

**“I made my great entry—flanked”:
Irving Layton’s Collaborators at
McClelland & Stewart (1959-1964)**

by Cameron Anstee

That is, in aspiring to become a successful ‘McClelland and Stewart poet,’ a writer tries to inscribe a distinctive and consistent subject position for herself within her texts—to develop a distinctive style, a continuity of theme and language from book to book, a visible ‘personality,’ all things which are market-creating and marketable within commercial publishing. (96)

—Frank Davey, *Reading Canadian Reading*

At least, on his book covers, [Irving Layton] puts his best face forward, a new one for each occasion. On one cover, a close-up of set mouth and fierce concentration, in reds and yellows; on another, a tough Byronism; again, triple-faced and triple-hued, a Jewish Satan; here, in solemn rectitude he rides a rooster [...] (66)

—Eli Mandel, *Irving Layton*

In 1952, Irving Layton described the Canadian poet as “an exile condemned to live in his own country. He has no public, commands no following, stirs up less interest than last year’s license plate” (“Preface” 145). Layton wrote these words as a preface to his poems in *Cerberus* (1952), the first title published by Contact Press. In the following seven years, Layton would publish six further collections with Contact Press, one collection with Divers, and two collections with Jonathan Williams, before finally publishing *A Red Carpet for the Sun* with McClelland & Stewart in 1959. Published as a “Collected Poems,” *A Red Carpet for the Sun* fulfilled many of Layton’s creative, critical and popular ambitions. The book sold out its initial print run of 5,000 copies within a single year (Deshaye 123), a substantial increase over the small editions of 250-500 copies he was used to producing. It met with national and international acclaim, and earned him recognition from the then nascent Governor General’s Awards. In a short seven years, Layton rose from condemned “exile” to bona fide national literary celebrity.¹ Layton’s transition from the small press community to the national roster of McClelland & Stewart occurred during a critical decade

in the development of Canadian literature which, during that time, emerged as a visible object of study and a major cultural force. McClelland & Stewart played a pivotal role in these developments. Layton's association with McClelland & Stewart both contributed to and benefited from this growing national recognition of Canadian literature, and of poetry specifically. Layton's most productive, influential, and popular years with McClelland & Stewart are located between 1959 and 1964, from the publication of *A Red Carpet for the Sun* (1959) to the publication of *The Laughing Rooster* (1964). Between these two titles, Layton published *The Swinging Flesh* (1961) and *Balls for a One-Armed Juggler* (1963), and also edited *Love Where the Nights are Long: An Anthology of Canadian Love Poems* (1962). While Layton would continue to publish with McClelland & Stewart for decades, and produce some of his most important and controversial poems in collections that would follow, 1959-1964 represents a high point in his national visibility and readership, and the poems that continue to be anthologized in the twenty-first century were either written and published during these years or first collected to be presented to his new national readership.

While it is tempting to read Layton's movement away from the small press as a movement away from a community-oriented literary and publishing community, such a characterization would discard the deft aesthetic work performed by those involved in producing these books at McClelland & Stewart. Each was designed by Frank Newfeld; each was edited by Claire Pratt; each includes one of Layton's infamous prefaces; each employs a portrait or portraits of Layton (several of which were taken by Sam Tata); and each benefited from McClelland & Stewart's experimental initiative to publish first editions in both clothbound and paperbound editions. These four collections established Layton as a cultural figure of national significance, facilitating his emancipation from what he perceived as a position of condemned exile. In this paper I would like to investigate the material and social conditions of production of Layton's McClelland & Stewart collections from 1959-1964 in order to illuminate the network of skilled artistic and business contributions made by McClelland & Stewart's team. I would like to reframe these contributions as *collaborations* in order to re-contextualize and challenge common readings of Layton's decision to cease publishing with small presses. In these four collections, one can identify not only the development of an important Canadian poet, but also the development of one of Canada's most important book designers (Frank Newfeld) as well as the emergence of a significant Canadian photographer (Sam Tata). Moreover, as recent scholarship from Ruth Panofsky

makes clear, editor Claire Pratt made significant yet largely unheralded contributions to the success of McClelland & Stewart in these years. Finally, the material decisions of Jack McClelland to pursue paperback first editions would reverberate throughout Canadian publishing. These books locate not only the emergence of Irving Layton as Canada's premier poet of the early 1960s, but also represent a constellation of substantial work by other invested figures. In other words, these are significant books not only for Layton's poems, but also for the exceptional cast of contributors who largely have gone unacknowledged until recently. Layton's early years at McClelland & Stewart, rather than being crassly commercial and stripped of the collaborative processes that partly define small press publishing, are exemplary of a literary publishing program that is responsive to all elements of book production.

Jerome McGann, in *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism*, asserts that "different presses [...] generate distinctive sets of textual signifiers" (12). The modernist "Renaissance of Printing" (21) at the centre of McGann's investigations is focused closely on the manipulation of textual and bibliographic signifiers by the writers and publishers of modernist literature in the service of developing publishing and distribution practices in harmony with experimental writing practices. McGann's emphasis is on manipulation of the printed page and the codex form by modernist writers. However, Irving Layton and many of Canada's modernist poets did not experiment directly with the page as a unit-of-composition, or with the classical form of the codex. For the generation of Canadian modernists ushered in by Raymond Souster, Louis Dudek, Irving Layton and their Contact Press, experimental publishing practices were generally restricted to the act of setting up a small press and publishing outside of traditional economic concerns. Radical experimentation with the possibilities of textual and bibliographic manipulation arrived with the next generation, exemplified by the work of Stan Bevington at Coach House. Even so, McClelland & Stewart explored a series of experimental and innovative *publishing practices* in the 1950s and 1960s that developed the textual signifiers distinctive to the press, signifiers that are fully recognizable in the Layton titles named above. Indeed, the material histories of these books overlap with a series of significant gestures by McClelland & Stewart that exerted enormous force upon the fields of Canadian literature in the 1960s.

