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CANADIAN LITERATURE No. 21

Summer, 1964

RECOLLECTIONS OF E. J. PRATT

Recollections

BY NORTHROP FRYE, ROY DANIELLS

Articles

BY GIOSE RIMANELLI, GEORGE WOODCOCK,
E. B. GOSE, NAIM KATTAN

Reviews

BY B. RAJAN, HENRY KREISEL, ROBIN SKELTON,
GEORGE ROBERTSON, GEORGE BOWERING, ALBERT TUCKER,
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editorial

ON THE DIVIDE

OUR RECENT ISSUES have reflected an anxiety which many people concerned with writing in our country are feeling today. We can see now, as Giose Rimanelli points out from a fresh viewpoint in a later page, that a Canadian literature exists. But we are still disturbed at the conditions to which the writers who make that literature must adapt. The consciousness of this situation appears in article after article submitted to us, and we have published several pieces of this kind because what they have to say seems to us urgently important. Underlying all these discussions is the realization that a literary "world" of the classic Paris or London kind, where writers could undergo their apprenticeship among other writers (with a full apparatus of publishing houses and literary journals), is not likely to come into being in Canada for a long time yet, if ever. Equally present is the related feeling that, though at the moment we are faced with an unprecedented crop of young writers publishing their works in the mimeographed journals that rise and die like mayflies in almost every city in the country, the chance of even the most brilliant of these new writers having the kind of leisure necessary to become latter-day Tolstoys or Flauberts is remote. The mere time to write the impressive literary masterpiece becomes more and more a luxury to be won only by the ruthless organization of the scanty spare hours that can be won from less congenial occupations.

How, in fact, is the writer to keep going so that he can write even minor masterpieces? In our last issue Thelma McCormack discussed in some depth the possibility of a new relationship between the writer and the mass media, and in a letter which reached us yesterday Hugh MacLennan remarked that in his view her essay "went to the heart of the modern writer's predicament, which is

common no matter where he lives," and added this most pertinent comment of his own:

> . . . I was struck by her nostalgic reference to Proust, Joyce and Pound. There can be no such writers these days because the cost of living is too high. Hemingway says that in his time in Paris, when he knew Joyce and Pound, a couple could live, and travel, on $5.00 a day. Now the cost of living in France, even in Grenoble, is about 20% higher than in Manhattan. Robert Goulet went to Mallorca and managed for a while, and then, in Hemingway's phrase, "the rich came." I spent a day in Palma last fall en route, and the only restaurant where I could get lunch before the ship sailed was as expensive, and almost as vulgar, as Longchamps. In the lovely mediaeval square of the city, plastered right across one of the most beautiful facades, was a Coca Cola sign with dimensions (according to my recollection) of about a hundred feet by thirty.
>
> Is Marshall McLuhan right? Though he uses a kind of mystical jargon that sets my teeth on edge, he well may be.

Those of us who knew it even in its last days certainly look back with nostalgia to the writer's life of the twenties and thirties, when a productive existence on a shoestring in a Paris hotel, a London attic or a Cornwall cottage was still possible. In recent years the writer of these lines has travelled far, through Europe, Asia, Latin America, and he has come to the melancholy conclusion that the places where the writer who can bear isolation might live and work on a pittance are vanishing as rapidly as the big game in Africa. Portugal, some of the remoter parts of Spain, Mexico and Greece, the foothills of the Himalayas (as long as one keeps out of the English-style hotels) and Australasia are about the last possible refuges. And for how long?

Accepting that few good writers can function at rock-bottom as ascetics or paupers, one has to assume that the world-wide levelling-off of prices will soon mean an end to those economical gathering-places of the Happy Few which those of us who are now middle-aged were lucky enough to know in our youth. The writer who wants to live in the congenial physical surroundings of whatever may be the literary gathering places of the future will have to do so on hard cash earned at home; in that sense we shall all be — if not Sunday writers — at least holiday writers, working most of our time for the leisure in which we shall write what lies nearest our hearts.

The most favoured alternative to that possible new relationship with the mass media which Thelma McCormack has explored is the retreat to the campus. In one of our recent issues Robert McDougall rather pungently suggested that

writers would do well to avoid the deadly shades of the academic groves, and Earle Birney has replied. Writers who have become university teachers — and particularly writers with freelance pasts — realize that there is something to both sides of the argument; academic activity can provide financial security and even certain kinds of intellectual stimulation, but — as most universities are at present constituted — it makes too heavy demands on the very sort of energy which the writer should be conserving for his real work.

If the alternatives are so puzzling even to the writer who can regard himself as more or less established, how much more so are they to the apprentice writer in a country like Canada. The mass media at present can offer him merely a selection of various forms of cub journalism; at best he can write scripts for the C.B.C. and at likely worst he can become a reporter in an execrable provincial newspaper.

Here at least the academics — or a minority of them — offer an alternative in the various Creative Writing courses, programmes and departments which are appearing in Canadian universities. This is a phenomenon which can neither be dismissed summarily nor accepted lightly. Homer, Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Stendhal, Cervantes: who were their Creative Writing teachers? But perhaps that question is too obvious; it may be argued, at least, that times have changed. So far as I know, not even the most dedicated of Creative Writing instructors suggests that he can make a silk purse out of a literary sow's ear; most of them are reconciled to the thought that the majority of their students will be dilettantes with no productive future and that some at least of them will merely be trying for easy academic credits. But they do put forward the argument that, in the absence of a literary ambience of the classic type, their classes and seminars may provide the kind of environment in which a young writer of real promise can receive encouragement, advice, sympathy, and perhaps decide whether, so far as he is concerned, the writing game is worth the candle. On the other hand, many people — including a fair number of practicing writers — believe that even this type of academic interference with the development of writers will do more harm than good. Certainly the case for Creative Writing classes has not been proved, either by argument or by experience; but it remains open, and it is worth discussing.

