

PATRICK ANDERSON AND THE CRITICS

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A. J. M. SMITH'S REMARKS on Patrick Anderson in the Autumn 1968 *Canadian Literature* may serve as a timely reminder that Anderson not only earned his page in the literary histories of Canada as the editor of *Preview* during the war, but that he is himself a fine poet. This fact seems in need of reassertion in view of the treatment afforded him by Canadian criticism since his departure from Canada in 1949.

Anderson's critical reputation reached its zenith around 1947, with the publication of his second volume, *The White Centre*, by Ryerson. *A Tent for April* had been published in 1945, and *The Colour as Naked* was to follow in 1954. The fact that P. K. Page, who had also been a member of the *Preview* group in Montreal, published her two volumes *As Ten as Twenty* and *The Metal and the Flower* in 1946 and 1954 meant that the two poets were often reviewed simultaneously, and their similarities commented upon. In view of P. K. Page's continued high reputation throughout the 'fifties and 'sixties, the similarity of the adulation afforded both her and Anderson in 1947 is illuminating in retrospect. Both poets had published in *Poetry, Chicago* during the war (P. K. Page had been awarded a prize by the magazine in 1944), and the reviews of the two 1946 volumes in *Poetry* were most favourable. In February 1947, Jessica Nelson North's review¹ of *The White Centre* praised Anderson for his metaphorical vividness and arresting technique, as well as his original treatment of the Canadian winter scene. In the July issue of 1947 the title of William Meredith's review of *As Ten As Twenty* proclaimed his approval: "A Good Modern Poet and a Modern Tradition".² Miss Page, he thought, was one of a new generation of poets for whom the idiom forged by Eliot was completely natural; he refused

to apply the adjective "promising" — he felt Miss Page had already arrived. Like many first reviews, these were brief and not given to extensive critical analysis. But they were agreed that here were two good volumes of poetry by two poets whose names had been linked, and that their finest quality was their linguistic vitality.

A. J. M. Smith himself reviewed the same two volumes in *The Canadian Forum*, opening with the too-familiar claim that the poetry was as good as anything produced in England or the States, a literary line-up of sides that the *Poetry* reviews had avoided, and which Milton Wilson almost unconsciously imitates eleven years later in his article "*Other Canadians and After*":

Since Anderson's Canadian interlude came to an end in 1960 and he has never returned (although he has continued to write and publish), our belief in the anticlimax of the younger writers in the *Preview* group will likely depend on what we think of the later poetry of P. K. Page.³

As if Canadian poetry were in competition with all other literature in English, and Anderson had been transferred from "our team" to another. In passing, this attitude may explain the strange neglect afforded *The Colour as Naked* in both anthologies and Anderson criticism. Nevertheless, Smith had great respect for the poetry: it is "serious, witty and intense" verse, with "a tightly controlled formal elegance", "bold, illuminating, convincing conceits" and "precise and dignified language".⁴ He foreshadows later opinions by finding P. K. Page the more intense of the two, though he does not say that this makes her necessarily the better. He does however object to some aspects of *The White Centre*: the poems where the social implications rest uneasily alongside the more "purely poetic" lines, especially when the "moral" seems to be tacked arbitrarily on to the end of the poem. Later critics were to take Smith's cautious objection and apply it wholesale to Anderson's work. Even within Smith's review one can see reservations encroaching on unqualified praise of Anderson; both in person and in his poetic "voice", Anderson seems to have enraptured many of his poetic colleagues at first sight. On the first publication of *Poem in Canada*, A. J. M. Smith had written to *The Canadian Forum*:

Here we have a serious and exuberant writer coming to grips with the fundamental task of the Canadian poet — the examination of our cultural traditions and the definition of our selfhood — and doing so with an intensity and an imaginative insight that is commensurate with the subject.

But on seeing it reprinted in *The White Centre*, reviewing it in 1947 with the

war over, and that particular Montreal wartime "exuberance" being replaced by something much less potentially revolutionary, Smith has doubts: he finds the conclusion of the "Cold Colloquy" section facile in its recommendations, and regrets its inclusion, believing that Anderson should have restricted himself to what he is capable of mastering — definition and diagnosis.