McClelland & Stewart had begun to experiment with paperback publishing in January 1958 with the appearance of the first four titles in the New Canadian Library (NCL). The NCL was launched as "a quality paperback series of literary reprints that gathered together works either written

by Canadians or set in Canada and first issued between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries” (Friskney 3). The series was aimed at the Canadian public and at the academic community. Professors had been calling for inexpensive but reliable reprints of the texts necessary to begin teaching Canadian literature at the university-level for years. A paperback reprint series accomplished these goals and established a precedent that would be imitated by publishing houses across the country in the following decades. While McClelland & Stewart was exploring the process of recovering lost and forgotten Canadian texts in new paperbound editions, they were also planning a publishing program that would embrace the paperback as a viable material form for new texts by emerging writers. In 1959, McClelland & Stewart published their first paperback original—*The Double Hook* by Sheila Watson. The novelty of this decision is emphasized by the prefatory material included in the first edition. An unpaginated note before the title page reads, in part:

Although first publication of novels and other serious literary forms in paper-covered editions is standard practice in France and in other European countries, it is a relatively new approach in English-language publishing. In Canada it is still an experimental concept. There is much to be said in its favour. We believe that many new Canadian works will make their appearance in this way in the future.

As this is our first original publication in paper covers we are pleased to have been able to select a work that we consider to be, in itself, exceptional.

Alicia Fahey describes the collaborative nature of the production of *The Double Hook* as “especially multifarious” (19), citing among its collaborators the series of academics who argued on behalf of the novel to publishers. However, she also discusses the material considerations of the book’s publication and reception, noting the relationship of the paperback originals to the NCL. She argues that Jack McClelland “was using the ‘experimental’ paperback format of the NCL editions as a marketing strategy to promote the ‘experimental’ style of *The Double Hook*” (24). McClelland & Stewart aggressively promoted the enterprise as experimental, and reviewers took note. Isabelle Hughes, reviewing *The Double Hook* in the *Globe and Mail* on May 16, 1959, writes:

By far the most interesting thing about *The Double Hook*—which is a first novel by Canadian writer Sheila Watson—is that it represents an unusual experiment in Canadian publishing. The book is available in two covers, one paper and one cloth. This arrangement, which seems eminently sensible,

gives the reader a choice between buying a new book at a reasonable price if he does not wish to add it to his permanent library, or investing a larger sum in it if he does. (16)

This “choice” affected sales. *The Double Hook* sold out its initial print run of 3,000 copies (Rendell Smith).

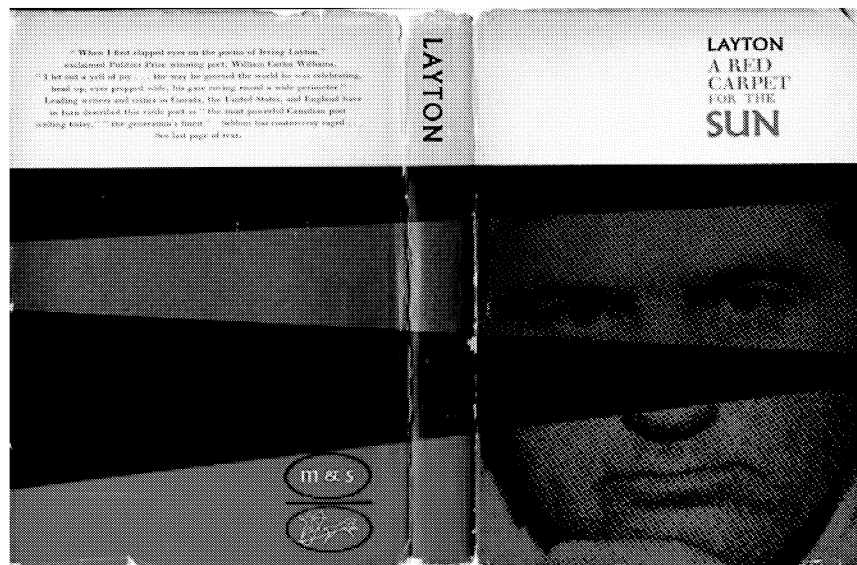
The Double Hook was followed in 1960 by Marie-Claire Blais’s *Mad Shadows* being published simultaneously in paper and hardbound editions. Between the two novels, Irving Layton’s *A Red Carpet for the Sun* appeared, also in simultaneous paper and hardbound editions.

A Red Carpet for the Sun sold out its initial print run of 5,000 copies. In 1959, Canadian literature was receiving unprecedented national attention following in the wake of The Massey Commission, the establishment of the Canada Council, as well as the rise in the study of Canadian literature at the university-level. The decision by McClelland & Stewart to make these texts available in less expensive paperbound editions appears responsive to a national cultural climate that was aware of, and interested in, Canadian literature, largely for the first time.

A major contributor to the M&S ‘brand’ of the late-1950s and early-1960s was Frank Newfeld, a post-war immigrant to Canada who, since his permanent arrival in 1954, had quickly established himself as a book designer of significance in the Canadian landscape.² Newfeld’s work defined a crucial moment in the development of Canadian literature. His designs supported the publication of contemporary writing, as well as publishing practices directed toward the recovery of lost texts. During his two decades at McClelland & Stewart, he worked as Art Director, Director of Design and Production, Creative Director, Vice President of Publishing, and was also a member of the Board of Directors (Beale). While his reputation remains high among book designers and publishers in Canada, his name is less well-known in academic circles. However, his work is nearly inescapable in the study of Canadian literature.

