DEEP IN THE OLD MAN'S PUZZLE

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> *I am deep in the old man's puzzle, trying to link the wisdom of the body with the wisdom of the spirit until the two are one.*
>
> FATHER BLAZON *(Fifth Business)*

ROBERTSON DAVIES' first three novels, *Tempest Tost*, *Leaven of Malice*, and *A Mixture of Frailties*, are satires on Canadians and Canadian society. Often heavy-handed, and often hilarious, these three Salterton novels expose and ridicule Canadian foibles and affectations. Yet although they are about Canadians and Canadian culture (or lack of it), they are somehow not truly "Canadian novels". At no time does Davies probe the Canadian psyche with any great depth or clarity of vision; he contents himself with exposing Canadian gaucherie with a decided tone of derision. Moreover, he does not just mock bumbling Canadian innocence and cultural ineptitude; he sets up an ideal, which he evidently admires greatly. Britain, he never lets us forget, is our cultural superior, and ought to be emulated. We always suspect that Davies' sympathies (and inclinations) lie not with his ineffectual Canadian heroes, but with his Britishers, like Humphrey Cobbler and Sir Benedict Domdaniel, who are always able to perceive with piercing accuracy the true state of affairs, while poor Sally Bridgetower and Monica Gall have to struggle to approach the same level of awareness. In short, Europeans are among the initiated, Canadians are "rustic beyond redemption", and, could we only see ourselves as others see us (and Davies is clearly among the "others"), we would turn our backs on our struggling cultural aspirations, and bow to those of our superiors. Ultimately we can accuse Davies of having little respect for his Canadian characters, and enjoying them only inasmuch as they provide him with foils to his eminently amusing and often scathing wit.

In 1960, Davies wrote, in a piece collected in *A Voice from the Attic*:

> Nevertheless, we may observe that in writers more fortunate or more sagacious than Leacock, who have won at least a part of their reputation as humourists, there occurs a development which is of great interest; at some point in middle age, the brilliant and often nervous quality which distinguished the humour of their early work gives place to a humour of another nature; the source of the writer's humour seems to have changed, and what he draws from this new well is of a fuller flavour . . . Why then if the gift is so great does the humourist seem to abandon it, or relegate it to an inferior place, in middle age? The answer is that he does not do so; rather, he balances it against another quality which has arisen in him and demands expression, and that quality is a sense of tragedy. This second quality, this later-comer, is not sufficiently powerful to alter the quality of his work absolutely, but it gives it a background of feeling which is sufficient to turn the brilliantly humourous young man into the richly but fitfully humourous middle-aged one.

In *Fifth Business*, we see Davies' observation on the British satirists, Waugh and Huxley, becoming applicable to himself. No longer are Davies' characters mere caricatures of a particular Canadian foible; no longer are his revelations of Canada one-way and superficial. In *Fifth Business*, we get at last a truly realistic depiction of Canadian mores and morality, of psychological orientation and motivation. And finally his criticisms of the "Canadian sensibility" are valid, sharp and thought-provoking. The easy laughs at the expense of the Canadian cultural wasteland have been replaced by real insights into the spiritual problem of Canada. Yet Davies has not confined himself to "Canadianism" as his previous novels had forced him to do. A man's search for his true self and for the nature of reality is hardly a theme exclusive to Canadian literature; but the reasons behind Dunstan Ramsay's search, the nature of his search, and the shape of his final discovery have a peculiarly Canadian flavour.

We are aware all through the book of a mentality against which Dunstan must constantly struggle, and in Davies' mind this mentality is exemplified by most Canadians, though there are hints that it is common to all Anglo-Saxons. It is the sort of mentality which, with its severe unemotional empiricism, rejects any notion of spirituality or the mystical. It is a mentality shaped by external reality, and can be seen in the novel especially in Dunstan's parents, and Boy Staunton, who are materially minded in the extreme, and who cannot even conceive of spiritual self-knowledge; but it is shared too, by most of the town of Deptford, Davies' microcosm of Canada. It is the tone of the opening of the book, when Ramsay is extremely irritated by the article published about his career in his old

school quarterly — written by a man with a "scientific view of history". The clichéd article is so obviously neglectful of any true perception of Dunstan Ramsay as a whole human being who has had "great spiritual adventures", that he is goaded into writing a vindication of his life — in the form of a book, *Fifth Business*.

