

CANADA

TODAY / D'AUJOURD'HUI

The
Canadian
Flair



Some people (most often Canadians) think of Canadians as unadventurous. This is not particularly true.

Many Canadians are as inconspicuous as fresh air in the Rockies, but others have their own unique pizzaz. Once there was a premier of British Columbia who bought two submarines and started the British Columbia Navy. Once there was a gent named Smith who migrated from Nova Scotia to British Columbia; he stopped in San Francisco on the way and persuaded the California legislature to change his name to Amor de Cosmos, or Lover of the World.

Today many Canadians are going their own ways with interesting results. In this issue of CANADA TODAY/D'AUJOURD'HUI we consider a dozen who have made (or are making) their marks along the corridors of time.

Now Playing

Robertson Davies is his own finest production. He wrote the script, designed the costumes, manufactured the set and plays the lead.

He is tall, of becoming girth and dressed to suggest a nineteenth-century ancestor, with richer blood than flows in modern veins. Although born a Virgo (under the extremely strong influence of Mercury), he has a leonine head, a mane of white flowing back from his forehead and down his neck, Mephistophelean eyebrows which crackle above his penetrating eyes, and a spade-shaped beard of brown and grey.

He is marvelously recondite, rooted in the psychology of Jung and the Calendar of the Saints — a believer in miracles, an unblinking realist, an

articulate enigma, a shatterer of icons and a respecter of proprieties.

He is one of the most arresting monologists in print or person since Hamlet, and many perceptive persons believe he is the best novelist now writing in English.

His novels, particularly his trilogy — *Fifth Business*, *The Manticore* and *World of Wonders*—are rich with unexpected points of view, but his views are most arrestingly delivered in his own sonorous voice.

The trilogy begins with the throwing of a snowball by a boy, Percy Boyd Staunton, at another boy, Dunstan Ramsay. The snowball enfolds a pink stone. Dunstan ducks and it hits the wife of

the town's Baptist minister, causing her to give birth prematurely to an infant who will be christened Paul and who will grow up to be Magnus Eisengrim, the greatest magician in the world.

It ends two books and sixty years later with Eisengrim, Ramsay and their mutual friend and confident, Liesl Vitzlipützi, in bed together in the Savoy Hotel, discussing God and the Devil. Liesl, who is both the ugliest woman in the world and a person of irresistible charm, is probably the Devil herself.

The three volumes are triumphant as mind-challenging perceptions of good and evil; as essays on ambition, success, failure and futility; as mystery stories; as splendidly accurate evocations of small-town Canada and other places; as richly textured, old-fashioned novels; and as painless sources of information on show business, magic, hagiography, Ontario tycoonship and caste symbols.

Robertson Davies is, above all, a man who should be allowed to speak for himself:

ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF A DEVIUS SNOWBALL:

"On a particular winter afternoon, a boy threw a snowball at another boy with a stone concealed in it and the consequences go on for sixty years. Was the boy guilty? Did he know what he was doing? Yes, he did know what he was doing up to the point that he wished to harm somebody; he was being as evil as he knew how; he was setting in motion an evil action and the amount of evil that came from it and also a great deal of good. But that doesn't alter the fact that, so far as he could control the thing, his impulses were toward evil. He wished to do harm, and he did harm but not the kind he meant.

Ramsay never intended to do good, but in the course of his life he does a great deal of good."

ON RELIGION, SUPERSTITION AND THE PRESENT AGE:

"It seems as if we are perpetually looking for new threats to our peace of mind and that is in a measure superstitious. We're very much in the position the Roman Empire was in before it really

began to go downhill, which took a long time. At about this equivalent of where we are now, they were immensely superstitious, and they were full of new religions, and they had swamis and maharishis, all kinds of eastern teachers who invaded the capital and taught meditation and so forth. Christianity was only another of the sort of voodooos from the East which invaded Rome, and I think that we're probably going to see the rise from the midst of all this queer, superstitious searching for something, a new religion, perhaps not entirely new, but at least a new form. Christianity was a gigantic forward step. If you look around you in any large, civilized country, you see for one thing that it's full of hospitals. Before the world fell, or a great part of it, under the influence of the Christian religion, there was no such thing as a hospital. All attempts to look after the unfortunates and the miserables, these are from Christian influence; it is a religion of compassion and it attempts to behave with decency toward other people, a notion which would have been absolutely incredible to the Romans."