In 1957, while still only a part-time employee, he was entrusted with designing the earliest titles in McClelland & Stewart’s New Canadian Library. In his memoir, *Drawing on Type* (2008), Newfeld acknowledges, “I had not been in Canada long enough to be familiar with more than two of the titles to be republished” (219). Newfeld relied on photographs of the writers to structure his designs by drawing, painting, and producing linocut images of each that he felt were responsive to the tone of their works. These covers were instrumental in shaping some of the earliest visual constructions of Canadian literature on a national scale.³

Likewise, it was Newfeld who took charge of the design of the Watson, Blais, and Layton titles that launched McClelland & Stewart's successful foray into paperback originals. Though they are not explicitly marked as part of a series, there are material similarities among them that go beyond their simultaneous appearances in cloth and paper bindings. Importantly, the three titles share certain distinctive design features that extend through Layton's subsequent McClelland & Stewart titles. Each book jacket is broken into two clear sections. The first, a smaller off-white band at the top that extends across the front and back covers as well as onto the jacket flaps, includes simply the title of the book and author's name. The second larger band presents a rich and colourful design element that similarly wraps entirely around the book.⁴ On *A Red Carpet for the Sun*, Irving Layton's face confronts the reader, filling the entire second band on the front cover in black, underneath four strips of red, pink, and gold.



In addition, like *The Double Hook* and *Mad Shadows*, *A Red Carpet for the Sun* featured an experimental design element, one that was entirely new to Canadian literary publishing.⁵ Newfeld made use of what he referred to as “extended preliminaries” (Inkster 6), a number of pages of introductory material composed primarily of graphic design features.⁶ The idea for these extended preliminaries was drawn from film. Newfeld describes seeing two films in 1955, *The Man with the Golden Arm* and *Around the World in Eighty Days*, whose credit sequences inspired the idea: “the audience

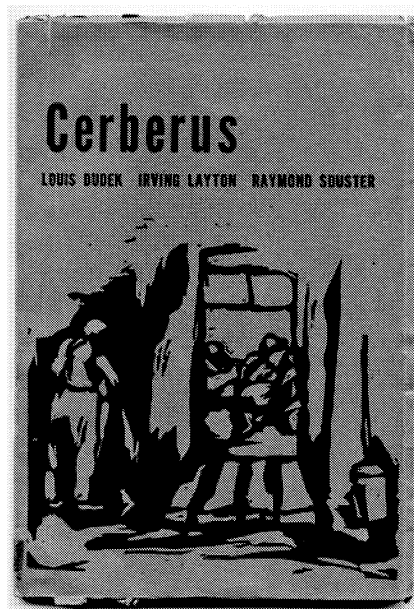
was brought into an immediate sensory relationship with the drama, by way of the credits-sequence, before the film even began" (*Drawing on Type* 325). Elsewhere, Newfeld explains that the preliminaries "could help to settle people down into a mood of looking through the book" (Inkster 7). Newfeld made a conscious effort to align a book's design with the mood and tone of the content. *A Red Carpet for the Sun* begins with a simple red circle in the top-right corner of an off-white page. This circle grows on successive pages before the two colours are inverted on the fourth page, surrounding the now off-white circle with a red page and introducing the title of the book inside the circle. In *A Red Carpet for the Sun*, these extended preliminary pages are a different paper stock.⁷ Newfeld additionally used a portion of Layton's portrait from the front cover to illustrate the cloth wrapping on the hardcover edition. Irving Layton's eyes confront the reader in black against yellow cloth on the front, with a negative image of the same on the back. Newfeld was permitted by McClelland & Stewart to experiment freely with these extended preliminaries, and Layton would be the primary benefactor of such experiments for the next five years.

Arguably, as one of the chief engineers at McClelland and Stewart of Layton's most canonical publications, Newfeld played a significant role in constructing "Irving Layton" as a marketable commodity. Differentiating the "petty-commodity production" of small-press literary publishing in Canada from the "capitalist production" of large mainstream presses, Frank Davey notes that

a number of the most 'successful' poets are ones who have published a series of similar titles with McClelland & Stewart: Irving Layton, Al Purdy and Leonard Cohen [...] each one an extension rather than a departure from the last, each one potentially creating an audience for the others, each one decisively inscribed with the 'trade-marks' [...] of its author and thereby reaffirming the major capitalist myth of the unified and coherent subject, each text, in the case of Layton, participating in a regular rhythm of production. (96)

Davey's description of a "McClelland & Stewart poet" (96) finds its basic structure in Irving Layton's career: "a writer tries to inscribe a distinctive and consistent subject position for herself within her texts—to develop a distinctive style, a continuity of theme and language from book to book, a visible 'personality', all things which are market-creating and marketable within commercial publishing" (96). Or, to use Jerome McGann's language, "freedom and innovation in the publishing and distribution of texts [...] might ultimately be managed for the creation and consolidation of an audience of readers" (21).