"Definition and diagnosis" — on a personal level this is what P. K. Page had been achieving in poems like "The Stenographers" and "Offices", where the wartime motifs end on a definite but unresolved note, and it is what gives the conclusion of Page's poems on wartime emotions and hopes a harder note than Anderson's, when he is drawn into abstract plans:

Yet now the derricks race
upon Glamorgan's hills
and the wheel of our heads
draw up the loaded veins
of once blind power
and dredge for the long dark
and waiting monuments
of the people's dead:
firing these histories, we forge
from shadows weapons.

(*Miners*⁵)

"Miners" was one of the 27 of the 40 poems Anderson first published in *Preview* that he never collected into any of his books. Of the rest, he put five in *A Tent for April*, seven in *The White Centre*, and one in *The Colour as Naked*. It is not difficult to see why he was not concerned to make it more public. The tone of the "we", as it joins mental activity to the work of the miners of Glamorgan in an extended conceit, is too much of an exhortation; and with the abstract concepts of "the people's dead" and "those histories" the immediacy of the identification with the miners seems to dissolve, and there is more hope than certainty in the last line.

But the difficulties of raising a passionate cry of expectation or affirmation in poetry are immense — how to avoid shrillness or glibness? And in Anderson's case doubly difficult: writing "Poem on Canada" when one is obviously English, and "Miners" and "Soldier" when one's every poetic utterance denies one's proletarianism and one's presence in Montreal ensures one's physical safety. He was too open to jibes like that from Wynne Francis: "Patrick Anderson, proletarian by choice, Canadian by desire, and poet aflame with purpose."⁶

Smith's phrase "description and diagnosis" could be applied more easily too to the poetry of F. R. Scott, who was associated with *Preview* throughout its existence. It seems strange to compare the two during this period and realize that it was Anderson who leapt most often from diagnosis to impassioned prefiguring of "cure", since Scott was the longer-established socialist, and certainly remained a socialist far longer than Anderson. By 1957 Anderson's memories of socialism were rather dim (self-consciously so, indeed):

No, I do not want to go on much about politics. For one thing, I find it difficult to resurrect that particular world, although it is only fair to say that my friends in the Popular Party seemed to be completely sincere, if often neurotic, and my affiliation with them helped me to see more of the city than I should otherwise have done.⁷

But Scott was able to work with objective irony and a muted tone to diagnose social evils and imply the correct response without having to state it directly. Anderson too is capable of irony, but of a self-deprecating kind far removed from Scott's terse "Social Notes".

To some extent, while his satire is more ferocious, Scott is a safer poet emotionally than Anderson — he will not lead the reader into dangerously fraught emotional situations and personal depths as the latter is prone to do, and it was partly this tendency which evoked A. J. M. Smith's *cave* in the generally favourable review in the *Forum*. Nevertheless, this review, and Northrop Frye's review of *The Colour as Naked*⁸, are virtually the last really complimentary critical studies of Patrick Anderson in Canada. P. K. Page's reputation has remained virtually intact through a long period of "silence" to her *Cry Ararat!* in 1967: a reputation sustained for thirteen years virtually by *The Metal and the Flower*, which Northrop Frye pronounced the most enjoyable book of poetry he had read in 1954.⁹ An illustration of the way in which her poetry has "weathered" better in Canada is her inclusion by Milton Wilson in his 1964 "Canadian Library" anthology *Poetry of the Mid-Century 1940-60*, from which Louis Dudek was excluded, and in which one could by no stretch of the imagination expect to find Patrick Anderson.

SOMETHING HAPPENED to Anderson's reputation between 1947 and the present; or to be more precise, several things happened to affect the reception of his poetry in Canada. Firstly, he was no longer here when *The Colour as Naked* appeared, but back in England, so the book does not seem

to have got the recognition it deserved; certainly writers on Anderson in the late 'fifties and 'sixties treat his work as if it ended with *The White Centre*. Secondly, his departure in 1949 made him appear a rather bizarre, mysterious figure who had appeared in Canada at the start of the war, taken a leading part in a most exciting decade of poetry and magazine production in Montreal, been married and divorced, and had suddenly left for Singapore. In other words, he was ripe for type-casting, and in reviews of Canadian literature and studies of the 'forties he is seldom mentioned without the qualification of the magazine he ran for three years: "Patrick Anderson of *Preview*". And to make clear what being Patrick Anderson of *Preview* meant, two editorial sentences are usually extracted from the magazine:

Two events of great importance to the writer have occurred in recent weeks. One is the Russian offensive, the other the conference at Casablanca.¹⁰ All anti-fascists, we feel that the existence of a war between democratic culture and the paralysing forces of dictatorship only intensifies the writer's obligation to work.¹¹

There is no denying the pomposity of these sentences, taken out of context, but it may be worth noting that while Desmond Pacey sees the first as cant; "one would have thought the whole Canadian war effort . . . depended on the continued existence of this little mimeographed monthly",¹² he omits to quote the previous sentence: ". . . we have lived long enough in Montreal to realise the frustrating and inhibiting effects of isolation." It is important to see *Preview* as a reaction to this sensation of isolation and socialist ambitions, and that when its tone became pompous or shrill it was not because it was absurdly sure of its own efficacy, but simply because that efficacy must have seemed dubious at times. Admittedly Desmond Pacey first published *Creative Writing in Canada* in 1952, before Anderson's third volume, but there is less excuse for Milton Wilson's brief passage on Anderson in "*Other Canadians and After*", written in 1958, which is a compendium of clichés about the Anderson "type", and quotes from the inevitable skiing passage from "Winter in Montreal" which Wynne Francis too batters on in disapproval. Anderson is "a tea-drinking Dylan Thomas"; his "Winter Landscape" (as if he wrote of nothing else!) is "oppressive . . . white . . . anaesthetic". Wilson talks of Anderson's "Marxism . . . his self-conscious Canadianism", in a derogatory manner, as if these were the only ingredients of an Anderson poem. The "Canadianism" taunt seems wholly off the mark; "self-conscious non-Canadianism" is more appropriate, since it suggests the honesty with which Anderson accepts his non-Canadian sensibility

and applies it to Montreal and to the Canadian scene generally. In *Poem on Canada* he seems to see himself as the interpreter, the immigrant, close enough to Canada to observe it, and detached enough to see it as a unique land still in the process of being populated, rather than as a factual "My Country." His affection for Montreal is honest and understandable:

There was so much to write about, so much that has never been written about before; one couldn't dislike a city which gave one so much, and which one had the sense of recreating.¹³

But in Wilson's article the myth has started to harden: Patrick Anderson of *Preview* is an anaesthetic white Marxist. From this portrait who could imagine the variety of his work, or recognize him as the author of the bitter little dialogue in "Sand"?

It's not just that there's so much of it, he said,
nor the bitter heat of it nor its blinding glare
but it's the shiftlessness, that there's no
purpose here
nothing but a blanket warming a blanket, or a sum
multiplying and dividing itself forever, a sum
adding and subtracting itself for ever and ever.

There is of course another ingredient of the Anderson myth, which has served so efficiently in the 'sixties to prevent serious and objective study of his poetry, and that is the existence, alongside *Preview* and the *Preview* group, of *First Statement* and its supporters, notably John Sutherland, Louis Dudek and Irving Layton. Raymond Souster was also associated with *First Statement*, though he did publish in *Preview*. The contrast between these two groups is striking, and has been stressed often enough not to need emphasis at this point. It seems certain that John Sutherland conceived *First Statement* at least in part as a counterweight to *Preview* and the English background of P. K. Page, Anderson and James Wreford. Louis Dudek coined the phrases "meticulous moderns" and "lumpen intellectuals" to express the contrast he and Sutherland felt between the two magazines, and they wrote editorials which were obviously aimed at the other magazine, and which provoked one response in *Preview II* (February 1943).¹⁴ Wynne Francis's article on "Montreal Poets of the Forties", published in 1962, and lavishly decked with reflections and recollections from Irving Layton, creates from the conflict between the two magazines a full-scale war, with *First Statement* as patriotic guerillas assaulting the establishment in the form of *Preview*:

Their accomplishments, age, prestige, sophistication, and talent all combined to present an irresistible target for the raw impecunious parvenus of Stanley Street.