1. *The Personal Legend*

Northrop Frye

NED PRATT is the only figure in Canadian literature, so far, who was great enough to establish a personal legend. The legend was simpler than the man, or, more accurately, it was cruder, because the man himself had the genuine simplicity that is so rare and so difficult. Poets and professors are supposed to be absent-minded, and people delighted in telling stories of Ned's absent-mindedness. They are also supposed to be unpractical, and the fact that he was easily baffled by mechanical contrivances also pleased them. But Ned always remembered a great deal more than he forgot. He carried for many years a teaching, speaking and social schedule that nobody in business or politics would attempt without a secretary. I remember many graphic stories he could tell of how his lecturing and visiting arrangements got fouled up, but I remember too that it was generally other people's dim-wittedness that was responsible and not his. When I first began to try to write myself, the only really sensible and well-informed advice about publishers and contracts I got came from Ned. And while it was true that he always counted the left turns he had to make before setting out anywhere with a car, I know of no contemporary poet who has used technological and mechanical languages with such easy assurance.

In my fourth year as an undergraduate I was editor of the college magazine, and had to administer a prize of ten dollars for the best poem contributed. The poems came in, and I took them to Ned. Ned didn't recommend an award.

NED PRATT

Two Recollections

What he did was to put his finger on one poem and say, "Now this one — it has some feeling, some sensitivity, some sense of structure. But — well, damn it all, it isn't worth *money*." I have never had a profounder insight into literary values, and I was lucky to have it so early. As a graduate student I was his assistant when he became the first editor of the *Canadian Poetry Magazine*. I am not saying that what was printed in those opening issues was imperishable, but it was certainly the best of what we got. What impressed me was the number of people (it was the depression, and the magazine paid a dollar or two) who tried to get themselves or their friends in by assuming that Ned was a soft touch. In some ways he was, but he was not compromising the standards of poetry to be so: poetry was something he took too seriously. And, as I realized more clearly later, friendship was also something he took too seriously to compromise. People who thought him a soft touch were never his friends. He could be impulsively, even quixotically, generous to bums and down-and-outs, and I think I understand why. His good will was not benevolence, not a matter of being a sixty-year-old smiling public man. It was rather an enthusiasm that one was alive, rooted in a sense of childlike wonder at human existence and the variety of personality. This feeling was so genuine and so deep in him that I think he felt rather guilty when approached by someone towards whom he was actually indifferent.

His hospitality and his love of parties was the central part of the Pratt personal

legend. The chair at the end of the Senior Common Room table in Victoria College was always left vacant for him, for Ned Pratt could not sit anywhere but at the head of the table. (It remained vacant for several months after it was clear that he would never return to that table.) Yet those who attended his parties realized how passionate his concern was for the genuine symposium, the exchange of ideas. He wanted good stories and picturesque language, most of which he contributed himself. Not many of his guests are apt to forget such things as the huge salmon hooked by the Governor of Newfoundland, who poured an entire bottle of Newfoundland screech down its throat and then released it, only to have it circle the boat on its tail singing Rule Britannia. But he was quickly bored if the conversation ran down in gossip or trivialities. The personnel at his parties naturally changed over the course of years, but from Bertram Brooker and Wilson Knight in the thirties to Marshall McLuhan and Douglas Grant in the sixties, he never wavered in his affection for friends who could talk, and talk with spirit, content, and something to say.

His entire poetic career was spent as a full-time member of the teaching staff of Victoria College. He never made a song and dance about being "creative," and he never felt the need of compensating for the way he earned his living by issuing anti-academic pronouncements. The College took unobstrusive measures to make it easier for him to get on with his work, but it could not have helped beyond a certain point. His reputation as absent-minded and as a complete duffer in practical affairs was carefully staged by himself, in order to stay clear of the enormous complication of committees and similar substitutes for thought and action that are such a bane of university life. He taught students, and worked harder to get to know them than anyone else on the staff. (Even after his retirement he gave luncheon parties for the students in the classes he had previously taught.) He worked with colleagues, to such effect that one came to recognize a special kind of affectionate smile that preceded any reference to Ned. But he stuck to the essentials of university work, to teaching and his own writing, and as a result it was hardly noticed that he was an academic poet.

He was also a Canadian writer, without either trying to be one or trying not to be one. Not many Canadian writers would really be content to be popular inside the country and largely unknown outside it. I am not saying that he was wholly content with this either — nor am I. But he did realize that he was addressing a specific community, and he showed extraordinary integrity in addressing also the general reader in that community, instead of writing for other poets. He was never in fashion, and he never tried to be out of fashion, and as a

result he has introduced hundreds of Canadians to poetic experience who would not otherwise have got it, or who would have tried to get it from some phony anti-intellectual doggerelist. There are many popular features in his work, some of them obvious, such as the preoccupation with physical courage and heroic action, and some of them less obvious, such as the absence of bad language, even when dealing with the grousing of sailors in *Behind the Log*. Yet there is a tough conceptual skeleton behind all his writing: his supposed incompetence in the two disciplines he tried before he tried English, theology and psychology, was part of his own campaign to persuade others that he was too simple-minded to have his time wasted in their interests.