While this paper resists a cynical reading of the publishing practices at McClelland & Stewart in these years as baldly capitalist and devoid of creative collaboration, Davey's terms allow for a reading of the labour of Frank Newfeld—as well as that of Sam Tata, Claire Pratt, and Jack McClelland—that takes into account the material conditions within which it was performed. It was certainly market-creating and was also certainly oriented towards the construction of Irving Layton as a visible and economically-viable cultural figure. However, it was certainly also thoughtful, creative work that was responsive to Layton's poetics as well as to the aesthetic criteria of other artistic fields (book design and photography). This collective work exists between economic market forces and aesthetic cultural forces.



between Dudek, Layton, and Souster. Betty Sutherland's cover design avoided any direct depiction of the three poets, tending towards the abstract. Contrast this with *A Red Carpet for the Sun*, the design of which confronts the reader with Layton's face. The book set the tone for Layton's future McClelland & Stewart titles designed by Newfeld. Through subsequent publications, Newfeld's book designs simultaneously constructed and traded on Layton's emerging public image. Significantly, as Layton's face comes to dominate the material form of his books, his prefaces become longer, more regular, and more critically antagonistic. Following

Davey's terms also allow us to place Layton's previous small press titles beside his McClelland & Stewart titles. At Contact Press, Layton's books were designed by Betty Sutherland, who designed "around half of the press's publications in [the 1950s]" (Rackham 66). Newfeld's designs facilitated Layton's transition out of the community-oriented small press world (consider the three-heads implied by the title *Cerberus*) into the McClelland & Stewart roster, a national publisher oriented around the reception of the individual author or poet. *Cerberus*, the title that launched Contact Press, had been a collaborative production

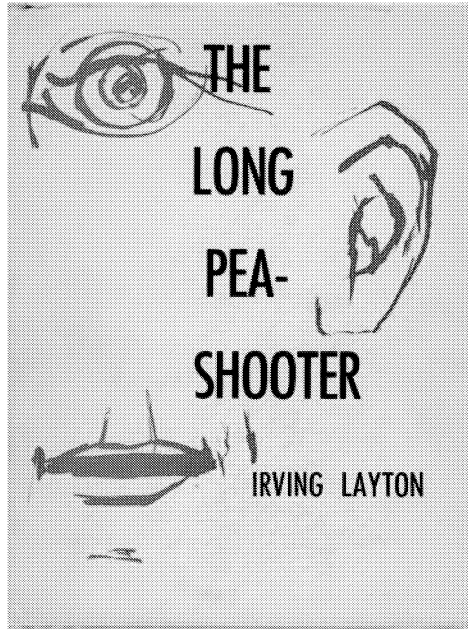
the astonishing sales of *A Red Carpet for the Sun*, he had new, extended access to a public that he was able to antagonize in a national forum.

Of course, Layton's image, whether literal (photographic) or symbolic (poetic), had long been important to his creative production. Moreover, Layton was keenly aware of the relationship between the poetic image and the image of the poet. In a letter to Jack McClelland in 1962, Irving Layton writes, "not only poetry but poets themselves are a matter of images" (Mansbridge 167). An intense concern for his own public image is evident in Layton's work throughout his career. Brian Trehearne, in *The Montreal Forties*, remarks, "Poetics and self-image are more closely linked in Layton than in any other modern poet I can think of" (178). Only with the publication of *A Red Carpet for the Sun* did Layton discover a receptive public on a scale he felt commensurate with his achievements. Describing the launch party for *A Red Carpet for the Sun*, Layton writes,

I was quite a lion, having let my hair grow for the occasion since the middle of July. By now my head looks quite massive, almost Yeatsian, though with only streaks of poetic silver; however, I had an impressive lock of hair falling across my forehead which, if I weren't the moral man I am, would be good for a dozen swift & easy seductions [...] I made my great entry—flanked by Aviva on one side, and by Leonard Cohen on the other, and I needed both of them to run interference for me as the mob bore down. (Mansbridge 108-109)

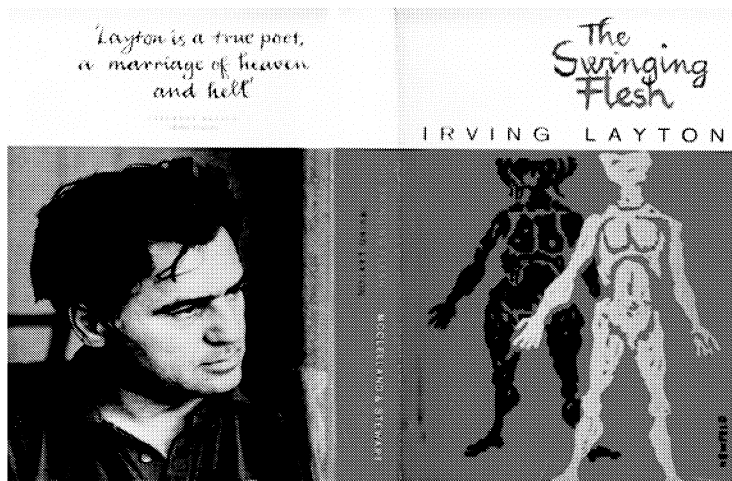
This letter to Desmond Pacey is indicative of Layton's understanding of the value of physical appearances. He claims to have deliberately grown his hair out to achieve a "Yeatsian" impression. He positions himself between Aviva and Leonard Cohen, ostensibly to "run interference." However, the letter is marked by the poet's awareness of framing and structure. The poet, making his "great entry," is surrounded by a female muse and a male acolyte (Layton was also aware of Cohen's rising reputation and great potential). Layton presents himself as a returning conqueror.

A Red Carpet for the Sun was not the first time that Layton's image appeared on one of his books. In 1954, Layton published *The Long Pea-Shooter* through Laocoön, an ostensibly independent imprint that was in fact a functional branch of Contact Press.⁸ *The Long Pea-Shooter* incorporates the features of a face on the cover (a single eye, a single ear, a mouth), before including a drawing of Layton by Betty Sutherland inside the book. This is the Contact title most immediately relevant as a point of reference for Newfeld's later designs. Unlike Newfeld's designs, however, it withholds Layton's image. When it does present Layton, his face is mediated in a drawing rather than presented photo-realistically.