We shall see that this is a very misleading picture; and of course, the "loser" in this poetic and critical battle is Patrick Anderson: he was an exploiter of the Canadian landscape, says Wynne Francis:

Exploited is the word. Anderson was not a nature poet. His Montreal mountain is a political symbol; snow is our chloroform and ice our state of social anaesthesia; skiers are capitalist entrepreneurs, or sometimes leftist propagandists.

"Winter in Montreal" again! Anderson might be forgiven for wondering whether anyone had read beyond Page 24 of *The White Centre*. The article completed the process of suggesting that Anderson is unreadable or not worth reading by suggesting that his role, and *Preview's*, was to stimulate Irving Layton. Mr. Layton is quoted as saying that it did.

I am not concerned here to deprecate the achievements of Souster and Layton, or to deny that they seem to have emerged as the major figures who moved from the promising 'forties to the established 'fifties. It is rather the melodrama presented by Wynne Francis which deserves to be questioned, as well as the factual accuracy of her remarks about *Preview*.

F. R. Scott has confined himself to saying that *Preview* "stimulated and kept alive" *First Statement*¹⁵; P. K. Page is even less conscious of there having been any out-and-out rivalry between the two groups:

I remember on one occasion a room was taken at the Ritz, for *Preview* and *First Statement* to argue out something . . . whether it was nationalism or internationalism, or what it was, I know it was a very emotion-fraught evening!

My memory of it is that the groups were pretty well separate. One saw Layton occasionally, because Layton wasn't the sort of person you didn't see, and one saw Dudek occasionally, and I didn't have very much to do with them after the *First Statement* thing got going.¹⁶

Francis' statements about the respective ages and social standing of the two groups could be misleading too:

Several of them were comfortably established professionally in the fields of teaching, law and medicine . . . the *Preview* elders in many cases represented father images. Several of them were McGill professors.

P. K. Page has stressed that F. R. Scott had a life independent of *Preview* during the war; that he was not as completely absorbed in the group as were

Anderson, herself, Ruddick and Shaw, and that Klein joined the group quite late in the magazine's life. Bruce Ruddick was not at that time even a student in medicine, and so he was far from being "established professionally in medicine", though he was later to achieve this status. Patrick Anderson was teaching at a boys' school in Montreal, and P. K. Page was a stenographer. The ages of the members of the respective groups in 1942 were much more evenly matched than "Montreal Poets of the Forties" would suggest. F. R. Scott was 43 and Klein 33, but Layton himself was 30; though Dudek was 24, and Souster only 21, Anderson and Page were only 27 and 26 respectively.

BUT POETS CAN SURVIVE classification, even misrepresentation, if they are read and appreciated by reasonable numbers of people; and after pointing to the difficulty of obtaining copies of Anderson volumes, and the poor state of criticism, and to Anderson's departure from Canada, one must finally admit that there are qualities in the poetry itself which have left it washed up on the bank of the Canadian poetic tradition while the stream flowed on; we have P. K. Page's high reputation as proof that this cannot be blamed on to circumstance entirely. This is not to say that the poetry is poor, and deserves to be forgotten; on the contrary, a unique experience awaits anyone who is prepared to read through the three volumes of poetry, and if possible the uncollected poems in *Preview*. The poetry is *certainly* most un-American, but it differs from anything published in England this century both in its choice of subject matter (which seems Canadian) and in the peculiar isolated intensity of the tone, which manages somehow to convey also a faintly amused sense of irony at the frenzied attempt to communicate. It stands out in a Canadian anthology through its wordiness, and density of metaphor, and its debt to Dylan Thomas. But it is Dylan Thomas with a taste of irony; a taste, in fact, of T. S. Eliot.

