

# The Mysterious East- *a critique*

by jeffrie lubin  
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The first issue of "The Mysterious East" is full of integrity, purpose, sincerity and zeal. These qualities are consistent with a group who describe themselves as "fed up, frustrated, angry with rotten journalism", and who are determined to write a magazine "which objects to the vulgar, the pompous, and the dishonest." It is just such a group and just such qualities which threaten at times to lapse into naivete and complusiveness. In this case, the naivete stems from the desire to find all the penaceas which all the other journals have failed to write about; the compulsiveness from the feeling of an obligation to serve the cheated public as it has never been served before. In particular:

## POLLUTION

The article on pollution, "Dead Leaves and Dying Rivers", is utterly exhaustive and requires a significant quantity of high-quality pain-killer to read, although the intentions of the writers are completely honourable and commendable. Certain internal contradictions in it suggest that a certain bias is looked into quite outside the consciousness of the writer. All through it, an

opposition is set up between an entity termed "industry" and entities termed "fishing" and "tourist industries". The following reply of the writer to an argument he supposes the government would use concerning pollution, illustrates the point well: "Industry is important, but all the money in the world can't make up for the lack of clean water, the damage to the fishery and tourist industries, the disease and death caused by unclean air or water." Granted, health and hygiene may be incompatible with unchecked industrial activity, but what does the writer consider the "fishery" and "tourist industries" to be? Are they not industries too? What the complaint concerns then, is the competition between the polluting industries (pulp and paper, and potatoes) and the fishing and tourist industries. No particular emphasis is put upon the pattern of the battle for survival between industries because, if the existence of this pattern were admitted, a certain anti-capitalist bias would emerge, which would destroy the magazine's claim to strict objectivity. Several pieces of evidence support the suspicion of such a bias. Firstly, the writer views the award to K.C. Irving of "Conservationist of the Year" with utter amazement. Now it is clear that Irving did not receive this honour for

collecting marbles. He obviously conserved something, and that something just as obviously escaped the consideration of the writer. That something was the forest. The writer, once again, was preoccupied with water (mainly with its esthetic aspects which are being victimized by capitalist pulp mills, and with the fishermen who are being similarly victimized, which indeed they are.) He forgets that forests, though they may serve the will of the capitalists, can be conserved as well as the water, which has so many capitalist aspects. Furthermore, when the author proposes that the fines (in accordance with the Water Act) of one polluting corporation be directed by the government into the pockets of a second polluting corporation, he is encouraging the same ruthless competition within the polluting industries as he is so impassioned about halting in the gentler tourist and fishing industries. Photographs of discarded pails, tires, and rubble on riverbanks, and the quotation of a reporter's Joycean description of pollution that "the bloated bodies of fish clogged the thick scum that rings many sections of the shoreline of the river" seem to be emotional objections to the big corporation, however unstated these may be.

The article entitled "The Police and the People" does a very admirable job of informing people of their rights with the police. Moving instances of police abuse, governmental narrowness, the stubbornness of youth, and, in general, of the total culpability of everyone are presented. An objective streak is maintained with uncommon strength. The only weakness is the article is a certain naivete which creeps into the ideas of rectification. In particular, the suggestion that "education and communication" will eliminate all fear between police and government on the one hand, and youth on the other; and that "Hippies" may well need "straight society ... to exist on a 'drop-in, drop-out' basis" is blatantly naive. There are large factions within each of these groups which genuinely threaten one another's existence through opposing world views. Any attempt at a reconciliation must involve the technique of psychological counsel. Strictly rational media such as "Education and communication" are largely useless. Here there is an oppressive sense of a need to produce the panacea of which I spoke in the beginning.

The "Personal Commentary" is weak and entangled in parts. When it propounds the formula with

such overwhelming confidence of "search, listen, watch and calculate" to judge the correct behaviour in a given social sphere, the article gets as dogmatic as the dogma it opposes.

"The Miramichi Folk Song Festival" is covered in a lively and effective style, but it occasionally slightly condescending to the "tight" little out-of-the-way "culture".

The interview with Ioner Cruise O'Brien is handled well. The questions are skillfully put to him. The Dublin politician does most of the talking, and he talks warmly and well.

The book review on "Notes for a Native Land" is handled competently. Russell Hunt relates the question of a Canadian identity to the book both delightfully and delicately.

"The Mysterious East" is much needed. It has been written with astounding forthrightness and freedom from the profit motive of which it speaks. There are certain minor faults which are completely attributable to the self-consciousness and over-zealousness any group undertaking such a staggering task would inevitably experience. Much luck to it! It is refreshing!

Yours truly,  
Dave Lambert

# VIEWPOINT

by tom ekers  
by brunswickan staff

## what about unb st.john ?



ralph jones  
bus. 4

"I think it is relieving the pressure up here."



barbara walls  
arts 1

"I don't know anything about it."



peter forbes  
law 1

"Other state and provincial universities have branch campuses, so we've arrived."



judy weaver  
arts 2 STU

"I don't know that much about it."

harold stupinski  
arts 111

"I think they are more progressive, ie., in terms of sensitivity and coherence."



howard lahti  
sc. 11

"I think UNB SJ should expand, especially a medical school or something."



lorry kennedy  
sc. 111

"I think we should all be here."



pepita ferrari  
arts 1

"Too bad we don't know it."