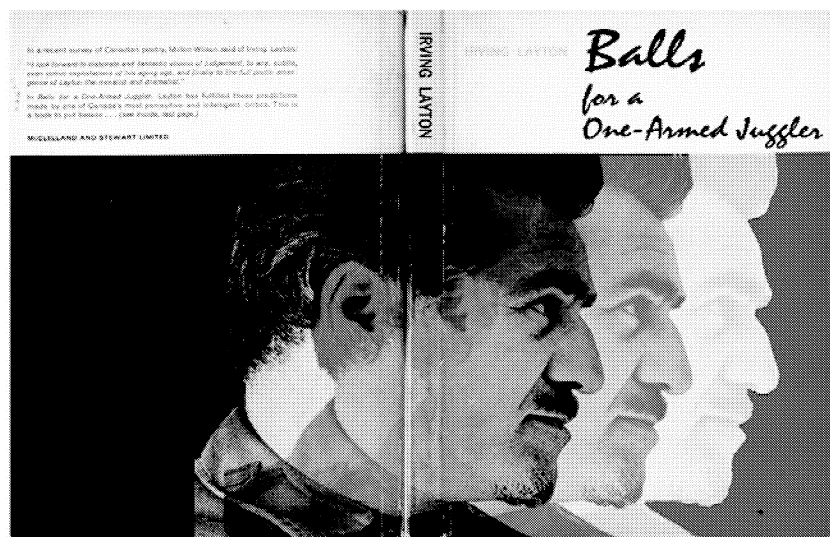


A photograph of Layton had previously graced *The Improved Binoculars*, published by Jonathan Williams in 1956. The first of Layton's books to bear his photograph, it would set Layton on a path away from Contact (he would publish only one further title with Contact Press before making the move to McClelland & Stewart). The first edition uses a photograph of Layton with his daughter Naomi. The second edition uses an individual portrait of Layton holding the first edition.⁹ *The Improved Binoculars*, particularly the second edition, places Layton in rela-

tion to other books. Even the first edition, with the picture of Naomi, creates an image that insists upon citing the passage of time and the coming of new generations. Moreover, the introduction to *Binoculars* was written by William Carlos Williams, not by Layton himself. While this is still a canon-making gesture, it is one in which an established voice welcomes Layton in rather than Layton declaring the necessity of his own inclusion.



By contrast, Layton's McClelland and Stewart publications insist on the poet's sovereignty, very much in keeping with poet-prophet persona Layton increasingly came to adopt in his work. Yet, an attention to Newfeld's design work reveals the degree to which Layton's public image in these years was not so much in the poet's hands as in the publishing apparatus of McClelland and Stewart, and under Newfeld's control in particular. *The Swinging Flesh* in 1961 follows the pattern established by *A Red Carpet for the Sun*. It makes use of the red, black and gold colour pattern. It uses the same two-banded design. The extended preliminaries are less prominent, with a single page reproducing the figural design element from the cover. Layton's portrait by Sam Tata occupies the entire back cover beneath the off-white band. Layton described this cover as "dramatic & appealing" and noted "the image projected by the cover" was "close to the real me" (Mansbridge 167). *Balls for a One-Armed Juggler*, published in 1963, was more contentious. Newfeld's design for the book, I argue, is in part responsible for establishing in the reading public's mind the notion of Layton as intensely self-absorbed, a belief that surely undermines the complexity of Layton's own self-image. *Balls for a One-Armed Juggler* continues the aesthetic established by *A Red Carpet for the Sun* and *The Swinging Flesh*, incorporating several portraits of Layton in a now familiar colour scheme with extended preliminaries that play with Layton's image and the title of the collection.



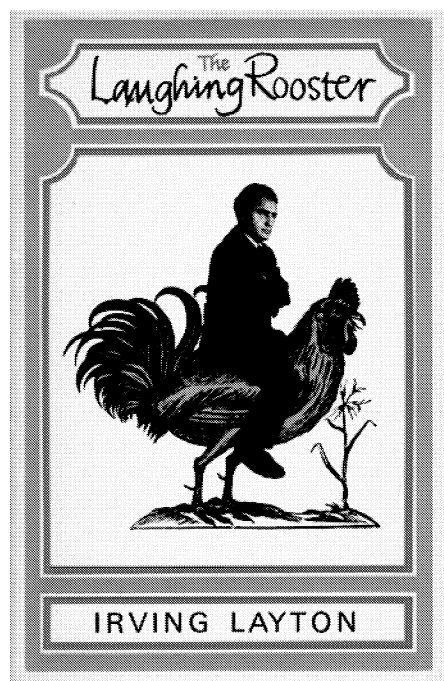
Including the repeated image on the cover, the reader of *Balls for a One-Armed Juggler* encounters seven images of Layton before reaching his preface (the seventh and final image occupying an entire page). In 1965, Layton wrote to Desmond Pacey, “the last thing I want to see happen to me is to be taken captive by my own image. I want freedom and blessed independence—even from myself. Perhaps most from myself” (Cameron 372-3).