T. S. Eliot, but not Pound. Perhaps here we can find some of the reasons at least for Anderson's decline in popularity in the 'fifties and 'sixties. It would not be too adventurous to claim that Imagism, along with several American poets directly or indirectly influenced by Pound, such as Cummings and Williams, has exerted a tremendous influence on Canadian poetry in the last twenty years. Anderson is not prepared to give you an object in the Imagist manner — he will process it, masticate it, turn it inside out and offer it to you with his fingerprints all over it. His complete antithesis to the Imagists not only separates

him from the laconics of Souster, and the cultivated directness of Layton, but is in complete contrast also to the low-keyed musings of the younger Margaret Atwood:

Who can tell what clothes may suffer
doomed to be hollow, to be thin,
unable to speak except by the gestures
of those who inhabit them.¹⁷

This is not itself an Imagist poem, but it does have that air of inviting the reader to fill out its sparseness: imagining various “gestures”, or the exact nature of the “suffering” involved, which one associates with that tradition. Beside it, Anderson’s poems seem tyrannical — each image’s effect has been calculated, and each image or adjective is startling or precise enough to direct the reader into the desired response. This is a far cry from Pound’s vision of an “austere, direct poetry” and from most Canadian poetry of the ’fifties and ’sixties. It is interesting to note that Imagism as a movement never really exerted a profound influence on English poetry of the twentieth century: Kingsley Amis’s poem “Against Romanticism”, written in 1956, re-phrases much of what Hulme and Pound were saying forty years before, and Pound does not seem to have had as many disciples in England as in America. Certainly a poem like “Summer’s Joe” stands out in a Canadian anthology for the self-conscious, almost intrusive, linguistic cleverness of its alliteration and epithets:

Then sudden in the scope of sea
with the delight of found
he saw his treasure island,
he saw his milkwhite fathom.

Desmond Pacey says in *Creative Writing in Canada* that though “Summer’s Joe” is an attractive and evocative poem, there seems a lot of poem to a small amount of theme or thought. This is in fact true of much of Anderson’s poetry — almost inevitable in view of his love of stunning phrases, figures and adjectives. But the way to read Anderson is not to hope for a final “knotting line” which will tie the whole poem together or supply a moral, something like Birney’s “Can. Lit”:

It’s only by our lack of ghosts we’re haunted.

On the contrary, in Anderson, it seems that each local effect has a semi-autonomous importance — many of his poems have a kind of molecular struc-

ture, a conglomeration. He puts great stress on the shocking, immediate portrayal of single experiences, often attacking a scene or mood from all angles; his images are always packed with *emotion*, and his overall aim is emotional. Poems like “Bathroom”, “Song of Intense Cold” and “The Self is Steep” seem intellectual in nature, but the intellectual cleverness always has some motivation on an emotional level — Anderson is doing intellectual allusive contortions to push the reader into sharing his emotions.

There are many such poems, as well as similarly intended lines in poems otherwise more intellectual, which conspire to demand the reader’s compliance, to direct him to a reflective, despairing, lost (though not often excited) emotional state. It is particularly cleverly done in section three of the series *The Self is Steep*, in *A Tent for April*, where the poet’s emotional state is described in physical terms: a collection of details about a depressing, claustrophobic room; he then puts the emotion to more intellectual uses. The emotion

... goes in rooms
has buttons on it, or hairs. It is to touch
self-hood or boredom or the furniture
which fingers travel until they trench or snap.
The litter of that dump is sourly lit
by a great unmade bed — a place of tears
and fingernails, or things kept in a box...

We are convinced, and appropriate the mental state as we read. But Anderson quite brilliantly moves the stagnant room into visions of desperate action: a cripple hurling his crutches from the room’s window at children in the sun; the window suggesting a sniper or assassin. But it is the concepts of the sniper’s and murderer’s motives which are psychologically acute, and which are built on the whole movement of the poem.

The sniper knows it, shooting to be loved,
and the murderer who hacks into a dream
the opposite body which will not approve
knows it, and the impacted bric-a-brac
of Germany, like a third-rate sitting room
grows dark and lonely with such love, such hate.

Anderson is at his best in this poem: the emotion generated is being put to use intellectually; there is none of that conscious “political verse” posing we saw in “Miners”; image is skilfully built on image, within the basic metaphor of the

room. The haunted atmosphere and the isolated feeling of Germany at the end of the war is presented with acuteness and integrity. Furthermore, this poem represents some of the best characteristics of *Preview*, its view of Europe is Canadian in its lack of hysteria, and can be read alongside F. R. Scott's "Enemies", from *Preview No. 16* (October 1943), to illustrate how the group at its best could cross-fertilize and treat its avowed subject matter with restraint and accuracy.