Davies is sharply aware in this novel of the stereotype which Canadians have adopted for themselves — plain, sensible, hard-working, material souls, proud of their ignorance of the spiritual aspect of their nature, proud of their disdain for the impractical and foolish. It has become such a stereotype, that Liesl, commenting on the "autobiography" of Eisengrim, says: "Now, tell me how you are going to get the infant Magnus Eisengrim out of that dreadful Canada and into a country where big spiritual adventures are possible?" Canada is a land that has no recognition for those who have had "great spiritual adventures". Spiritual reality has no existence in Canada as Davies sees it, and yet he is all too aware that in each one of us there is a spiritual self that responds to the "unbelievable" or the extraordinary, and he believes that it is crucial for the self to recognize it. He is aware that conventional Protestantism does not provide this necessary spiritual factor, hence his insistence on the "intellectualism" of the Presbyterians. But what does? Saints? Illusion and magic?

Davies tantalizes us in this book — he is trying to trick our stubborn Canadian mentality into being psychologically aware. He makes us believe that Mrs. Dempster is a saint, and then he suddenly confronts us with the fact that she is a simple lunatic. Eisengrim's magic is nothing but mechanical cleverness and illusion — but he is able to cause the death of Boy Staunton. Why do we believe? Why do we *want* to believe? What is in us that *makes* us want to believe? These are the questions which *Fifth Business* explores.

In his portrait of Deptford, the hometown of his three protagonists, Davies has made a microcosm of Canada. The town was described as " . . . more varied in what it offered to the observer than people from bigger and more sophisticated places generally think, and if it had sins and follies and roughness, it also had much to show of virtue, dignity, and even of nobility," but it has one major limitation:

> I have already said that while our village contained much of what humanity has to show, it did not contain everything, and one of the things it conspicuously lacked was an aesthetic sense; we were all too much the descendants of hard-bitten pioneers to wish for or encourage any such thing, and we gave hard names to qualities that, in a more sophisticated society, might have had value.

The nature and character of Deptford (and Canada) are firmly rooted in practical common sense and a solid reliance on material, down-to-earth reality. The strongest influence of this orientation upon young Dunstable Ramsay is his mother, Fiona Ramsay, though his whole family is renowned for its good sense:

> By far the majority of the Deptford people had come to Western Ontario from the South of England, so we were not surprised that they looked to us, the Ramsays, for common sense, prudence, and right opinions on virtually everything.

Mrs. Ramsay is inevitably spoken of in terms of her "good sense", "Mrs. Ramsay had her head screwed on straight", "A Scots-woman widely admired for her practicality . . . with little sense of humour", with her "unfailing good sense". She is firmly opposed to any sort of softness or spirituality, nor does she understand it. Her moral system would accommodate no shades of grey: "Mrs. Dempster had transgressed in a realm where there could be no shades of right and wrong." This is the main influence on Dunstable, and although the town manifested other opinions, the general tone was the same. Amasa Dempster, for example, was supposed to represent feeling and emotionalism as opposed to Presbyterian intellectualism and practicality: "His quality of feeling was weighty. I suppose this is what made him acceptable to the Baptists, who valued feeling very highly." But this sense of "feeling" expends itself on cavilling about the "Devil's picture book" and his own hard lot in life. He has no true sense of religion or the spiritual, and Dunstable sees where this attitude of Dempster's leads:

> I was most hurt that Dempster had dragged down my conjuring to mere cheating and gambling; it had seemed to me to be a splendid extension of life, a creation of a world of wonder, that hurt nobody. All that dim but glittering vision I had formed . . . had been dragged down by this Deptford parson, who knew nothing of such things, and just hated whatever did not belong to life at the $550-a-year level. I wanted a better life than that. But I had been worsted by moral bullying, by Dempster's conviction that he was right and I was wrong, and that this gave him an authority over me based on feeling rather than reason: it was my first encounter with the emotional power of popular morality.

Even the local atheist offers no alternative. "If he hoped to make an atheist of me, this was where he went wrong; I knew a metaphor when I heard one, and I liked metaphor better than reason."

