who have no knowledge of such an imposed system. It is not designed to offer a complex analysis of the problems on any type of sociological basis.

The book was released this fall as a re-publication of a previous work, originally copyrighted under a different title in 1970.

Kevin Gillese

You Make Me Want to Be was only the beginning, with the release of his first album, DAN HILL lives up to the raves he's received from radio and the press. There's been no question that Dan is an important songwriter and performer, now the album confirms the arrival of a major new recording artist.



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Spiked punch can kick out with potent force

Birdbath, now playing at Northern Light Theatre, works on it's audience like liberally-spiked punch works on a party. Things proceed at a smooth pace until the last scene when the impact of the play hits you full in the face, and the effect is astounding.

Velma Sparrow, played by Merrilyn Gann, is a twenty-six year old girl who works hard to support a domineering mother, all the while dreaming of Hollywood, love, and the happiness she doesn't have. Initially the character seems slightly overdone, and the constant chatter and nervous hand gestures a bit much, but in the light of her final confession this impression is negated. Velma becomes pathetically realistic.

Frankie Basta, the unsuccessful poet and writer, is also true to life. Foulmouthed, hard drinking, arrogant and yet tender, the character of Frankie gives Allan Lysell the chance to portray a variety of emotions, all of which he does very well.

Velma and Frankie come together each hoping that the other will be the answer to a dream. Instead they discover that they must settle for a more transient and realistic relationship.

The play has many humorous moments, but in the final scene the audience is hit hard by Velma's revelation. This revelation, and the scene that follows would seem unrealistic if it were not for the well-written script and fine acting.

A play that ends with such pathos and realism is, perhaps, not the most uplifting way to spend a lunch hour, but it is still well worth seeing. Performances are at the Art Gallery Theatre at 12:10 PM, with extra performances Thursday and Friday at 1:10 PM. Admission is \$1.50 and it is well worth the price.

Maria Nemeth

"For me, good food
and a good beer go together.
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