But is it not unfair to see emotion as the basis of Anderson's earlier work? One wonders how far this desire to convey emotional states corresponds to P. K. Page's picture of him as one who loved to be the centre of activity, and the leader of a group, an orator,¹⁸ and one is reminded of Anderson's own confession in the first part of *The Self is Steep* that "Between these passionate acts I do not live — / shaping before me the declarant one, the orator . . ."

It would be a mistake, in view of this and other candid hints in the poems, to see Anderson as an egotist without insight into his own poetic extravagance or the emotional forces at work in his verse. In fact it is easy to see the blasé tone of his Canadian reminiscences in *Search Me* as a personal reaction to Canadian critical essays which cast him as a self-important, word-intoxicated, pompous, militant Marxist. In this connection, there is an interesting poem in *The Colour as Naked*, entitled "Ballad of the Young Man" which treats Anderson's particular poetic problem in an ironic and sophisticated manner and expresses a mature attitude towards the relationship between poet and poem. He did in fact place it as the last poem in the book, where it comments on much of his poetry of the previous decade.

"Ballad of the Young Man" is for most of its length a description in ballad metre of a young man walking in the October countryside, of his precocious sensitive nature feeding on images the countryside supplies, and of two visions, of love and death, that he sees in the waters of a stream. The presentation of the young man's vision is dramatic and colourful, and we can understand his emotions, self-absorbed as they are:

The young man rose from his dreaming,
he turned and he walked away:
'At last I have had my vision
all this has happened to me.

Nevertheless, we are a little disturbed by the undisciplined emotional tone of these words. Then in the last four stanzas, Anderson produces a surprise. An unexpected sceptical voice expresses misgivings:

Oh, I have had my moment —
 Love on his golden throne,
 Death in his marble basement!
 'Yes, but you were alone.'

Intriguingly, Anderson uses this voice to question the usefulness and universal meaning of a moment of understanding and vision. How far is it possible to communicate such moments, and how can it be done? The voice seems to say that there must be some binding force of intellectual meaning to unify the "vision" and make it meaningful for others, that all the stunning detail remains locked in oneself: "Yes, but you were alone", without this,

O I shall write about it,
 tell wife and friend of my walk',
 'Do you think you're Proust — that they will trust
 such vague aesthetic talk?'

This is a voice attacking descriptive verse — and so much of Anderson's verse is descriptive! But the intricacy of the poem does not end here.

I saw a young man walking,
 he talked to himself by the way —
 the great red sun was sinking,
 rooks collapsed the sky.

So the voice represented an inward dialogue in the poet's mind, and we share in his disappointment through that final strong verbal metaphor, as the rooks collapse the sky. But in doing so, we are jerked into the realization that we *have* already shared, dramatically, simultaneously, in the young man's experience, and can share his delight, and opposition to the sceptical voice. So in attacking the idea of the primacy of emotion and description in poetry, Anderson has vindicated it in an interesting way. But the poem depends for its effect on an infusion of intellect: it is not purely descriptive, and in this it seems to me superior to the much anthologized "Drinker".

Anderson wrote in *Preview* of his poem "Winter in Montreal":

In this poem I have tried to express a social statement about Canada in terms that allow my essentially emotional and romantic nature free play . . .¹⁹

This is reminiscent of the *Preview* manifesto's aims of fusing "the lyric and didactic elements in modern verse",²⁰ and using it as a yardstick one can divide

Anderson's verse into three main groups. The first group contains poems which exercise the descriptive, "emotional and romantic" nature of Anderson, whether seriously as in "Children", or in a deliberately "precious" manner as in "Bathroom". There are many such poems in *Preview* and *A Tent for April*. The second category comprises those poems of the "traditional *Preview* Anderson" which approach social or political themes through description and definition. *Poem on Canada* falls into this category, as does "Winter in Montreal" and many other poems from *The White Centre*. This is the form most fraught with dangers, and there are several uncollected poems in *Preview* which link emotion and description to specific events of the war in a way which must seem sentimental, since the "humanity" is yoked to the "comment" in a facile manner which suggests a manipulation of feeling for its own sake. The last lines of "Death of an Animal Man", which conclude the celebration of the joyous senses of an anonymous man — his breathing, loving, running, dancing, whistling and laughing, read:

the precipice hand
gives back no more the rose as a soft echo
nor does the arm defend the cottage brain
nor shoulders wear the massive past as muslin
for all, all, all
lies now dissected on the battlefield.²¹

Because the death in war has no integral significance in the poem — the man as described could have lost his life in any time or place — the poem comes close to obtaining cheap "significance" from the mere mentioning of the battlefield.