So although he was never anti-intellectual, and never undervalued or deprecated what the university stood for, he still avoided the pitfalls that beset intellectuals in modern society. Of these, one of the most striking is the fascination with the logical extreme, as opposed to the illogical golden mean. To write and to teach in Ned's generation meant defending the values of the imagination through a depression and a war, and this took courage of a kind that he not only celebrated but, very unostentatiously, possessed. Some of us grew up in that generation and tried to hold on to the kind of liberal values that are not simply the values of the left as against the right, but are the values of human dignity as opposed to stupidity and hysteria. We remember many lost leaders in that period, some temporarily and some permanently lost, who deserted wisdom for paradox. The sense of outrage and betrayal that I felt when I first opened *After Strange Gods* is something I hope never to feel again. But during the war, at an evening in Earle Birney's apartment in Toronto, I heard Ned read *The Truant*, and felt, not simply that I had heard the greatest of all Canadian poems, but that the voice of humanity had spoken once more, with the kind of authority it reserves for such moments as the bombing of London, when the powers of darkness test the soul and find once more that "The stuff is not amenable to fire".

2. *The Special Quality*

Roy Daniells

THERE ARE a few poets in the Canadian tradition who will be remembered for what they were in themselves, almost independently of what they wrote. Lampman and Isabella Crawford are among them. Now our good Ned Pratt has joined this small company whose personal memory we shall not willingly let die. Yet the personal image is no more simple than the image of Pratt the poet whose complexity has been the theme of H. W. Wells, John Sutherland and Desmond Pacey. Ned's hospitality was famous, his bonhomie a legend in his lifetime, his kindness a constant factor in many lives. Yet other good hosts, other occasions filled with wit and paternal benevolence, have not left the same indelible mark on the mind. What was Ned's special and unique quality?

Let us go back to 1919, the year that Pelham Edgar rescued Pratt from the psychology department on St. George Street and installed him in Victoria College as an associate professor of English. Ned's descriptions of his ill luck as a demonstrator — prisms flying from the turntable to shatter against the wall — may have obscured the full situation. So may recollections of Edgar's prescience and his tactful kindness to new members of staff (which the present writer must recall with gratitude). The fact is that Edgar gave Pratt all that anyone could have given at that time — a favourable stance from which to survey a situation most unfavourable to poetry. By 1919 little remained of the post-Confederation impulse which has produced Roberts, Lampman, Crawford, Carman and D. C. Scott. Scott alone was both alive and kicking, yet his statement to the Royal Society in 1922, "Revolt is essential to progress", was not matched by anything corresponding in his own work. "We require" he said, "more rage in our poets" but nothing of the kind was forthcoming. It was not until 1925 that the *McGill Fortnightly Review* came into being, borne on the same tide of post-war change that had brought in the first number of the *Forum* in October 1920. When the *Review* began its brief career, Arthur Smith, Frank Scott, Leo Kennedy and Leon Edel were all in their teens or twenties. Pratt was by this time in his early forties and writing the kind of poetry which appeared in his 1926 volume *Titans*

(comprising "The Witches' Brew", "The Cachalot" and "The Great Feud"). He was committed by geography, by his non-urban tradition and by the impetus of his career to something quite unlike the social strategy and poetic tactics of the Montreal group.

In 1919 the Canadian landscape had indeed been bleak and if we imagine Pratt searching among the abraded Edwardians, the English war poets, or the pages of Eliot just reaching Canada, it is hard to see what stimulus to sensibility or what techniques he could have recovered from outside to help him deal with actualities in the local landscape, literal or intellectual. He was in fact thrown heavily back on his own resources (whereas Lampman, in a previous generation, had with all modesty rightly felt himself a kind of reincarnation of Keats). That the whole web of Pratt's poetry had in the best sense of the word a pervasively homespun quality is attributable to his having had always to work alone. The "plain heroic magnitude of mind" with which he got down to his task has never, I think, been sufficiently recognized. We may recall the days when he was struggling to write *The Titanic*, when he would expound his intention, when floorboards became deck-planks under one's feet as the long narrow office shuddered under the impact of ice and slowly sank, leaving one struggling — with Ned's problems, his efforts to shape the narrative, to find diction, to achieve catharsis. (I doubt if he really got help from anyone.) This magnitude, this ability not to be overcome, was, I think, his most distinguishing and most admirable quality. Certainly, if any newcomer to Elysian fields were trying to identify Canadian poets, Ned Pratt would stand out in a simple way, as *larger* than all the rest.

This largeness of mind, which sometimes led to an indifference to what others felt were immediate burning issues, saved Ned Pratt the poet and Professor Pratt the academic from pride, pedantry, paranoia, the Messiah-complex, the thirst for recognition, the affectation of "grand old man", one upmanship of every description and all the other customary side effects of a talent for writing or occupational diseases of academic life. He was never more — and never less — than Ned Pratt getting on with some job to which he was uniquely fitted, with all his powers.