With that last statement, Dunstable clearly establishes himself as being apart from the general stream of the village. From his earliest appearance in the novel, he is distinguished from the other boys his age. He was technically guiltless in the

affair of the snowball, Percy Boyd Staunton really being at fault, but nonetheless, he suffers the agonies of the damned when Percy refuses to accept any of the guilt. He comes to feel that he was responsible for Paul's birth — " . . . and if this were ever discovered some dreadful fate would overtake me. Part of the dreadful fate would undoubtedly be rejection by my mother." So when Mrs. Ramsay takes the Dempster family on as a charity-case, Dunstable doesn't really mind becoming their chore-boy; in a sense it allows him to expiate some of his guilt. But as he grows older, the other boys in the village reject him because of his association with the Dempsters: " . . . some of the oddity and loneliness of the Dempsters was beginning to rub off on me" and he turns for solace to his loneliness to books of magic. He resolves to become the world's "foremost prestidigitateur". This dabbling in the occult leads to a stormy scene with his mother, which can be seen as the collision of the two inclinations, the one towards the mystic, the other towards the solid and the real. After this quarrel with his mother, Dunstable gravitates more and more towards the influence of Mrs. Dempster, and simultaneously he begins to teach Paul some of his magic tricks, and reads to him from a storybook of saints. From these early inclinations, we see the three main divisions into which Dunstable's lifelong preoccupation with the mystical falls: Mary Dempster, hagiography, and magic.

AT THIS EARLY AGE, Dunstable is attracted to Mrs. Dempster partly because of his rejection by his mother, and partly because she is so unlike the other Deptford people: "Her face wore a sweet but woefully un-Deptford expression". He has been so thoroughly immersed in the practical, and so disillusioned by it, in his confrontations with both his mother and Amasa Dempster, that he begins to search for something else. Hence, his interest in Mrs. Dempster grows.

> It would be false to suggest that there was anything philosophical in her attitude. Rather, it was religious, and it was impossible to talk to her for long without being aware that she was wholly religious. I do not say "deeply religious" because that was what people said about her husband, and apparently they meant that he imposed religion as he understood it on everything he knew or encountered. But she . . . seemed to live in a world of trust that had nothing of the stricken, lifeless, unreal quality of religion about it . . . She lived by a light that arose from within; I could not comprehend it, except that it seemed to be somewhat akin to the splendours I found in books, though not in any way bookish.

When the town's harsh morality decides that she is no longer respectable,

Dunstable refuses to abandon her, even though he knows that his mother's stern morality forbids continued association. He says: "I regarded her as my greatest friend, and the secret league between us as the tap-root of my life."

Dunstable is directly confronted with the village's sense of material reality, when Mrs. Dempster performs her second miracle, that of raising Willie from the dead. Dunstable's belief in this miracle finally alienates him from the whole village. His friends think that he is a "credulous ass"; the town doctor advises him that: "I might become queer if I did not attempt to balance my theoretical knowledge with the kind of common sense that could be learned from — well, for instance, from himself." The Presbyterian minister advises him that: "The age of miracles was past, and I got the impression that he was heartily glad of it. It was blasphemous to think that anyone — even someone of unimpeachable character — could restore the dead to life." Even his father says: "I would do best to keep my own counsel and not insist on things my mother could not tolerate." But the strongest opposition of course, comes from Mrs. Ramsay herself. "It was clear that she now regarded a hint of tenderness towards Mrs. Dempster as disloyalty to herself, and as loyalty was the only kind of love she could bring herself to ask for, she was most passionate when she thought she was being most reasonable." Ultimately Dunstable realizes that: "Deep inside myself I knew that to yield, and promise what she wanted, would be the end of anything that was any good in me; I was not her husband who could keep his peace in the face of her furious rectitude; I was her son, with a full share of her own Highland temper and granite determination." When she at last challenges Dunstable to choose between herself and Mrs. Dempster, he runs away and enlists in the army.

While Dunstable is in the army, Mrs. Dempster performs her third and final miracle for him. She appears to Dunstable in the face of a small statue in a church in the middle of a bloody battle at Passchendaele, and saves his life. He is wounded and in a coma for many months, and awakens in England. During his convalescence he hears of the death of his parents in the flu epidemic:

> It was years before I thought of the death of my parents as anything other than a relief; in my thirties I was able to see them as real people, who had done the best they could in the lives that fate had given them. But as I lay in that hospital I was glad that I did not have to be my mother's own dear laddie any longer, or ever attempt to explain to her what the war was, or warp my nature to suit her confident demands. I knew she had eaten my father, and I was glad I did not have to fight any longer to keep her from eating me.