But this was not Anderson's only approach to social subject-matter. The third category, which is found most often in *The Colour as Naked*, holds the "emotional and romantic nature" in a productive tension against more intellectual considerations. We have seen how this technique works in "Ballad of the Young Man", and how it is used to present an image of Germany, guilt, and the nature of violence in *The Self is Steep* from the early volume *A Tent For April*. *The Colour as Naked* is full of such verse, where the meaning is not diffuse or tacked on arbitrarily, but welded to the emotional content: "Houses Burning: Quebec" balances the physical fascination of fire with its revolutionary and slum-cleansing implications; "Leaving Canada" measures feelings of achievement against concrete memories of Montreal; "Eden Town" contrasts the sense of belonging to a city and wanting to change it to the isolation of bringing a new

mentality into it. In this work one feels a deeper involvement in the materials of the poems, a greater sense of responsibility towards the imagery and its effects. There is, in fact, a capacity to be *hurt* which the easy facility of some of the earlier work lacks.

But these poems are not well known, either in England, where Anderson is hardly known except for his travel books, or in Canada, where all manner of difficulties prevent them getting the hearing they deserve. Indeed, the pattern of criticism here has been misleading: praising the earlier work and ignoring the mature; ignoring much of what is mature in that early work; pouncing on over-emphasised aspects of his work, and on a handful of lines from half a dozen poems; even misrepresenting the facts of his career. If Patrick Anderson ever does return to Canada, he would be justified in demanding a reassessment of his poetry, or at least that we abandon the current clichés about his work.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Jessica Nelson North, "Mercurial": *Poetry* (Chicago) 69; 284-6 (February 1947).
- ² William Meredith, "A Good Modern Poet and a Modern Tradition", *Poetry* (Chicago) 70: 208-211 (July 1947).
- ³ Milton Wilson, "Other Canadians and After" in *Masks of Poetry*, ed. A. J. M. Smith (Toronto 1968).
- ⁴ A. J. M. Smith "New Canadian Poetry" *Can. Forum* 26: 252 (February 1947).
- ⁵ Printed in *Preview* 14 (July 1943) Never collected.
- ⁶ Wynne Francis, "Montreal Poets of the Forties", *Can Lit*: 14 (Autumn 1962).
- ⁷ Patrick Anderson, *Search Me. Autobiography — The Black Country and Spain*. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1957), p. 152.
- ⁸ In *UTQ* 23, April 1954.
- ⁹ In "Letters in Canada 1954" *UTQ* 24 (April 1955).
- ¹⁰ *Preview* 11 (February 1943). Quoted by Desmond Pacey in his *Creative Writing in Canada* and by Wynne Francis in "Montreal Poets of the Forties."
- ¹¹ *Preview* 1 (March 1942) quoted in *A Literary History of Canada*, ed. Carl F. Klink (University of Toronto Press, 1966), p. 489.
- ¹² *Creative Writing in Canada*, p. 155.
- ¹³ *Search Me*, p. 149.
- ¹⁴ "What is the writer going to do? [about attempts to discredit the Labour movement]. Is he, like the First Statement group, going to content himself with study circles to ponder the platitudes of Lampman and Carman?"
- ¹⁵ In his review of *Search Me* in *Tamarack Review* (Winter 1958).
- ¹⁶ P. K. Page in a recorded conversation with Dorothy Livesay, December 1968.
- ¹⁷ Margaret Atwood, "Closet", *Pluck* 3 (Fall 1968).
- ¹⁸ "Patrick liked disciples, and liked to be a centre, and it would have been difficult for him to play the role necessary in a merger [with *First Statement*] . . . Patrick loved the role of poet. He adores it." With D. L. December 1968.
- ¹⁹ *Preview* 21 (September 1944).
- ²⁰ *Preview* 1 (March 1942).
- ²¹ "Death of an Animal Man", *Preview* 8, (October 1942).