ON SAINTS:

"The fascination of the saint is the fascination of the extraordinary person, the remarkable person, the outstanding person. People are very quickly interested in criminals. Look at the extraordinary sales for all kinds of books, not only mystery stories, but real-life criminals, books about crime. Criminals are extraordinary people. You have got to be very unusual to be a distinguished criminal. But it takes just as many extraordinary qualities to be unusually good. And these very good people are fascinating because they are so unusual and they have such energy. And their goodness isn't the sort of sickly goodness that nearly makes you throw up. It is a sort of driving, practical determination to change something which they felt was wrong. And sometimes it was themselves that they thought was wrong and they changed themselves."

The Televisionary Man

Marshall McLuhan is a conservative man who believes in home discipline, school discipline, Thomas Aquinas, marriage and the church. This may be surprising (or perhaps it is not), because persons steeped in linear thought tend to believe in logical connections and it seems illogical (at least to them) that:

A) a man who believed in all the above would be the patron saint of the fragmented

world

of

TV

OR

B) the patron saint of TV would

believe

in all

of the above. (This sentence is, like McLuhan's own, circular; but it is not, LIKE HIS, PARADOXICAL.)

The fact is that Marshall McLuhan is probably not the patron saint of TV at all, although he is the author of *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, *Culture is Our Business*, *The Medium is the Massage*, *Understanding Media*, *The Mechanical Bride*, *Through the Vanishing Point*, and *War and Peace in the Global Village*, most of which were written in short bursts of unconnected lines, words and paragraphs.

(The books above are not listed in linear, chronological, vertical or philosophical order, or in the order of their degrees of thickness.)

Mr. McLuhan is a solemn man, a serious man and a professor at the University of Toronto. In the mid-sixties he burst on the electronic world as the MaN wItH the aPpRoPrI AtE mEsS AGe. It was that the world had moved, abruptly, from an age of linear, egocentric thinking into the age of the GLOBAL VILLAGE.

It was an idea
WHOSE TIME HAD COME,
though difficult to get hold of.
Still McLuhan's bursts of perception (accompanied by a great many illustrative pictures and cartoonish words like ZAM, BAM and ZOWIE) seemed to explain some of the odder aspects of life in the sixties, such as: incense, war and peace, the fact that Johnny couldn't read, long hair and short attention spans.

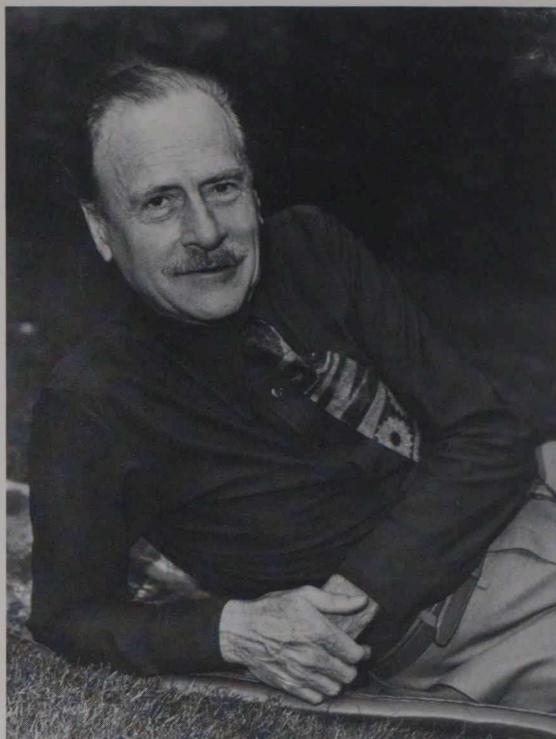
One interpretation of his theory (not necessarily his) is that the world has changed profoundly with the invention of movable type. Before there were books (or book stores), man did not think of himself as the centre of the world around him. When he painted a picture of his village, he painted all of it, including people and objects on both sides of walls, indoors and out. In his own mind he was not the prime viewer but just part of the clutter.

The arrival of type (and in time, of newspapers, held twelve to fourteen inches from the tip of the nose) caused man to become egocentric and gave birth to, among other things, capitalism, rugged individualism, SUPERSTARS, suicide, spelling bees and social outcasts. Type (a hot medium) made Renaissance man self-conscious and fiercely logical, seeing causes and effects all around, often in places they didn't exist.

In some places this caused the burning of witches, heretics and persons who ruined the crops.