Beside his psychic dimension, he possessed the complementary virtue of being responsive to people, of being intuitive, spontaneous, *uncalculating*. No one of his innumerable beneficiaries ever felt he had to do something in return. "Pro pelle cutem" was not in Ned's vocabulary. Lack of guile and even of foresight had its comic consequences. The college would be ransacked for Ned's little black bag containing important papers, day after day until he reported opening

a cupboard at home and "there it was!" But fundamentally his lack of calculation reminded one of stories in the Gospels or in the Acts: great ends are in view yet from day to day whatever happens will turn out to be divinely directed. Life is too important to be organized. It follows that to meet Ned casually was to feel him give his whole sympathy to one, immediately. After a time one counted on this. Acquaintances felt they were his friends. His friends each felt sure of a special place in Ned's regard — and rightly so: he had room for a great deal of special concern for others. He relived the old virtues of the Canadian literary tradition, Roberts' ability to become exemplary by becoming through unaided effort a man of letters, Lampman's life of spontaneous feeling and creative "dream". This wise passiveness, this ability to give his all where intuition prompted and never by calculation kept clear and bright to the end a sensitivity which set him apart from others.

Whether his massive simplicity of purpose and the unforced immediacy of his daily response to life were related to the epic strain in his poetry and the unclassifiable moral impulse which so powerfully animates it — an impulse no theory seems to exhaust — these are problems for the literary critic. What seems at the moment more important is that as many as possible of those who knew and loved him should leave some record of "the emperor in his habit as he lived", going beyond anecdote and sentiment yet not forgetting the man in pursuit of his work.

We shall not look upon his like again. The Newfoundland community, now part of Canada, cannot hope to retain its old Elizabethan quality. The kind of sensibility that contrives to live in a city without succumbing to urbanization threatens to become rare to extinction. Our culture, saturated with mass-media, will no longer provide the partial vacuum in which by breathing hard a strong sensibility may contrive to have its being. It is unlikely that uncalculating goodness of heart can persist into a world of computers. All the more reason why memory should keep green the greatness and uncontriving simplicity of this good man.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

An Italian View

Giose Rimanelli

Dr. Rimanelli is a distinguished Italian novelist and critic who has spent much time in Canada and has written a travel book on the country (Biglietto di Terza). *Now, with another Italian writer, Roberto Ruberto, he has prepared an anthology of Canadian short stories, entitled* Canadiana, *which will shortly be published in both Italy and the United States. In this article Dr. Rimanelli explains the reasons which led him to undertake the task.*

LITERATURE IS NOT A MERE WORD, but the individual expression of man's spirit. Consequently, to study the literature of an epoch means to study the spirit of the man of that epoch. Man lives, thinks and acts within society; he is *for* or *against* society because it is part of his destiny to accept or rebel, and yet, in a group or isolated, he himself is society, therefore presence, therefore history and myth, therefore dimension, breath, parable.

The history of the universe is the history of man, but it is through man that we tell the story of the universe, because he is the only one who can discover it, give it meaning and thence sing of it. Under this aspect, there is not a country in the world that does not have its own poetry, its own literature, primitive or refined, serene or chaotic, vital or creative. And Canada is no exception to the rule.

The task of the scholar is to find out if, beyond the social and political changes which form and reform a country, there are creative forces which endure, which have their own reason for being, whether they are a mere reflex of the time in

which they are produced or whether they go beyond it, to impose themselves on new generations. Art is tradition, even in its most experimental forms.

There is a view in both American and Europe that denies Canada its "own" literature. This view is based more on an ignorance of the political-economic — and therefore cultural — history of the country, than on positive critical facts. It is expected that one speak of Canada in terms of anthropology, ethnology, mineralogy and immigration rather than of literature. To the European mind in particular the idea of literature in Canada is exhausted in a nucleus of Indian legends and folkloric songs, or in those peculiar works of foreign writers who lived for some time in Canada, such as Hémon's *Maria Chapdelaine* or Constantin Weyer's *Un Homme se penche sur son passé.*

Canada, for the European, is still a pioneer land. Among the Italians this conviction can be attributed to the Italian migratory flow toward Canada and the lack of effective cultural relations between the two countries. But this does not explain how the idea persists also in France and England, countries with which Canada has both language and traditions in common.

Some years ago, writing from London, Mordecai Richler lamented that there the idea of a Canadian literature seemed something similar to the idea of a literature among the aborigenes of Australia. A strange fact this, if we consider the success obtained in England by purely Canadian writers such as Stephen Leacock, Mazo de la Roche, Ethel Wilson and Richler himself. The situation reaches the point where those Canadians who in one way or another have succeeded in arousing the attention of Europe, lose their Canadian identity in the minds of their readers and are seen as products of other countries, France, America or England. For the Europeans, Frances Loring and Florence Wylie are English, Gabrielle Roy is French, and Morley Callaghan is American.

This state of affairs has helped to form in Canadian public opinion and even among certain Canadian writers an unjustifiable inferiority complex in relation to the literature of other countries, with two consequent reactions: a conviction that nothing written in Canada is worth reading on the one hand, and on the other a nationalistic urge to praise and exalt everything that is Canadian. Of the two, the former is the more widespread attitude. The man of middle culture, the clerk or professional man, does not know the names of more than three or four contemporary Canadian authors: Callaghan for his participation in C.B.C. panels; Hugh MacLennan for his contributions to *Maclean's* magazine; Stephen Leacock for his *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* of which passages are read in school; Mazo de la Roche, whose *Jalna* novels are found in inexpensive edi-

tions in most drugstores. But a writer like Frederick Philip Grove, whose work has not appeared on television or been adapted for the cinema, is not even known by name to such people.