By 1963, Layton had likely reached the apex of his fame. Joel Deshayé argues that Layton was “still the unsurpassed celebrity in Canadian poetry in 1963” (124) when *Balls for a One-Armed Juggler* was published. Deshayé writes: “probably no other Canadian poet had ever before enjoyed such success, not until Purdy and Cohen achieved higher sales for their respective *Selected Poems* in the mid- and late 1960s” (123). However, at this arguable height of his celebrity, Layton chafed against the image of himself that his books presented. He appears to have been especially unimpressed by this cover, reflecting his growing discomfort with the prominence of his public image. He writes to Jack McClelland in 1962, before publication:

I think it's a passable cover [...] but the fact is that the picture is not me; and with [Newfeld's] design I look like [a] Red Army colonel in triplicate. Or am I Trotsky in triplicate? I don't want to tell you how to run your business, and if you think the cover will do, then it's fine with me. However, not only poetry but poets themselves are a matter of images [...] why put my face on the front cover at all? Why not some imaginative design that would give the feeling of the poems and of the title on the book? You can use a small photo of me on the back cover. (Mansbridge 167)

According to Elspeth Cameron, *Balls for a One-Armed Juggler* sold 2,000 copies in its first month (335). Following this continued success, Layton confessed to Pacey in a letter that he wanted to “cut free to hide from the public view for a couple of years, wrap myself in a black shell of anonymity” (Cameron 373). Although earlier letters and poems make clear that Layton had relished his sudden fame and success, his resistance to Newfeld's design suggests a growing fatigue and concern with the intensely serious poet-persona he was required to uphold.

Layton's relationship with McClelland & Stewart and the construction of his public image via Newfeld's designs reached an apex in 1964 when *The Laughing Rooster* was published. Though his books with McClelland & Stewart would continue to be designed by Frank Newfeld through to 1967's *Periods of the Moon*, this was the last of his books from the press



with such lavish production values, and the final one edited by Claire Pratt. On the cover, the poet sits in “solemn rectitude” (Mandel 66) atop an oversized rooster. The title poem of the collection describes a rooster who performs his duty to crow “in the early light / of the morning” (32). The rooster “[scatters] the hills / in all directions” (32) before surveying “the crowds / of anxious people” (32) he has awakened. The rooster laughs at his accomplishments and the poet-speaker declares “this rooster / wanted to be different” (32). In this poem, as in others by Layton, the reader can discern a critical self-awareness. Layton’s

rooster is acutely conscious of his effect on the public, appears to enjoy observing that effect, and attempts to actively manipulate the public. The rooster is a masculine and virile image, one aligned with the sexuality of Layton’s public image and poetry (if one is so inclined, it is possible to read a more lewd term for the implications of the rooster relative to Layton). Newfeld’s extended preliminaries see Layton facing off with this element of his persona, the solemnity and seriousness of the poet’s face undermined by the laughter of his rooster counterpart. The ‘solemnity’ described by Mandel is draped in a ridiculous and incongruous presentation. Newfeld recalls,

When I told Irving I wanted to do this, he said, ‘Fine, what am I going to sit on?’ And we thought, ‘Now wait a minute, how are we going to do this so it looks as though he’s sitting on something big?’ Finally we decided that we’d take eiderdowns and put them on an upturned chair, and it works. Layton sat on these eiderdowns, with his feet dangling. They couldn’t reach the floor. (Inkster 39)

The photograph was taken by Sam Tata. There is a sense of humour and a self-awareness to the cover design and extended preliminary that balances the seeming egotism and seriousness of *Balls for a One-Armed Juggler*.

As early as the first years of the 1950s, before achieving national acclaim, Layton's poetry included an undercurrent of self-effacement regarding the poet-persona he was cultivating. In 1953, he published "To the Girls of My Graduating Class" in *Love the Conqueror Worm*, a poem later collected in *A Red Carpet for the Sun* and a regular entry in his selected and collected poems for the rest of his career. The final lines of the poem read:

O light-footed daughters, your unopened
Brittle beauty troubles an aging man
Who hobbles after you a little way
Fierce and ridiculous.

(11)

In these lines, Layton indicates his awareness of the lecherous poet figure he was regularly represented as being, a persona he often enjoyed but that overshadowed many of his other accomplishments. These final lines read with remarkable prescience, and are reconstituted by Layton's public development in the 1960s. The poet as photographed on the cover of *The Laughing Rooster* has surely realized the implications of the "fierce and ridiculous" aging man in the 1953 poem. With the publication of *The Laughing Rooster*, as Layton's position was being usurped by the generation of poets who would lead Canadian poetry into the 1970s, the material book object seems to at last be reconciled with the multi-dimensionality of Layton's public image. It balances dignity with absurdity, introducing humour to the visual dimension of his books where there had perhaps been too much solemnity in Newfeld's previous designs (at least in Layton's opinion).

This discussion of Newfeld's design work has gestured towards but not directly addressed Sam Tata's photographic contributions to these book objects, undoubtedly as important as Newfeld's designs in shaping Layton's public image and reception. Tata immigrated to Canada in 1956, two years after Newfeld. He was born in 1911 in Shanghai, China. He learned his trade as a street photographer travelling through India and China in the 1930s and 1940s. He made his living as a photo-journalist once he arrived in Canada, but also regularly shot photographs of Canadian writers, actors and artists. Of particular relevance to this paper is the portrait by Tata that occupies the back cover of *The Swinging Flesh*. This portrait continues to

be the most iconic, defining image of Layton. This photograph is used on the cover of the 2004 edition of *A Wild Peculiar Joy*, the most popular and visible collection of Layton's poems that remains in print. The portrait was taken in 1960 in Montreal. It is actually a wider photograph than the covers of *The Swinging Flesh* or *A Wild Peculiar Joy* indicate. The photo has been cropped; approximately one-third of the full image has been removed. In Tata's framing of the photo, Layton is placed in the left of the image and there is substantial empty space in the foreground next to him, with books visible in the background of the room. Cropped closely to his face, the framing of this image on his books suggests a rugged and independent poet. In the larger Tata framing, however, the poet is less dominant and possesses an increased vulnerability. Newfeld's hand in shaping Layton's image through his book designs is clear in this instance. The two Irving Laytons in the two framings are drastically different.