McLuhan believed (and believes) that television (a cool medium) has knocked man out of his position at the centre. When man looks into that small box, he sees other people doing things, many of them violent, without paying attention to him. He is no longer the critical observer.

He is



ONE OF THE CROWD.

Meanwhile, McLuhan, who, whatever else, is NOT ONE OF THE CROWD, continues to speak forth. Most recently he has been considering the functions of the right and left brain hemispheres. Research indicates that the right hemisphere is concerned with spatial, emotional and intuitive processes; the left, with verbal, sequential, intellectual and analytic thought. Here are some of his recent remarks which have appeared

IN PRINT:*

"You see, TV will not take a face, it has to have a mask. That's why the Jimmy Carters and the John F. Kennedys were good people for TV because they didn't have a face, they had a mask. That applies to Trudeau as well. Trudeau has the mask of an American Indian and it's a potent mask. The American Indian does not have a private face. He has the face of his tribe, his clan. Now, that's good TV. It's called charisma."

"The effect of television is certainly to turn off the left hemisphere, and insofar as it is being used by mainly left hemisphere people that is sort of against the grain. TV itself cries out for right hemisphere programming."

"My whole natural bent is right hemisphere but my academic training was all left hemisphere, and so was yours. Anybody who's been to school is a left hemisphere person; on the other hand, if they have an artistic bent, that means they're in head-on clash all the time with everything they're learning."

* *Maclean's*, March 7, 1977.

Toller Cranston, the Laid-Back, Loose-Hanging, Jump-Suited, Thawed-Out, Canadian Contradiction

"I skate the way I think Isadora Duncan danced," Toller Cranston says. "I'm trying to explore every facet of my personality. I'm criticized as flamboyant, arrogant and melodramatic. I'm black and white. I'm yes and no. I try to live my life touching extremes."

Toller, now twenty-eight, was born in Kirkland Lake, Ontario, a small mining community and has spent much of his life defying Canadian traditions.

One major one was that men figure skaters were frozen from the waist up. Toller began figure skating at seven. At seventeen his flexible style dismayed the judges at the Canadian Championships, and though he skated with bewildering finesse, he finished fourth. He bounced back when Ellen Burka, a leading coach, insisted he was right and they were wrong. In time, under her tutelage, he won the Canadian free skating championship six times and the world championship, three. His style, featuring swooping movement of the arms, head and torso, revolutionized male figure skating. It was also often described as "effeminate," and Toller was a lonely, defensive young man.

Dr. Fred A. Urquhart, of the University of Toronto, is the monarch of all he surveys. For forty years, he and his wife, Norah, have kept a long-distance eye on eastern monarch butterflies. After many experiments, they developed a pressure-applied adhesive label that could be stuck to a monarch's wing without diminishing its ability to fly. Over the decades, he built up corps of volunteer watchers, throughout North

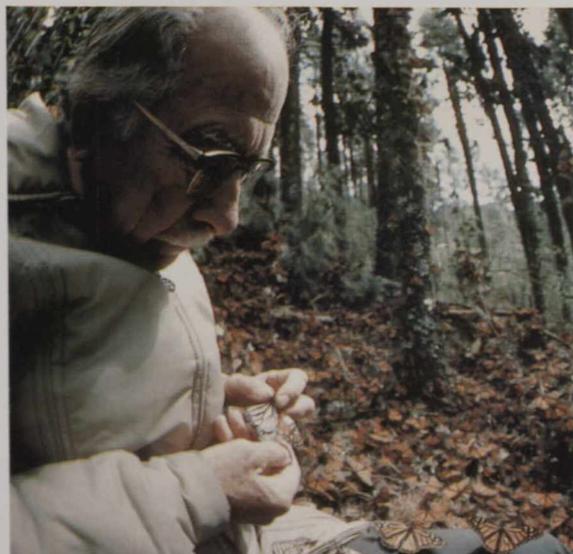
"I never pretended to be the boy next door, or a super jock like Joe Namath. Namath has one type of masculinity; I have another. A man is a man, and being a man depends on how you feel about yourself."

This spring Toller Cranston's *The Ice Show* was on Broadway for eight weeks, getting critical raves, but playing to less than full houses. First, fifteen yellow-clad skaters glided on; and then Toller, wearing a black-beaded jump suit, cut nearly to his navel, came down, slowly, on a large, shining star. "I just had to say, 'Well here I am, New York.'"