If you were to ask this man of middle Canadian culture what he thinks of the literature of his country, he would probably answer, in a modest tone, as if to justify himself, "Agreed, we don't have a real literature, but — excuse me — we are still a young country, hardly at the beginning, and with time, with time, you'll see . . ." A very similar reply might be expected from a university student who would be capable of writing an essay on James Joyce and reading Proust, Lorca and Rilke in their original languages.

Such an attitude, even if understandable, is now unjustifiable. It might have been valid in the last century when, even if there were writers such as Haliburton and Susanna Moodie, and even if it was proclaimed that "Canada is no longer a child, sleeping in the arms of Nature," there was in fact no Canadian literature because there was no Canada; it might have been valid even twenty years ago when, even if there were good works, there were no systematic studies of the Canadian literary panorama. Since then, Canadian literature has been liberated from the colonial condition and has attained an individuality and a voice of its own. To speak of a Canadian literature means in fact to speak of a contemporary literature.

As I pointed out at the beginning of this article, it is the task of the scholar to find out if, beyond the social and political changes that form and reform a country, there are creative forces which endure, which have their own reasons for existence. The task of the anthology of Canadian stories which Roberto Ruberto and I have been preparing, in Italian for the Italian reader and in English for the United States reader, is in fact a recognition of a literature which stands on its own and which has the right to be known and recognized, abroad and at home, as autonomous. As we see it, this literature is adult; the literary masterpiece may yet wait to be born, but this does not change the fact that a substantial production of quality exists.

EVERY LITERATURE has its mark of originality. And since every literature is in a sense the epitome of the country and civilization in which it has been born and has evolved, it reflects the developments, the anxieties and

the changes, both social and intellectual of that country and that civilization. Italian literature, for instance, tends toward realism but considers aesthetic forms important; Spanish literature is formal, German philosophic, French insidiously experimental; English literature speaks of reality through symbolism. Beyond these characteristic patterns, of form and content, style and idea, are the secret forces of a work of art. Its beauty, its universality, do not rest upon preestablished formulae, but on a mysterious transcendental quality which can reach, and therefore move and exalt, the heart and mind of man. Every valid literature is thus based on reality, either lived or imagined. Myth and the traditional elements of folklore, time and space, dream and sickness, the impulses of childhood and the demands of society, are interwoven in a literary work which — to explain this complex reality — must make use of language. Language is the true maturity of a people and also the obstacle that divides them, because language is idea. When Stephen Spender stated some years ago that Canadian literature lacks *originality*, did he perhaps intend to say that it lacks characteristic elements and therefore a *humus* and a language of its own?

Yes: for lack of originality, Spender labelled Canadian literature "derivative" and "provincial". A judgment too quick, too easy, and also unjust. It reminds one closely of the sardonic judgments expressed by Alfred de Vigny regarding the French of Quebec in colonial times. But if Alfred de Vigny judged while being outside the tragic reality of Acadia at that time, devastated by internal struggles, religious pressures and a lack of cultural contact with France, Stephen Spender, not dissimilarly, judges on the occasional basis of certain presuppositions: on one side the dependence of Canada on the United Kingdom, on the other its belonging to a continent whose *magna pars* is the United States.

According to the judgment of Spender, Canadian literature would appear as a reflex of one or other of the above-mentioned countries, as one prefers, rather as in the Platonic theory with its relationships between the world of things and the world of ideas. In the first case, one might equate Canadian literature — under the term "colonial literature" — to the literary endeavours of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa; in the second case it would appear as "provincial literature", as if Canada were a state, like California or Michigan, belonging to the United States. In either case one would deny it its own light and individuality.

But a study that is not superficial demonstrates that neither of these suppositions is completely correct. Canada cannot be associated with the other British dominions both because of the lesser distance that separates it from Europe and

because of its nearness to the United States. In literature the British influence was strong during the last century, but today it is reduced to the key writers who have influenced to a certain degree the literature of all countries, authors like Joyce, Conrad, Dylan Thomas, and so on. If there is a tradition by which most Canadian authors are now influenced, it is the American, that of the United States: Hawthorne, Melville, Eliot, Ezra Pound, Hemingway. Morley Callaghan, for example, was very close to Hemingway when both were reporters for the *Toronto Star* and, later, in Paris; Raymond Knister began his literary career with a review in Iowa; writers like W. O. Mitchell and Sinclair Ross show clearly the influence of Sherwood Anderson and Faulkner. It is easy to note American influences on other Canadian novelists and poets, as it is, after all, to note them on certain Italian writers of the forties and fifties and even on writers as purely English as William Golding. This does not mean, however, that such Canadian writers lack originality and can be incorporated into American literature with the same facility and naturalness as writers from San Francisco and Chicago. Everyone of us has had fathers, professors, books, which have spoken to our souls, often changing them also, but at a certain moment we have learnt to walk alone, to stand by ourselves, to think with our own brains, and to suffer with our own flesh.

Canadian literature is a North-American literature; but it is Canadian to the extent that Canada is Canada and not a part of the United States.