While in England, he is tempted to marry the charming girl who had nursed him back from the dead, but he is aware of the flaw in their relationship: "I know how clear it is that what was wrong between Diana and me was that she was too much a mother to me, and as I had had one mother, and lost her, I was not in a hurry to acquire another." Thus Dunstable decides not to adopt another stultifying set of Anglo-Saxon values. Diana's spiritual orientation does not satisfy Dunstable:

> But when I told her about the little Madonna at Passchendaele and later as a visitor to my long coma, she was delighted and immediately gave it a conventionally religious significance, which, quite honestly, had never occurred to me.

She is a romantic, and Dunstable knows that romanticism is not the route he must follow either. He is determined to return to Canada in order to prepare himself to discover the significance of Mary Dempster and the little statue, and free now of the restrictive force of his parents, he sets out as Dunstan Ramsay, renamed and reborn. This rebirth is significant in that he rids himself of the name Dunstable, his mother's maiden name; thus he is freed of her tyrannical influence on his soul.

One cannot help but be somewhat surprised at Davies' rejection of England as a place to find oneself, in this novel, remembering Monica Gall's enthusiastic adoption of the "mother country". Davies has perhaps realized that a Canadian cannot find his true self, except in the context of his native land.

After the war, Dunstan moves from his first phase of mystical involvement into his second. Although he remains in contact with Mrs. Dempster, she has no recollection of him, and she never again performs a miracle. But from Dunstan's fascination with her, comes his compelling preoccupation with hagiography. In his search for the small statue which saved his life, Dunstan picks up bits of information about saints, and soon becomes intrigued by one particularly odd saint: Wilgefortis, a Portuguese hermaphrodite. Although on the surface, Dunstan's search is an intellectual preoccupation with the discovery of knowledge, the nature of this saint is a clue to Dunstan's actual search. The hermaphrodite is classically the symbol for the whole self — the totality of male and female, reason and passion, which since their division has caused much of the misery of mankind. Dunstan's search is for the "whole" selfhood, but he does not yet see it in these terms. He is now intrigued by a study of the spiritual, ashamed of his Protestant ignorance:

> But I became aware that in matters of religion I was an illiterate, and illiteracy was my abhorrence. I was not such a fool or an aesthete as to suppose that all this art was for art's sake alone. It was about something, and I wanted to know what that something was.

He is not sure of the exact nature of his search, nor exactly what he is searching for. He says:

> I clung to my notion, ill defined though it was, that a serious study of any important body of human knowledge, or theory or belief, if undertaken with a critical but not a cruel mind, would in the end yield some secret, some valuable permanent insight into the nature of life, and the true end of man . . . The only thing for me to do was to keep on keeping on, to have faith in my whim, and remember that for me, as for the saints, illumination when it came would probably come from some unexpected source.

Dunstan is searching for the "true end of man" and does not yet see it in terms of his own search for self-knowledge.

PARALLELING Dunstan's rebirth and awakened interest in the spiritual, is the rising career of Percy Boyd Staunton. Where Dunstan has deliberately attempted to turn his back on the practical roots of his upbringing, Boy has exploited these very qualities. He has a genius for making money, and he becomes a material success. Davies emphasizes that the nature of his success is completely worldly and materially oriented; all through his life, Boy's success relied upon the submersion of any spiritual or mystical tendencies, and thus, as Davies shows us, he lacks any true knowledge of himself.

Davies goes out of his way to emphasize how artificial Boy really is: "It was characteristic of Boy throughout his life that he was always the quintessence of something that somebody else had recognized and defined." Any religious or moral attitude is essentially self-centred for Boy — not in the sense of gaining knowledge about himself, but rather in that he defines his total self in terms of his material self. As Dunstan eventually says: "You created a God in your image, and when you found out he was no good you abolished him. It's quite a common form of psychological suicide." Boy's conception of Christ, borrowed from an American preacher, pinpoints this attitude:

> I mean, Christ was really a very distinguished person, a Prince of the House of David, a poet and an intellectual. Of course He was a carpenter; all those Jews in Bible days could do something with their hands. But what kind of a carpenter

> was He? Not making cowsheds I'll bet. Undoubtedly a designer and a manufacturer, in terms of those days. Otherwise, how did He make his connections? . . . And an economist! Driving the money-changers out of the Temple — why? Because they were soaking the pilgrims extortionate rates, that's why, and endangering a very necessary tourist attraction and rocking the economic boat . . . the priests got their squeeze out of the Temple exchange, you can bet, and they decided they would have to get rid of this fellow who was possessed of a wider economic vision — as well as great intellectual powers in many other fields, of course.