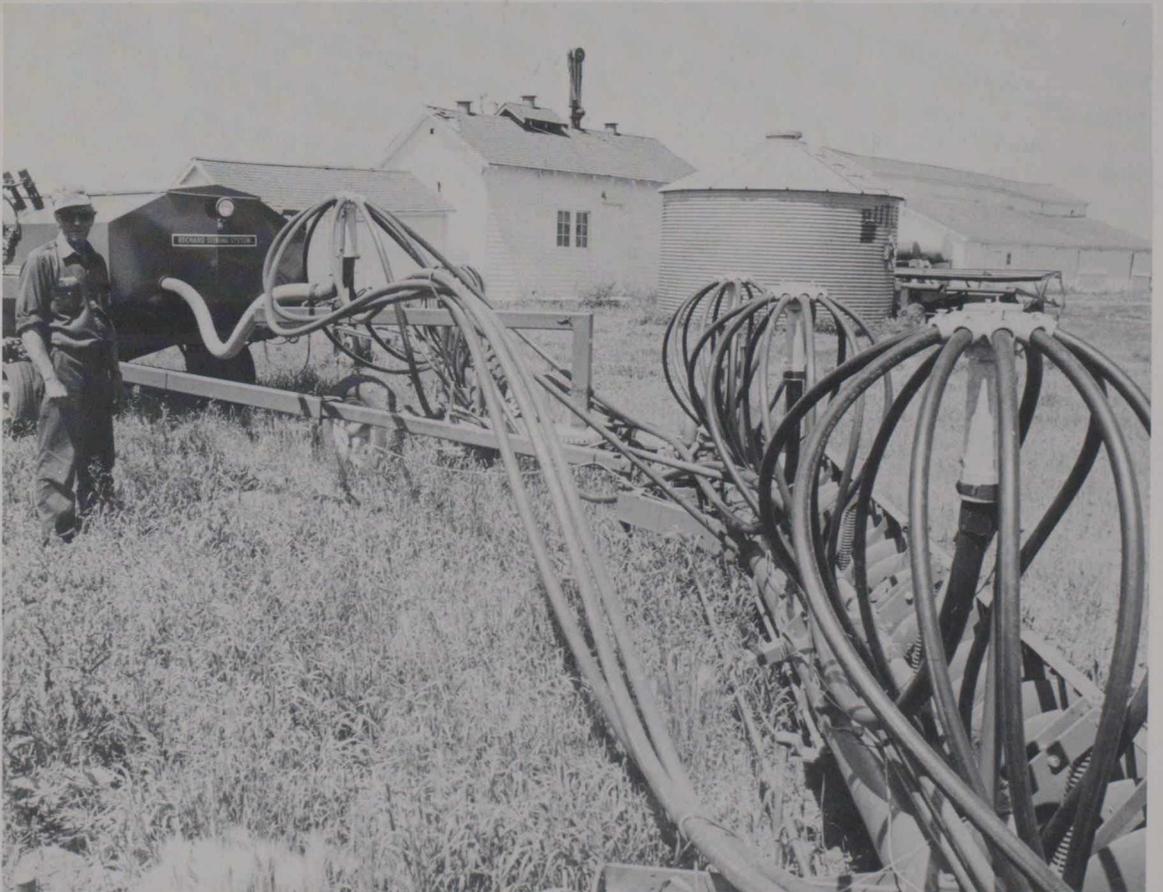
At the moment Toller is feeling great. He is also a painter, and his works, in a style called mystic symbolism, sell for as much as six thousand dollars.

"I could stop skating tomorrow and never look back. My painting career is very valid and successful and I could support myself doing that. I would also like to design ballet costumes. The important thing is to end your career with a certain kind of dignity and I think I did that. At least I never joined the Ice Capades."

America, who helped discover the monarch's migration patterns. The glorious culmination of it all came when a volunteer in central Mexico found a mountainside covered with millions of wintering monarchs, one of which at least was properly labelled. Dr. Urquhart promptly went down to see for himself and, in his own words, "gazed in amazement. A glorious, incredible sight."



Jerome Bechard, an ingenious and successful Lajord, Saskatchewan, farmer, shoots his seeds into the ground and lives beneath his wheat field. The slab roof of the house he designed (with some architectural help) is covered with earth, which keeps it coolish in the summer and warmish in the winter, saving much fuel. When approached from the back (top picture), only a single tower is visible. The front view (middle) is both original and handsome. The harrow Bechard invented uses air pressure to shoot seeds at uniform depths into the earth, giving much better crop yields. The seeds travel from the truck at the left, through the hoses and into the ground, freshly turned by the disks at right.



