

## Crazy for God

## Life with the Moonies

by Greg Morgan

After four disenchanting years at Yale, Christopher Edwards went to California, where a group of cultists waylaid him on the road to truth. Willingly taken to a rural "training centre", he was systematically subjected to techniques similar to those of brainwashing programmes. He was "reborn" into the Unification Church, and remained a member until seven months later, when his father kidnapped him and had him deprogrammed by Ted Patrick.

**Crazy for God** tells the whole story, from the arrival in Berkley to after the deprogramming, and provides a detailed and perceptive view of day-to-day life in a cult. It is primarily the story of a confused human being, how he was sadly degraded, and his subsequent resurrection. In order to make them obedient disciples of Reverend Sun Myung Moon, the cult requires members to assume the roles of small children. Using a handful of simple techniques, it rapidly stripped Edwards of his critical faculties, personal will, and virtually all inner life.

Of course, there are thousands who have shared Edwards' experience, and you may have encountered a few of them yourself. A tap on the

shoulder, you turn, and a well-scrubbed, glassy-eyed young man asks whether you'd care to purchase some flowers or candy in aid of a charitable organization. You are looking at the Unification Church's sunny side, the one Edwards emphasized in a letter he wrote during his stay: "Shunning all drugs, sex, and selfish pleasure, the group stresses spiritual development. The attitude here is a very enthusiastic one. We exist to bring love, and joy to the community around us."

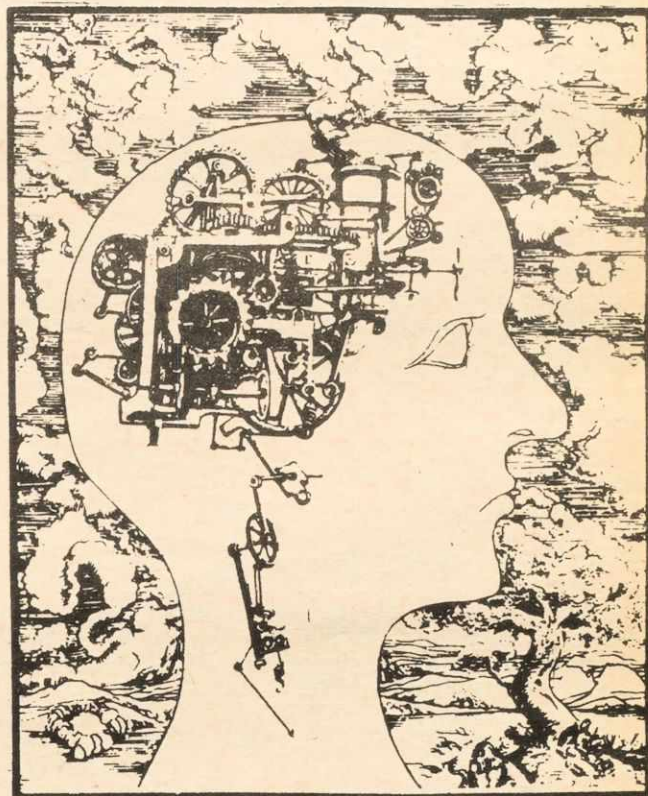
Can we ridicule a human being for trying to help build a better world, or for reaching to grasp a share in Utopia? Yet the attempt frequently requires great sacrifices, and the leaders of the alternative society may merit no respect at all. Why do some cults demand strange acts of devotion, and why do their followers obey the commands? This book contains insights into the way cults exploit needs and weaknesses to win and retain people's loyalties.

Although some psychiatrists claim that no one is immune to appeal of the cults, the chance of a particular person's joining is certainly

remote. Perhaps only members of a narrow slice of society would yield easily. In those children of the middle classes whom unsound values have alienated, Edwards sees a strong attraction for extreme alternatives. His own affluent background and the scholarly character of his response to the seven months' ordeal may suggest that he stumbled on a metaphysical stone which a more practical or somewhat poorer youth might have side-stepped.

However, people of all classes and walks of life appeared in his training camp. Edwards attributes a high degree of susceptibility to a category of people, but it is his generation more especially than his class. That generation's weakness for cults is briefly dealt with in an epilogue. What he has done since—a year of graduate work at Princeton Theological Seminary, the founding and direction of a psychiatric research group on cult-engendered problems—indicates an interest in investigating the question more deeply.

Although more readable than elegant, content recommends **Crazy for God**.



## Richler speaks on Can lit

by Margaret Rumsey

"Our problems are real," said Canadian author Mordecai Richler in a lecture at St. Mary's University last week, referring to our search for a national identity in Canada.

In an entertaining and thought-provoking talk on Canadian nationalism and Canadian literature, Richler said "everybody outside Canada finds us boring." With characteristic satirical comment, he illustrated this by relating his recent experiences while promoting his books in the United States. He was repeatedly introduced as simply "a writer from Canada", and his books discussed in such a way that they "may have been like kosher pudding in five flavours."

Richler's books certainly do have flavour, but he has emphasized that they are not necessarily written to promote Canadian nationalism. Instead he attempts to reflect the human condition. His career began at the age of 23 with **The Acrobats**, progressed to **The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz** and **St. Urbain's Horseman**, and has recently expanded into other fields such as television and film scripts and children's stories.

In 1951, Richler left Canada for Paris and London "with a contempt for all things Canadian." According to Richler, at that time it was an embarrassment to be published by a Canadian company.

Richler returned to Canada in the 1960's, his views of his

native country somewhat modified. Perhaps, after all, life could be boring no matter where you lived. Furthermore, the author noted at that time that the flood of Canadian writers who had escaped to Europe had not achieved much success, while Canadian literature was beginning to flourish at home with the presence of such writers as Callaghan and Frye.

In 1980, Richler says that Canada is only "ostensibly boring", putting forth the example of William Lyon Mackenzie King, "who is not boring, only demented".

The main problem with our self-image today seen by Richler is the domination of our country by the United States. "We will continue to be dominated by Americans", he said, because we share the same language and grievances. In returning to Canada in the 1960's Richler found the country immersed in American culture, and young people at his former college in Montreal emulating the student unrest in the States.

Today, says Richler, the cultural and economic domination is met with a new attitude. "The objective of today's intellectuals is to build something of our own," and Richler expressed hope that this "something" would materialize. He noted happily that there are more good young Canadian writers than 20 years ago—"writers who have something to say about the human condition."

The surge of nationalism, to Richler, has both negative and positive aspects. On the positive side, he listed such new organizations as the Canada Council which has been generous in awarding grants, the National Arts Centre in Ottawa and the National Film Board. "These cannot create unique Canadian culture, but can create favourable conditions."

However, he continued, many nationalists try to shelter us from the U.S., and have become anti-American. These people refuse to live with the fact that Canada will always be overshadowed by Americans.

Richler reserved the last segment of his talk to express his views on the nationalists' effect on Canadian literature—an issue on which he has become a crusader. The attitude has so changed towards Canadian writers today, he said, that we must guard against over-press at home. The danger is a double standard for our writers—"a national dog license." In closing, the author emphasized his belief that young writers should be encouraged, "but too much encouragement is mischievous for you must be able to compete with your peers."

The lecture painted a colourful picture of changes that have occurred over the years in the self-image of Canada within Canadian literature, and within Mordecai Richler himself.

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