

Book review

Check out these ghost writers

By JEANNETTE URBAS

Even if you are not a fan of ghost stories, *The Oxford Book of Canadian Ghost Stories* (Oxford University Press, 271 pages, \$16.95) is an interesting collection. Edited by Alberto Manguel, it spans almost

two centuries and includes aspects of Canada's two cultures, though stories by only three French-Canadian writers have been included. The table of contents contains a star-studded roster of English-Canadian writers, among them, Stephen Leacock, Robertson Davies, Timothy Findley, Farley Mowat and Margaret Atwood. There are 26 stories in all.

Ghost stories are intended to chill and frighten but Robertson Davies' tale, *Dickens Digested*, is funny, not only as a spoof on the genre but as a satiric commentary on the vagaries of academic life. Who would have thought of Charles Dickens as a potential vampire who literally ingests a PhD student who was concentrating on him as his thesis subject?

Some of the stories do not have ghosts but deal with complex affinities and repulsions between individuals, such as the animal scent or smell of rotted wood associated with Mr. Sleepwalker in Ethel Wilson's story of the same name. The smell disgusts and haunts Mary Manly, the protagonist; conversely, little Mr. Sleepwalker is attracted to her by what he terms her delicious fragrance.

EMOTIONAL BONDS

Intricate emotional bonds of identification also appear in Timothy Findley's *Dreams*, where two psychiatrists, a husband and wife, become closely tied to two patients, both of whom frustrate all attempts at help. The husband is afraid to sleep for fear of nightmares about his schizophrenic patient, one of whose lurid symptoms finally overwhelms the psychiatrist.

As is to be expected in such a collection, dreams and/or nightmares play an important role in many of the stories. The psychiatrist wife in the story above writes in her report about an autistic child who has slipped into death: "We dreamed him..."

Mavis Gallant's *From the Fifteenth District* is a brilliant, original narrative that turns the tables on the traditional ghost motif, for here it is the dead that are haunted by the stupidity, hypocrisy and lies of the living. The story relates three complaints lodged with the police by the dead against the living in an epidemic of haunting. These constitute a devastating critique of modern society, especially in the case of Mrs. Ibrahim, 37, mother of 12 children, betrayed and abandoned by the two people who should have helped her - the doctor and the social investigator.

Several of the stories take place in mental hospitals, a setting where delusions and distortions of the imagination flourish. The most

poignant of these is *If There Is No Gate*, by Jane Rule. The protagonist appears to be in a relatively benign atmosphere, for there are no walls nor gates to fence her in or oblige her to stay. Yet, she is filled with anguish in an unsuccessful struggle to achieve an inner cohesion that will make her part of the world, instead of standing desperately outside it.

CANADIAN

A few of the stories are identifiably Canadian. Philippe Aubert de Gaspé narrates the tale of *La Corriveau* - the spectre of the woman who murdered her husband and lies in wait at night for unwary travellers - which belongs to Quebec legend. Antonine Maillet's *The Ghost of Lovers' Lane* could only be Acadian, in its use of language and oral forms, which comes through even in translation from French.

The majority of the stories, however, have a more universal quality; some are set in such faraway places as Africa and Bombay. All have high literary value, with an inventiveness and technical skill designed to appeal to a wide variety of tastes.

-Jeannette Urbas, a Toronto-based teacher and reviewer, is a French-Canadian literature specialist. She teaches courses combining literature and women's social history in the Department of Multidisciplinary Studies at Glendon College, York University.
-Thomson News Service

Canada will have 31 million people in 35 years

(NC)—There is a mystique about the future that appeals to everyone. Crystal balls, tarot cards, palm readers, time travellers; humans have always had a desire to predict the future. Advancements in our ability to analyze trends scientifically have made our future-gazing activities more believable, albeit less exotic.

Calling upon the expertise of over 200 scholars from across the country, the Demographic Review Secretariat (created by the Minister of National Health and Welfare in 1986) has produced a report entitled *Charting Canada's Future*. It details current population trends and is designed to help Canadians plan for the future. Here are some projections from the report:

- The Canadian population will peak at 31 million in the year 2026.
- By 2086, the Canadian population will return to the level of the 1986 census—25 million.