The Rats on the Roof

When Hans Selye was nineteen, he suggested to his teacher, Hofrat Professor Doktor Armin Tschermak Elder von Seysenegg, that diagnosing doctors should pay attention to the "syndrome of just being sick."

"Obviously," the professor said, "if a person is sick he looks it. What is so special about this? If a man is fat he looks fat."

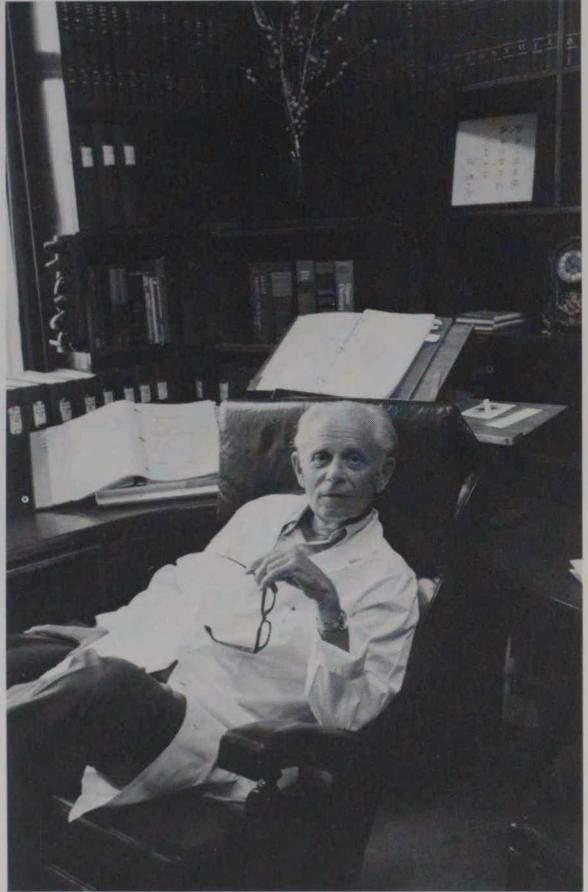
Actually Hans, whose mind was unconfused by incidentals, had taken the first unappreciated step in identifying "stress."

Ten years later, working at McGill University in Montreal as an assistant to Professor J. B. Collip and doing research on female sex hormones, he took extracts from the ovaries of recently slaughtered cows and injected them into female rats. He was looking for a change which could be attributed to some unknown hormone. The rats responded. Their adrenal glands enlarged, their lymphatic systems atrophied and they got peptic ulcers.

But he took extracts from other organs and injected the rats again. They responded in the same way precisely. Sex hormones clearly had nothing to do with it. Then he remembered the "syndrome of being sick."

He put all the rats on the wind-swept roof of the medical building. It was mid-winter and the rats shivered through the night and in the morning they had the syndrome: enlarged adrenals, atrophied lymphatic systems and signs of ulcers. He experimented further. No matter what type of stress he inflicted on the rats, they responded in the same way. Professor Collip invited him in for a heart-to-heart talk. He assured Selye that he was wasting his time. "Selye," he said, "try to realize what you are doing before it is too late. You have now decided to spend your entire life studying the pharmacology of dirt."

Fortunately Selye found one conspicuous supporter, Sir Frederick Banting, the discoverer of insulin, who dropped in from time to time and who arranged his first small grant, five hundred dollars. In 1944 Selye published some results in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, and in 1952 he published *The Story of the Adap-*



tation Syndrome. Today his concept of biological stress is included in medical textbooks throughout the world. In essence it is this: When a person is under stress of any kind his body responds in a predictable way. The stress may be damaging (in which case it is called distress) or it might be exhilarating (eustress), such as news that one has won a sweepstakes.

"Stress can result from tensions within a family, at work, or from the restraining influence of social taboos or traditions. In fact, any situation in life that makes demands upon our adaptive mechanism creates stress. From a psychological point of view, the most stressful experiences are frustration, failure and humiliation. . . . On the other hand, we derive a great deal of energy and stimulation, considerable force and pleasure from victories and success. . . . Although these obvious differences exist between the effects of pleasant and unpleasant experiences, in biological terms both have a common effect—they cause stress. . . . Perhaps eustress [the joyful kind] is less likely to be harmful because it rarely equals the intensity and duration of suffering."