LET US OPEN AN ANTHOLOGY of Canadian poets. The parable runs from deserts of snow to the narrow life of urban metropolises. We are immediately overcome by a vast sense of solitude, of space, of expectancy. It is almost a sense of alarm. Man has not yet dominated nature here, but for this he lives and struggles, for this he suffers and loves and gets drunk. From the one side an old Eskimo song says:

> There is fear in
> Feeling the cold
> Come to the great world
> And seeing the moon
> — Now new moon, now full moon —
> Follow its old footprints
> In the winter night.

From the other side, a song of the city, by the young John Newlove, answers:

> As one beauty
> cancels another, remembrance
> is a foolish act, a double-headed snake
> striking in both directions, but I
> remember plains and mountains, places
> I come from, places I adhere and live in.

The outer landscape — the ice of the North, the immense lakes, the prairies, snow, winter — is the plasma of the inner landscape. The human psyche here explains itself in jolts, in gestures, through pauses; and the individual sensibility, rather than being refined, seems to be hyper-acute from the long silences, the far-away rumblings, that drama which has no origin. Life is a canal of rapid effusions, a struggle in the sun. The cycle of the seasons, Vico's life-history, seems to have been lived for one half; decadence has not yet peeped through the walls of the houses. The seasons have only two colours; green and white — summer-winter, a trajectory which in Canadian poetry, now ironic and then melancholic, assumes the quality of mythic time. P. K. Page, as in a dream, would say:

> In countries where the leaves are large as hands
> where flowers protrude their fleshly chins
> and call their colours
> an imaginary snow storm sometimes falls
> among the lilies.

Stephen Leacock, in his humoristic tone, tells in a story that "the solitude of the dark winter nights was that of eternity." But especially in Canadian prose, the ever-present element of the man-nature struggle comes out with violence. At times, nature dominates the pages of the writer and overcomes the man who traverses and labours it. Man faces it with fury, or bewilderment, or resignation: the resignation before fate which we find in Greek tragedy. But pessimism is a poison which has not yet reached him. In the story "Essence of Man" by Alan Sullivan there is man's victory over the snow; in Frederick Philip Grove's "Snow" there is that of the snow over man. In Grove's remarkable book, *Over Prairie Trails*, nature explains itself to man and explains man; this man is a god-made man, patient, tenacious, stoic, bombastic. Grove, here, is a pantheist. But in Sinclair Ross's story, "The Lamp at Noon", nature is only the furious background of the drama of solitude, of cold, of white nights, of blizzards, and of the desperate and stubborn life on the farms of the prairie. The characters of Helen and Paul,

with all their weaknesses and their stoicism, their faith and their disbelief, their need of love and of death, acquire almost symbolic value. This nature is not always generous with man, and the panic feeling of death which often grasps man becomes, in such stories, a sacred element. Such writing could not be done except in Canada: a lonely land, according to A. J. M. Smith, whose beauty is of dissonance and

> of strength
> broken by strength
> and still strong.

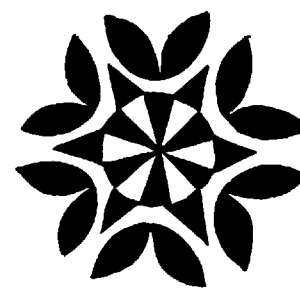
The flora and fauna play another important part in this literature. There are the immense forests of firs in Ontario and the isolated bushes of the prairies; there are the wild animals — the bear of the North, the eagle of British Columbia, the wild duck of Alberta, the beaver of the lake regions. A series of stories also exists to which, as a typically Canadian creation, the label "animal story" is seriously or ironically applied. In this field Charles G. D. Roberts is a master. Then there are the Indians, now characters in stories and now their narrators.

Of course, at the very beginnings of Canadian literature we find the Indians' own stories, legends and poems, typical of which are the songs of the Haida, which place at the centre of creation the sun, the crow and the bear. In these stories, which are to Canadian literature what the Provencal writings are to the Romance languages, one can recognize not only echoes of Christianity but also resemblances to the characters and myths of Orpheus, Prometheus, Samson and Hercules. The Indian myths are anterior to the arrival of the white man, and the similarities they show to Mediterranean myths make one pose the existence of a universal human mythology of Asian origins, or perhaps rather of a way of personifying needs common to all men of all races.

The Indians appear — as characters, comic or dramatic — in the short stories of earlier Canadian writers like Gilbert Parker, Duncan Campbell Scott and Alan Sullivan, and in those of such contemporaries as W. O. Mitchell, Hugh Garner and William McConnell. Through such stories one can almost follow the decline of the red race and the adaptation of its life to that of the white man. In the stories of today, the Indian appears usually in European dress, either as a vagabond or a worker with a regular job; his woman is no longer a squaw, but plucks her eyebrows, uses lipstick and drinks whisky. At times, as in McConnell's "Totem", a solitary character tries to remain faithful to the tradition of his ancestors through struggle against white civilization, but he is mocked by his own people.