But Boy and Dunstan have a strange symbiotic relationship. Dunstan's major concern is now with the spiritual; for Boy, " . . . the reality of life lay in external things, whereas for me the only reality was of the spirit — of the mind, as I then thought." But in a sort of love-hate relationship, they each provide the other with a certain service. Boy provides Dunstan with a number of useful tips on the stock market, and in a sense, provides him with his material necessities — he is Dunstan's tie to the material world, and as he says: "I've been your patron and protector against your own incompetence!" Dunstan acts as sympathetic ear to all of Boy's problems and troubles, and of course, at the end is revealed as the keeper of Boy's conscience.

Dunstan's quest is still only a vague search when he goes for the first time to Brussels, and meets Father Blazon, who is one of the keys to his self-discovery. In the character of Blazon, Davies gives an example of a man who has found true self-knowledge through religion (albeit approached in a thoroughly unconventional manner). "Jesuit training is based on a rigorous reform of the self and achievement of self-knowledge. By the time a man comes to the final vows, anything emotional or fanciful in his piety is supposed to have been rooted out." Perhaps Blazon's ultimate discovery would be considered emotional and fanciful by the conventionally Catholic, but what he finds is a God who teaches him the totality of the selfhood:

> Everybody wants a Christ for himself and those who think like him. Very well, am I at fault for wanting a Christ who will show me how to be an old man? . . . I think that after forty we should recognize Christ politely but turn for our comfort and guidance to God the Father, who knows the good and evil of life, and to the Holy Ghost, who possesses a wisdom beyond that of the incarnated Christ. After all, we worship a Trinity, of which Christ is but one Person. I think when He comes again it will be to declare the unity of the life of the flesh and the life of the spirit. And then perhaps we shall make some sense of this life of marvels, cruel circumstances, obscenities and commonplaces. Who can tell? — we might even make it bearable for everybody!

This is Davies' metaphor — the totality of God in the totality of self. But Dunstan is not yet ready to recognize this as the answer to his problem. His immediate concern is with saints, and with his attempt to establish the fact that Mrs. Dempster is a true saint. Wisely, Blazon advises him: "Turn your mind to the real problem. Who is she . . . who is she in your personal world? What figure is she in your personal mythology? . . . you must find your answer in psychological truth, not in objective truth."

Having devoted many years to the study of the saintly, in Mexico Dunstan gets an opportunity to study the demonic, through his relationship with Liesl and Magnus Eisengrim, the magician. Blazon warned him to learn the meaning of his personal saint; he must now discover the meaning of his personal devil.

From Eisengrim, Dunstan learns why the public has a fascination with magic;

> You know that nowadays the theatre has almost abandoned charm; actors want to be sweaty and real, playwrights want to scratch their scabs in public. Very well; it is in the mood of the times. But there is always another mood, one precisely contrary to what seems to be the fashion. Nowadays this concealed longing is for romance and marvels . . . People want to marvel at something, and the whole spirit of our time is not to let them do it. They will pay to do it, if you make it good and marvellous for them . . . What we offer is innocent — just an entertainment in which a hungry part of the spirit is fed.

And we realize that Davies means that all Canadians who have grown up in a stolid, practical atmosphere crave a knowledge of the marvellous, and that this craving for the marvellous is really a craving for self-knowledge — for the knowledge of something which has been repressed but manifests itself in a fascination with the mystical.

While Dunstan is with Eisengrim's troupe, he is initiated into the "other side" of the life of the spirit — into the demonic aspect of himself, which can round out his "saintly" aspect. Part of his initiation comes with his physical relationship with Liesl. She had accused him of lacking the complete knowledge of self — that he had not lived in a physical sense, and which had been symbolized throughout by his one-legged crippled body. She calls him:

> . . . you pseudo-cynical old pussy-cat, watching life from the sidelines and knowing where all the players go wrong. Life is a spectator sport to you . . . there is a whole great piece of your life that is unlived, denied, set aside . . . But every man has a devil, and a man of unusual quality, like yourself, Ramsay, has an unusual devil. You must get to know your personal devil. You must even get to know his father, the Old Devil . . . Why don't you, just for once, do something inexplicable,

> irrational, at the devil's bidding, and just for the hell of it? You would be a different man.