The Canadians in this issue are not, of course, the only ones with flair; they were selected by something close to happenstance. If, by chance, you have a flairy Canadian worthy of attention, drop us a line and tell us about him or her.

Judy the Invincible

Judy LaMarsh was born in Chatham, Ontario, in 1924 and grew up in Niagara Falls. Her family was very respectable, and so, in her early years, was she.

"I didn't date very much in high school. . . . I always had a date for a dance or something but they weren't the football heroes or anything else. I'm sure I was about the third or fourth person they'd asked. And that distressed me when I was in high school. My mother said, 'You're the kind of person who'll be more popular when you're older.'"

After high school came a major disappointment: "I always wanted to be a lawyer. I don't think my father ever accepted that I was going to be a lawyer until I left college and went to Osgoode. When I graduated from high school my dad said,



Mme. Madeleine Parent, a convent-bred girl from middle-class Quebec, became the determined union organizer of French-Canadian industrial workers and the chosen enemy of Premier Maurice Duplessis, who had her indicted for seditious conspiracy and who persuaded many citizens that she was a Russian communist who had been landed from a submarine. She was not, of course. She and her husband, Kent Rowley, were founders of the all-Canadian Textile and Chemical Union.



'No I can't do that. I don't have the money and your brother is coming along.' He came first. It was the biggest shock of my life to be told I couldn't go to university."

After a year at teachers' college, she joined the army. "The army was good to me. I was a girl from a parochial family living with one class of people all my life—I sure got to learn all sorts of things."

The army sent her to the University of Toronto. After graduation she attended Osgoode Hall law school. Her social life repeated the pattern of high school days; she graduated as president of her class. "I wasn't experimental about sex. God, I think I was a virgin until I was about twenty-seven! And that's after I was in the army."

She practiced law with her father for some seven years and became an active member of the Liberal Party. Her father died in 1957, and her mother in 1960; and that year she ran for the House of Commons and won by five thousand votes. She went to Ottawa in a cloud of achievement and was soon put in her place.

"No one on the Liberal side gave less of a damn whether I was there or not. I sat there for a month and I started to talk. They were a little surprised. In this men's club they thought women were there on sufferance, that it was a freak election that I got there and I ought to be modestly pleased with that and not try to contribute."

She contributed anyway. When the Liberals came to power in 1963, she was appointed minister of health and welfare—where she steered the Canada Pension Plan into law—and in 1965, secretary of state. The press soon cut her up to fit



Once Harold Town was a cautious young man in Toronto. "My days at art college were preceded by a night at the Ramona Grill. . . . Hair greased, wearing white socks and other nostalgic gear and the required look of swinging boredom affected by big band sidemen, I managed a toehold on the interest of an older woman (she must have been all of twenty-two) and walked her home. She let me know that no one in the house was up and asked me in. Mentally rolling up my sexual sleeves, I started forward, then stopped as if held by a throat chain and blurted out . . . that I must go, tomorrow was my first day at art college and I had to get up early." Later, Harold learned that punctuality is the politeness of squares and decided to march to the tick of his own clock. The mixed media drawing above is called *Vale Variation No. 75*, a title that shows that Mr. Town calls his work anything he pleases.

several stereotypes, calling her a number of things clearly intended to hurt: "The No. 1 spinster in Canada," "an odd bod," "a drill sergeant in jack-boots." The Canada Pension Plan involved her in endless political pushing and shoving. In an extraordinary interview with Heather Robertson, she described the ordeal: "It took the shine off politics, and in the minds of many stamped me as a quarrelsome, stubborn, heavy-handed fighter."

At the peak of power she quit politics. "I got so tired of fighting. There's no one to talk to about things and, when you come right down to facts, nobody really cares if you live or die. It warped my personality. I was really bitchy and always tired and short tempered."

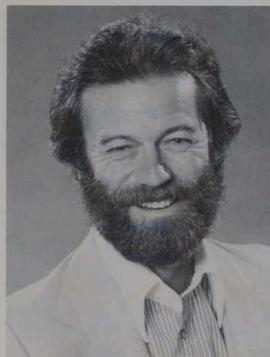
Once out, she found she was very far out indeed. "Most ministers who leave government go on to half-a-dozen boards and their friends rally

around. That certainly didn't happen to me."

