



Gordon A. Smith, *West Coast #1*, 1974, acrylic on canvas, 60" x 72", Courtesy Marlborough Godard Gallery, Toronto/Montréal.

concerned with economics and Canadian identity, but it is a work of fantasy rather than coherent philosophy. Rohmer first imagines a singularly inept invasion of Canada by U.S. forces, which is almost effortlessly repelled. He then projects the swift, sure take-over of the Exxon Corporation by a government-supported but privately-controlled oil company, secretly backed, it develops, by Arabian oil billions. Mr. Rohmer (who holds a brigadier general's rank in the Reserves) is essentially an apostle of peace, and he accomplishes the swift demolition of straw men with a minimum of bloodshed. Finally Canadians are in control of one splinter of the Exxon empire, the Canada-based Imperial Oil, and Saudia Arabia is in control of the rest. There is, surprisingly, little resentment shown by anyone; Exxon's former stockholders seem delighted, and so indeed does the Western world in general. *Exxoneration* is not a work of art, it is an outline for a novel rather than a novel, and its characters are as two-dimensional as the tiger which once resided in the Exxon tank. Still, it is a significant book; its sale indicates clearly the

Canadian concern with the overwhelming presence of foreign and multi-national firms, such as Exxon, and the enormous control they exercise over the Canadian economy. Indeed the concern itself provides Canadians with a kind of unifying identity — a common desire to control their own skies, fields, streams and resources in a way which will benefit twenty million people.

[AMONG THE FIRST-RATERS]



THE Canadian identity search is not limited to economics, thank God — it is more entertaining to look for it in the works of Mordecai Richler than in the Canada Development Corporation's annual reports. Mr. Richler is a serious, funny man, and since the triumph of his film, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, his work is familiar, at least indirectly, to millions in the U.S. *Duddy Kravitz* is widely available in paper-back, and it is an excellent