How do the pieces of the puzzle fit together? In spite of Liesl's revelations, Dunstan does not yet make a drastic change in his life — in his role as Fifth Business: "the one who knows the secret of the hero's birth, or comes to the assistance of the heroine when she thinks all is lost, or keeps the hermitess in her cell, or may even be the cause of somebody's death if that is part of the plot", Dunstan must bring about the dénouement of the plot. He reveals to Boy to exactly what extent he has been the keeper of his conscience. He shows Boy the Stone which he had so long ago embedded in the snowball, and informs Boy of his fault in the accident. "Boy, for God's sake, get to know something about yourself. The stone-in-the-snowball has been characteristic of too much you've done for you to forget it forever!" But Boy, the material man, refuses to own up to his guilt and he dies after Eisengrim's hypnotic suggestion, though through his own volition. The material man cannot know himself.

But who is Paul Dempster, alias Magnus Eisengrim, in the workings of the plot? It is no accident that Eisengrim is a master of illusion, for his human personality in the world is illusory too. Davies hints that Eisengrim is the "Faustian man", one who has sold his soul to the Devil, in order to gain knowledge and power. Eisengrim has lost contact with humanity, and is absorbed in self-aggrandizement. As Dunstan says:

> It was clear enough to me that his compelling love affair was with himself; his mind was always on his public personality, and on the illusions over which he fussed psychologically quite as much as Liesl did mechanically. I had seen a good deal of egotism in my life, and I knew that it starved love for anyone else and sometimes burned it out completely.

Eisengrim had been convinced by his father that his birth had been responsible for his mother's loss of sanity. He says: "I was too young for the kind of guilt my father wanted me to feel; he had an extraordinary belief in guilt as an educative force. I couldn't stand it. I cannot feel guilt now." Just as he feels no guilt for his mother, he feels no guilt about hypnotizing Boy and suggesting that he drown himself. He is no longer a human being.

Davies establishes a unity of the saintly and demonic sides of his hero's soul; from the one original accident, one character becomes a saint, another a studier of saints, and another a magician whose miracles "have a spice of the Devil about them". Dunstan, for so long the chronicler of saints, becomes the chronicler of a

magician. The two people who are the oracles of the two points of view, Liesl and Blazon, both advise Dunstan the same way. Blazon advises him to know his own saint and how she affected his personal mythology, but advises him to know the Devil as well:

> The Devil knows corners of us all of which Christ Himself is ignorant. Indeed, I am sure Christ learned a great deal that was salutary about Himself when He met the Devil in the wilderness. Of course, that was a meeting of brothers; people forget too readily that Satan is Christ's elder brother and has certain advantages in argument that pertain to a senior.

And Liesl urges him to know his own devil, to round out his awareness with the "poetic grace of myth". Both aspects are necessary, they are two sides of the same whole, the "union of the flesh and the spirit" which must be known by each individual in order to be whole. We suspect that Davies shows us that total conversion to one side or the other produces the madness of the fool-saint, or the impersonal inhumanity of the magician. The complete neglect of it leads to the Canadian success story, Boy Staunton. But the integration of it leads to self-fulfillment, leads to the discovery of the true nature of man.

Ultimately, we must ask: what is it that Davies is advocating in *Fifth Business?* Is he recommending that Canadians shake their stolid frame of reference and immerse themselves in a study of saints or magic? What are we supposed to do?

Man may view his life either in terms of his function in the external world, or as an integrated, psychologically aware being. Anglo-Saxons have always tended towards the former attitude, and Davies believes that Canadians especially are afflicted by this orientation. Thus his hero concerns himself with the view which his milieu disregards — the world of the mind. It becomes necessary to jolt Dunstan out of his too esoteric world, and into the realization of his being in the world — his role as Fifth Business. Thus for Davies the question becomes more than a matter of orientation, be it spiritual — saintly or demonic — or material. It becomes more even than the answer which Dunstan finally achieves, for the idea of the perfection of man being found in the unity of flesh and spirit is an ancient one. Davies finally tries to convince us (and this explains the form of the book — that of vindicatory letter), that our life is not defined solely in terms of the external world, nor in terms of our own intellectual yearnings, or imagined personalities. We must live in order to know life; we must live with the awareness of the total self.