So first she wrote her autobiography: *Memoirs Of A Bird In A Gilded Cage*. That established her as an articulate critic, and she got her own TV shows in Ottawa and a radio hotline program in Vancouver. In 1974 she came back east to teach law at Osgoode Hall. She took another television show and started writing a weekly column for *The Toronto Star*. In 1975 she was appointed chairman of Ontario's Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry. A lot of the old bitterness faded away. "The speeches and kinds of things I'm being asked to do are more establishment now," she says. "I'm much more respectable."

Though not, of course, as she was, once upon a time, in Niagara Falls.

How To Be a Quadruple Threat Success (in Canada) Without Becoming a Household Word (South of the Border)



Gordon Pinsent is a rowdy man. He is an actor, a playwright, a novelist and a composer.

His income runs into six figures and then stops abruptly. He could make more if he wanted to.

"In the past five years, say, I've turned down a couple of hundred thousand dollars worth of work in television commercials. I won't do them. It would keep me being just an actor, for one thing. . . . Writing helps me a lot. Writers think more than actors. An actor is an empty person."

Gordon is as full as an egg. He was born in Grand Falls, Newfoundland, and during his formative years he drank a variety of alarming things, including vanilla extract and liquid shoe polish. By 1959 he was settled down sufficiently to act small parts at Toronto's old Crest Theatre and smaller parts at Stratford. In the mid-sixties he became an instant TV celebrity, playing Quentin Durgens MP, a stuffed parliamentarian shirt from Moose Falls.

In 1969 he went to Hollywood, where he remained for six years, working often but never starring. In 1970 he outlined *The Rowdyman* and, after difficulty, raised enough Toronto money to

make it into a movie in which he played Will Cole, the shiftless, lively Newfie rowdyman. The movie was a critical though not a commercial success, and its substance became the focal point of Pinsent's creative life.

He has converted it into almost every theatrical form, except a march for the dead.

"It was a good film but it should have been a great one," he told *Maclean's* magazine. "With a little extra care, time, a bigger budget, it could have been. It wasn't just a story, it was a chunk of my life. That's why I wrote the book, later, to make it more complete; the way it should have been."

The book did well, and last year he produced it as a musical at the Charlottetown Festival. He wrote the book and the lyrics, codirected and starred.

In his mid-forties, he appears to be just hitting his stride. As he told *Maclean's*:

"You ask yourself: what's important in the long run? When you're young and you think time will never run out, it doesn't seem so important to make one's mark; later, especially when people you've known and loved begin to die around you, I suppose you either become somewhat mad and melancholy or are impelled to do something, create something. . . . [This is] the most creative period of my life."

Suzuki on Science

David Suzuki looks like half of a TV team of dashing young cops, the kind who wear embroidered denim shirts and drive sports cars on the sidewalk.

Actually he is a TV star, and his shirts are sometimes embroidered. He is also the geneticist who bred a strain of fruit flies that drop dead in the cold, originating a new kind of pest control.

Suzuki, forty-one, is older than he looks. He is the concerned principal of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's *Science Magazine*, a program to tell the layman, in nonjargon language, what is going on in the labs.

Suzuki believes science could ruin us before it saves us, and genetics is his principal cause of concern. At Oxford, scientists have implanted cells from rat embryos in female mice and produced offspring which are seventy per cent mouse and thirty per cent rat. More alarmingly, other scientists have united human cells with rat cells, fish cells and chicken cells. They can now create living things which have never existed before. Suzuki does not trust their discretion.

"I am very cynical about the real commitment of the participants . . . when it comes to possibly not doing experiments that would win them the

Nobel Prize, I just don't believe these guys will stop."

Suzuki's experience of life has not encouraged him to assume everybody's best behaviour. He and his family were sent to Slocan, a British Columbia detention camp for west coast Japanese, when he was five. He grew up lonely and serious, and while attending Amherst on a scholarship he was overwhelmed by genetics. "It was incredible. So precise and logical."

He took a PhD at the University of Chicago and was hired by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee. The civil rights revolution was just beginning in Tennessee, and Suzuki was vigorously involved. He went back to Canada to the University of Alberta and soon to the University of British Columbia. In 1967 he and five researchers published a paper called *Temperature-Sensitive Mutations in Drosophila Melanogaster I. Relative Frequencies Among Gamma-Ray and Chemically Induced Sex-Linked Recessive Lethals and Semi-Lethals*. It was the breakthrough on pest control, though the title illustrates the kind of jargon Suzuki finds disturbing.

"Secrecy can be perpetrated . . . by so mystifying the language and activity of science that, for all intents and purposes, it is secret. And I can do a hell of a lot about that."