- All provinces and territories with the exception of Ontario and Quebec will continue to grow steadily at the national average.
- Ontario's population will grow more quickly than the rest of the country, Quebec's will also continue to grow but at a slower rate than the rest of the country.
- Canada is not alone—the population trends we face are common to all western nations.

If you would like a glimpse into the next century, please write for a copy of *Charting Canada's Future* to the Demographic Review Secretariat, Health and Welfare Canada, Ottawa, K1A 0K9.

OFFICE MAGIC

877-2300

FOR ALL YOUR OFFICE & STATIONERY NEEDS

138C Guelph St., Georgetown

FINANCIAL GUIDE

Knolcrest Plaza
Georgetown
877-6733

H&R BLOCK
THE INCOME TAX SPECIALISTS

8 Mill St. E.
Acton
853-1771

On The
TAX SCENE

Q. Last year, I earned approximately \$60,000 and my wife's only income was from the family allowance payments. It is my understanding that because I earned over \$50,000, I will have to repay all or a portion of the family allowances I report on my tax return. However, because my wife had no income, could she report the family allowance on her return in order to avoid repaying any of the allowance?



Mark Bulicki

A. No. Because you are the higher-income spouse, you must report the family allowance payments on your return. Therefore, you are subject to the repayment rules. You are still entitled, however, to claim the credit for dependent children.

COMPUTATION ON LOCATION

We Are Now Pleased To Offer...

a fully mobile computerized accounting service intended to minimize the disruption of our clients, yet provide the best service possible. Call for all the details.

Codatas

Computer Data Services

37 MAIN ST. S., GEORGETOWN
877-6565 877-5656

THIS SPOT IS RESERVED FOR YOU!

Call our display advertising today and we will get your message to



35,000 readers

877-2201

LOOKING FOR FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS?

WE HAVE THE ANSWERS!



Goebelle MacAdam Alexander

Chartered Accountants

WITH THREE LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU

GEORGETOWN
37 Main St. South
877-5155

BRAMPTON
18 Regan Rd.
840-5518

MISSISSAUGA
6549B Misaissauga Rd.
826-6352

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF HALTON

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for a Tourism Exemption pursuant to the Retail Business Holidays Act, Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1980, Chapter 453, as amended

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Regional Municipality of Halton has received an application requesting the passage of a by-law pursuant to the Retail Business Holidays Act, to permit the retail business establishments currently located within the retail centre known as The Village Square located at 2045 Pine Street, in the City of Burlington, to open between the hours of 12:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. on Sundays and 10:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. on holidays between the dates May 20, 1990 and October 14, 1990. This application is in the name of the:

"Merchants of Village Square"
2045 Pine Street - Upper Level
Burlington, Ontario
L7R 2N1

The Public is invited to review this application and to provide comments at a Public Meeting to be held Wednesday, May 9, 1990, commencing at 10:00 a.m., in the Council Chambers at the:

Regional Administration Building
1151 Bronte Road
Oakville, Ontario

A copy of this application will be available for viewing in the Business Development Department during normal office hours on any business day or prior to the public meeting on May 9th. Any interested individual or parties wishing to be heard at the public meeting should register as a delegation with the Regional Clerk on or before Thursday, May 3, 1990. Delegations to Council will be limited to a ten minute presentation. All written submissions should be provided to the:

Regional Clerk
Regional Municipality of Halton
Regional Administration Building
1151 Bronte Road
Oakville, Ontario
L6J 6E1

by Thursday, May 3, 1990 for inclusion in the Council Agenda.

Any telephone enquiries should be directed to the Regional Business Development Department at:

- 827-2151 (Milton, Burlington, Oakville/Toronto)
- 878-8113 (Halton Hills/Georgetown)
- 853-0501 (Halton Hills/Acton)
- 639-4540 (Burlington/Aldershot)