In Canadian literature there is also a cosmopolitan element, which is to be explained by the fact that contemporary Canada is a mosaic of nationalities. In this sense, one can say that each writer has immersed in Canadian literature a sensibility and a particular style. Some, born in Europe, arrived in Canada with a literary background already adult. Others came as children. Grove arrived in Canada towards his twentieth year, after having passed through Paris, where he had made contact with Mallarmé, Verlaine, Jules Renard and André Gide; he was born in Switzerland and had studied archaeology in Paris, Rome and Munich. Brian Moore, born and raised in Ireland, is a Canadian by acceptance. Malcolm Lowry, an Englishman, took Canadian citizenship, lived in Canada for almost fifteen years, and wrote stories inspired by his Canadian environment. From England came also Leacock, and such poets as Roy Daniells, Ronald Hambleton and Wilfred Watson. Henry Kreisel arrived in Canada less than twenty years old, having escaped Nazi persecution in Vienna. Ethel Wilson was born in South Africa, and Jane Rule, author of a brilliant first novel, *The Desert of the Heart*, in New Jersey.

A varied and rich, stimulating, active, creative literary world emerges from all this. The Canadian note in it is very difficult to define. It consists in a mode of living and feeling in an atmosphere which is easier to intuit, to perceive, to assimilate, than to explain. In this way Canadian literature speaks for itself. The characters of Leacock's Mariposa, for example, are not those of Mark Twain's Mississippi; the Montreal which Callaghan presents in *The Loved and the Lost* belongs in feeling as well as geography to another country from the New York that Dos Passos describes in *Manhattan Transfer*. We find ourselves before two Americas, the America of the United States and that of Canada. Practically two worlds: so close, yet so different. Canadian literature is a reality and no longer only an aspiration.



LOST EURYDICE

The Novels of Callaghan

George Woodcock

MORLEY CALLAGHAN'S best book for a quarter of a century is that which he probably wrote with the least effort and the least intent of producing a masterpiece. It is not one of the three ambitious but imperfect novels he has published since the last war; it is the volume of autobiography, *That Summer in Paris*.

That Summer in Paris describes the months in 1929, just before the great stock market crash, when Montparnasse was enjoying its last fling as an international literary centre and when Morley Callaghan, a young man from Toronto, mingled closely with several of the great figures of the Lost Generation. It is self-revealing to an extraordinary degree, honest and, despite some curious vanities, more modest than a first reading immediately suggests, for it is a naïve wonder that really comes through when he tells how Sinclair Lewis said "Flaubert would have loved your work" and Hemingway remarked that "Tolstoy couldn't have done my 'Wedding Dress' story better." In a rare feat of reminiscent concentration, Callaghan really does bring back the spirit of Paris a generation ago and he offers some extraordinarily interesting insights into the personalities of Hemingway, Fitzgerald and even Joyce; he also recreates very convincingly his own personality of those far-off days. He not merely recollects his past self; he seems to rebecome it, and the achievement affects even his writing. The tone is that of *They Shall Inherit the Earth* rather than that of *A Passion in Rome*. The flabbiness of prose and thought that have characterized his most recent novels is absent; everything is crisp, clear, unpretentious. Callaghan writes with the air of a man knowing the limitations of his powers and then using them to the full, as he did in the three novels of his middle period which are still unexcelled among

his longer works of fiction — *Such is My Beloved, They Shall Inherit the Earth* and *More Joy in Heaven.*

That Summer in Paris is more than a satisfying book for the reader interested in literary personages. It is in its own way a fascinating handbook to Callaghan's own other writing. For example, we come across incidents and characters which we recognize from his fiction, and so we begin to get some insight into his methods of building up a book. Callaghan's realistic theories — even if they have never really dominated his essentially moralistic novels — have justified him in appropriating anything that life happened to offer which was suitable to his purposes of the moment. Like many better novelists, Callaghan is less inventive than imaginative. He is always ready to use a good character or a good situation time and again under various guises, so that the priest whom he portrays in real life in *That Summer in Paris* (the priest who loved drink too well and has walked with sixteen men to the death chamber) appears, variously transformed, in both his early novel, *It's Never Over,* and his middle-period novel, *More Joy in Heaven.*

But even more interesting than the buds of character and situation which Callaghan has more or less successfully transplanted into his novels from the life portrayed in *That Summer in Paris* are the statements of his literary principles which are scattered through the pages of his Paris memoirs. Like Samuel Butler, George Orwell and Ernest Hemingway, Callaghan came in his own way (which he does not very clearly reveal to us) to the conclusion that — in our age at least — writing must be uncomplicated and direct. It should present the object — not seek to transform it into something it is not or use something else to suggest or describe it.

> I remember deciding that the root of the trouble with writing was that poets and storywriters used language to evade, to skip away from the object, because they could never bear to face the thing freshly and see it freshly for what it was in itself.

Hence metaphor must be avoided. At this point in the argument it is ironical to find Callaghan picking for the special target of his attack the man who wrote in the Preface to Lyrical Ballads that the language of poetry should be "a selection of the language really spoken by men."

> Those lines, *A primrose by the river's brim a yellow primrose was to him, and it was nothing more,* often troubled me, aroused my anger. What the hell else

> did Wordsworth want it to be? An orange? A sunset? I would ask myself, Why does one thing have to remind you of something else?

It goes against the grain to defend Wordsworth at his most inane, but there is a certain obtuseness about Callaghan's argument which suggests that he did not even attempt to consider the uses of metaphor; at least, however, he makes quite clear the practice he intends to follow in his own work.