This portrait also has an independent aesthetic life removed entirely from Layton's poetic activity. A print of Tata's photograph was purchased by the National Gallery of Canada in 1978, where it resides in the collection of the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography. Its place in the holdings of the gallery ensures it a position in the visual history of Canadian art independent of Layton's book objects, and even independent of Layton's legacy and biography. It has also been printed in multiple books of Tata's photographs. It is the first photograph in *A Certain Identity: 50 Portraits* (Ottawa: Deneau, 1983), and is also included in *Portraits of Canadian Writers* (Erin, Ontario: The Porcupine's Quill, 1991). In *A Certain Identity*, Tata recalls Layton's impression of the photo: "'Irving tells me it is the best picture I have ever taken,' he says, laughing. 'Not the best picture of Irving, mind you, just the best I've ever done'" (13). While it would not have been clear to Layton in the early 1960s that he was enjoying the benefits of working closely with two of the leading Canadian artists in their fields on his books, in hindsight Layton's position relative to Newfeld and Tata is striking. On these books, one can identify a leading Canadian poet, a leading Canadian book designer, and a leading Canadian portrait photographer, all operating at the peak of their creative and popular achievement (or at least at *one* of the peaks). Moreover, all of this activity occurred at McClelland & Stewart, a publishing house that was enjoying a high point in terms of national influence and was reaping the benefits of Jack McClelland's early investment in Canadian literature.

The collaboration was not limited to these four figures, however. Claire Pratt's editorial contributions must be contended with as well. In 2012, Ruth Panofsky published an article on Claire Pratt's editorial work at

McClelland & Stewart during the years discussed in this paper. Panofsky's profile of Pratt is of a thoughtful, conscientious, and perceptive editor who was tremendously important to her stable of writers. Pratt, the daughter of E.J. Pratt, was one "of the first women [in Canada] to enter the book trade as a professional editor" (Panofsky 5). Pratt enjoyed a productive six-year professional relationship with Layton, editing his books from *A Red Carpet for the Sun* through *The Laughing Rooster*. According to Panofsky, Pratt "penetrated Layton's grand public persona—he was renowned for his bravado—and appreciated his private need for approval and human connection" (18). Panofsky describes a relationship where Layton sought Pratt's assurance about the quality of his work, deferred to her judgement structuring the books, and even on occasion relented when she suggested that he tone down some of his more antagonistic remarks. Moreover, she was in part responsible for the consistent output of his prefaces in these books (according to Panofsky, "she coaxed Layton to pen yet one more bombastic preface" [22] for *The Laughing Rooster*). As their professional relationship concluded with *The Laughing Rooster*, Pratt asked of Layton, "Now that I have, at great pains, done everything you asked, where is my ode?" (23). Layton responded, "Claire, my love...Because you were so patient with my repeated requests, I've put you into my special roster as Saint Claire and I pray to you each night before going to bed" (23). At the close of their editorial relationship, it is clear that Layton has great respect for Pratt's contributions to his published collections.

In addition to her capable management of Layton's needs, Pratt also nurtured relationships with artists and book designers. Discussing the Design for Poetry Series, Frank Newfeld recalls, "On the first two I worked with Claire Pratt, and without the kind of editorial-visual communication that she established the books would not have been so successful nor so pleasurable" ("Book Design and Production" 13). Randall Speller, discussing the same series, writes that Pratt "acted as the go between for artist and author [...]. It was also Pratt who made sure Newfeld received credit for the series in the colophon, the only feature of the book to identify the series" ("Frank Newfeld and McClelland & Stewart's Design for Poetry Series" 7). The question of attributing public credit to contributors is a central one when considering the general silence in Canadian literary and academic communities about the network of contributors to books in these years.

Frank Davey's assertion that the capitalist mode of production, as exemplified by Layton's books at McClelland & Stewart, trades on the "major capitalist myth of the unified and coherent subject" (96) of the individual author rings true when one returns to the credits provided in the

books themselves. Despite the regular cast of contributors, there are very few direct credits. Frank Newfeld is identified as the designer of Layton's books from 1959-1967 (with the exception of *Collected Poems* in 1965 that does not identify its designer). Tata receives credit for his photographs only in *The Laughing Rooster* and *Periods of the Moon*.¹⁰ Claire Pratt does not receive printed credit as editor in any of Layton's books. These credits, or lack thereof, are evidence of the degree to which book production of the era emphasized the individual author over the collaborative network of contributors. It was simply not yet conventional to provide such detailed credits as became standard later in the century. Newfeld's regular credits at McClelland & Stewart occurred partly because of Pratt's care, but also because Newfeld was a member of the Typographic Designers of Canada (TDC), a trade-union of sorts that was founded in 1956 (and was renamed the Society of Graphic Designers of Canada in 1968). The TDC ran annual exhibitions of exceptional book and typographic design, and even published an annual catalogue awarding prizes for excellence. The TDC appears to have exerted pressure on publishers to credit designers. Randall Speller notes:

M&S almost always credited their designers on the verso of the title page. Once the last TDC exhibition was held in 1964, however, this policy of accreditation began to disappear. At M&S Newfeld's name gradually vanished even though the books were noticeably his design. Grant's *Lament for a Nation* (1965), for example, was by Newfeld but not credited as such. ("Frank Newfeld and the Visual Awakening of the Canadian Book" 18)

Tracing these networks of creative collaboration and business practices can help to reframe our understandings of the nature of book production in these years, as well as to illuminate figures who were significant in their eras but have been relegated to the historical margins since. In the case of Irving Layton, this understanding of book production at McClelland & Stewart as intensely collaborative disrupts portraits of the poet as a self-sufficient individual genius. Irving Layton's name is on each book, but buried in the paratextual histories of each title we can locate a significant cast of contributors. The poet made his 'great entry' with *A Red Carpet for the Sun*, but the unacknowledged figures 'flanking' him from the margins were indispensable in delivering him to that moment.