He began with a few television and radio programs in Edmonton and Vancouver; CBC then funded a modest network show called *Suzuki On Science*. *Science Magazine* began last year and



was soon on prime time, Wednesday evening at eight o'clock.

Suzuki will return to the University of British Columbia and his fruit flies this fall. "I am really looking forward to it. I feel I've been pretty lucky. All in all, I guess I've accomplished more than I ever dreamed I would."

The Street Without Men

Michel Tremblay, a plump and gentle man, was born thirty-five years ago on a mean street in Montreal. It was a place with many women and few young men.

The street, the time and the circumstances would affect him profoundly. He would become Quebec's leading playwright and a forceful speaker of subtle truths.

His first play, *Les Belles Soeurs*, created a sensation—most obviously because it was written in *joual*, the street French of Quebec (the name derives from the pronunciation of *cheval*). No one had done that before. Actually, Tremblay was also being original in more significant ways. Quebec was finding its own identity, and the play reflected the turmoil. It concerns a French-Canadian woman who has won a million trading stamps and who has asked fourteen women neighbours to help her paste them in little books. The stamps themselves are a cause of outrage. Their number is a

deliberate illusion, making a small prize seem large; they are worth, at most, a thousand dollars, and they are redeemable only in tawdry, plastic prizes. They are a trick played on women.

Tremblay's later plays were also written from the woman's point of view (or in the case of *Hozanna*, from the viewpoint of a transvestite, a woman in a man's body trying to get out).

Here are some of the things Mr. Tremblay had to say during a recent interview with CANADA TODAY/D'AUJOURD'HUI.

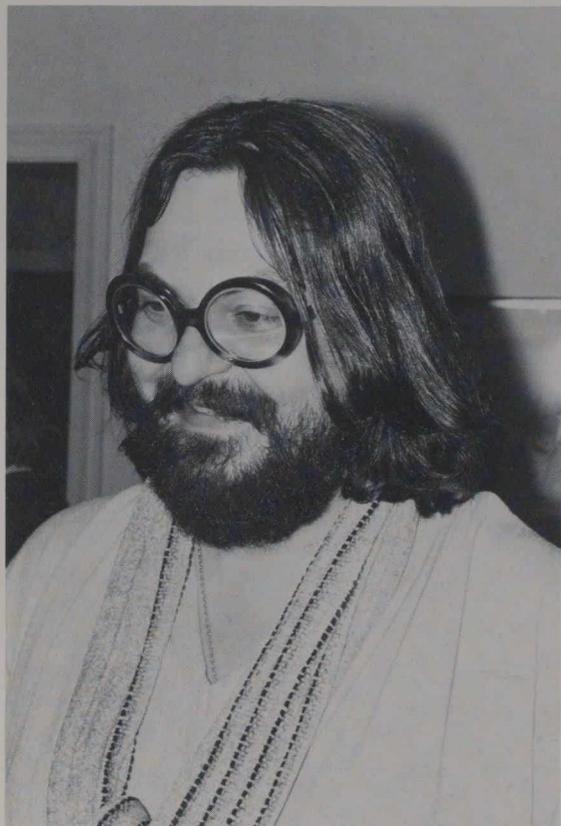
ON PLAYS

"I would never write something that is only entertaining, even the songs that I write are political."

ON WOMEN

"I wrote the first women's lib play. The culture in Quebec before the sixties was a man's thing.

The greatest plays that were written before 1960 were plays by men and for men, and even the female characters were tomboys. Nobody talked about women as they are."



ON CULTURE IN QUEBEC

"French culture does not come into our homes with cable TV. We are Americans because we live in America; but since we are French we are different, and we do have a culture although the culture has always been colonized by the French. We are now reacting to that. Since the language is different from the rest of North America's, it's easier for us because the mother [France] is very far away.

"I'm very American, I'm much more American than French because I know all about the American theatre."

ON PLANS FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE

"I'm going to Paris to write a novel. It will take place in the past. Nobody has interesting things about the war years in Quebec. There is one great novel, *Bonheur d'Occasion*. I want to write a novel about one street in Montreal from May 1, 1942, to June 25, 1942 (the day I was born); and it will be called 'The Fat Woman Next Door is Pregnant' (that was my mother). It will be a novel about a street with only women, because when I was born the only men I knew, before I was three or four, were children or older men. I didn't know what a grown-up young man looked like. I want to make out of this street a microcosm of all society. The smaller you are the bigger you are."

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