With the publication of *The Laughing Rooster* in 1964, Irving Layton's fame had reached its height. He continued to be a visible and controversial poet for decades, and certainly produced important work following these years, but his days of greatest consequence nationally are located between

A Red Carpet for the Sun and *The Laughing Rooster*. This paper has traced a direct, material connection between Layton's rise to national success and the collaborative network furnished by McClelland & Stewart between Jack McClelland, Claire Pratt, Frank Newfeld, Sam Tata, and Irving Layton. The convergence of these five figures in Canadian letters and design on this series of books is significant in the history of Canadian publishing. While the individual parts have been acknowledged in various places, the concerted effort of the five in creating and branding Irving Layton as Canada's foremost poet in these years has not been noted previously. Layton's image, for better or worse, was shaped by these book objects alongside the emergence of television and radio as important modes of literary distribution.¹¹ The regularity and consistency of these book objects place them firmly within the confines of Davey's capitalist mode of production, but that classification obscures the capable and often experimental aesthetic work performed by each participant at each stage of production, from composition to editing to design to distribution. These books, more than being the product of the singular vision of an accomplished poet, sensitively trace the network of agents active in the material production and reception of Canadian poetry at McClelland & Stewart in these years. These books constructed and contested Layton's public image, and indicate a productive yet largely unexplored dimension of Canadian literary history for continuing to reshape our understandings of the poetry of Irving Layton and other Canadian modernists.

Notes

- 1 See Joel Deshayes's *The Metaphor of Celebrity: Canadian Poetry and The Public, 1955-1980* (2013) for a fuller discussion of Layton's poetics in relation to his celebrity.
- 2 Newfeld was born in Brno, Czechoslovakia in 1928. He briefly lived in Toronto for eight months in 1947. He returned to Europe in 1948 before relocating permanently to Toronto in 1954 with the intention of becoming a book designer. By the end of the 1950s he was among the most highly esteemed and consequential book designers in Canada.
- 3 It is curious that a reprint series with clear nationalist motivations enlisted a relatively new Canadian immigrant to brand the series. McClelland & Stewart trusted him with other literary publishing initiatives as well. Notably, it was Newfeld who designed the first edition of Leonard Cohen's *Beautiful Losers*, which featured a cover that controversially did not include either Cohen's name or the title of the book. He also designed four books for the Design for Poetry Series (including Leonard Cohen's *The Spice-Box of Earth*), one of the most noteworthy explorations of Canadian book design in the 1960s. Perhaps most visible for a certain generation of Canadian parents and children, he collaborated with Dennis Lee on a series of children's books, providing illustrations

for *Alligator Pie* (1974) and *Garbage Delight* (1977).

- 4 On the Watson cover, this second band includes a series of superimposed hooks in green and yellow, with a prominent central pair in red. On *Mad Shadows*, the reader is given the basic features of a face washed away under blue, red and purple colours running down the page.
- 5 Newfeld had previously included extended preliminaries in the non-fiction title *Dynamic Decade: The Evolution and Effects of the Oil Industry in Alberta* (1958).
- 6 In *The Double Hook*, the reader finds repeated images of black lines of various thicknesses suggesting an abstracted horizon and landscape that incorporates the prefatory material quoted earlier that McClelland & Stewart felt was necessary to introduce the novel to the audience. *Mad Shadows* employs a leaf motif that grows in prominence page by page before the title is introduced. This motif is later repeated between chapters.
- 7 Newfeld's more experimental design work (including the extended preliminaries and the use of different stocks of paper) must be thought of as forerunners of the more radical Canadian book design experiments that would follow in the late 1960s and early 1970s from publishing operations such as Coach House. While narratives of influence on the Canadian small press of the 1970s typically look back at earlier small presses such as Contact, an attention to Newfeld's book design work for the larger press McClelland and Stewart suggests a more complex set of relationships in the field of Canadian literary publishing.
- 8 Michael Gnarowski states that two titles appeared under Laocoön (the other being Louis Dudek's *Europe* in 1954). Gnarowski notes that "both of these books were Contact Press books, and that the Laocoön imprint was [Dudek and Layton's] way of showing a certain dissatisfaction with the idea of 'Contact' and of giving their books a distinctive feature" (*Contact Press*). Dudek and Layton had been frustrated by their attempts to make editorial contributions to Souster's *Contact* magazine, the magazine that provided the name for Contact Press. According to Collett Tracey, "Souster maintained tight control over *Contact*, despite numerous appeals by Dudek to loosen the reins and allow him and Layton more say in the little magazine's content" (178).
- 9 I thank Professor Seymour Mayne for providing this information.
- 10 A letter from Irving Layton to Jack McClelland in 1962 suggests that the photographs used for *Balls for a One-Armed Juggler* were taken by Max Layton (Mansbridge 167).
- 11 See Joel Deshayé's contribution to this issue for a discussion of Layton's engagement with emerging mass media outlets. [eds.]

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