He follows this first statement with hostile references to "arty writers" and uses "too literary" as a regular term of condemnation. He remarks that "it was part of my writing creed to distrust calculated charm in prose," and he shows a hostility towards critics and "writers about writers" which — even if his later actions have shown it to be rather suspect — can be interpreted as part of his general reaction against literary self-consciousness. Elsewhere he talks of aiming at a writing "as transparent as glass", and in what is probably his most significant statement he tells us this:

> But I knew what I was seeking in my Paris street walks, and in the typing hours — with Loretto waiting to retype a chapter. It was this: strip the language, and make the style, the method, all the psychological ramifications, the ambience of the relationships, all the one thing, so the reader couldn't make separations. Cézanne's apples. The appleness of apples. Yet just apples.
>
> Wandering around Paris I would find myself thinking of the way Matisse looked at the world around him and find myself growing enchanted. A pumpkin, a fence, a girl, a pineapple on a tablecloth — the thing seen freshly in a pattern that was a gay celebration of things as they were. Why couldn't all people have the eyes and the heart that would give them this happy acceptance of reality? The word made flesh. The terrible vanity of the artist who wanted the word without the flesh. I can see now that I was busy rejecting even then that arrogance of the spirit, that fantasy running through modern letters and thought that man was alien in this universe. From Pascal to Henry Miller they are the children of St. Paul.

The philosophy is clear and, as Callaghan expresses it, consistent. Writing is concerned with, in the old Godwinian phrase, things as they are. Its purpose is statement. It should be simple — so "transparent" as to be self-effacing. The style and the content should become one, indivisible. Writing should not detach itself from the visible world which, for Callaghan as for Gautier, exists. Callaghan shared his attitude, as I have remarked, with many writers of his time; it was part of the great reaction against the reign of Symbolism. At the same time, he did not reject entirely those who followed other directions. We find him admiring Joyce, that most deliberately "literary" of all writers, and Fitzgerald, though he also says of him:

> And what could be left for Scott when the glamorous wandering was over? When 'a primrose by a river's brim, a yellow primrose was to him, and it was nothing more.' My old theme. Nothing more; the wonder of the thing in itself. Right for me. But not for Scott.

THE THEORY of writing Callaghan puts forward in *That Summer in Paris* is rational enough, but literature is not produced by logical consistency. Carried to extremes, such a theory would result in a total atrophy of feeling, but no real writer works by theory, and Callaghan as often deserts his ideal of stark, direct statement as Zola does his vaunted scientific realism. Every Callaghan novel deals with man as a moral being, and hence it is led into realms where the statement cannot be direct; here, even when metaphor is not used obviously, it enters in the larger symbolic sense. A whole essay could be written on the significance of the cathedrals which appear at crucial points in every novel that Callaghan wrote, from the Canadian cathedral in his first novel, *Strange Fugitive*, of which he says, "You can't get away from it. It's right in the centre of things", to the universal cathedral, St. Peters, in *Passion in Rome*, where the ceremonies connected with the death of the Pope proclaim the endurance of universal verities which reflect on the morally tortured life of the novel's characters.

Strange Fugitive is probably nearer than any other Callaghan novel to being a textbook example of his writing theory carried into practice. The narrative style is simple and for the most part decorated only by a frequent use of vernacular. At times the tone is that of a rather naïve person laconically telling a tale.

> The practice was over, he went into the dressing-room and talked with some of the players. He watched a fellow stretched out on his belly getting a rub down. He smelled the liniment, and thought maybe the fellow had a charlie horse. Most players undressed slowly, singing and telling stories. They talked loudly and happily. Harry picked up a fellow's ball-shoes and whacked them on the floor, knocking the mud out of the spikes.

There is no need to seek far among the companions of Callaghan's youth to find something very similar. In the passage I have quoted, Callaghan was speaking as author; here Hemingway speaks through the mouth of one of his characters.

> Walcott had been just hitting him for a long time. It was like a baseball player pulls a ball and takes some of the shock off. From now on Walcott commenced

> to land solid. He certainly was a socking-machine. Jack was trying to block everything now. It didn't show what an awful beating he was taking. In between the rounds I worked on his legs. The muscles would flutter under my hands all the time I was working them. He was as sick as hell.

Of the two passages Callaghan's is perhaps the better, but the similarity shows that, in their duller moments, both Callaghan and Hemingway slipped into an almost anonymous period style. Because it contains so much writing of this kind, *Strange Fugitive* is the most dated and the least individual of Callaghan's early works.

In content, *Strange Fugitive* is already typical Callaghan, a novel of consequences. The very first sentence strikes the note.

> Harry Trotter, who had a good job as foreman in Pape's lumberyard, was determined everybody should understand he loved his wife.

What follows is Harry's fall from this respectable niche because of his failure to control his passions. His predilection for violence loses him the good job in the timber yard. The attractions of an easy-going divorcée lead him away from his wife; here, incidentally, we find a situation that recurs constantly in Callaghan's work — the conflict between sacred and profane love, between the slender, somewhat frigid wife figure and the abundantly fleshed amoral mistress, the Jocasta figure of men who, like Harry Trotter, loved their mothers too well. Infidelity and careless violence lead to lawlessness and deliberate violence. Harry becomes a bootlegger, kills the boss of a rival gang, and dies under the sawn-off shotguns of his enemies. It is a fate that rolls on with massive inevitability, like a Buddhist Karma; in fact the very symbol of Karma fills Harry's eyes as he lies dying. "He saw the wheels of the car going round and round, and the car got bigger. The wheels went round slowly and he was dead."

Strange Fugitive is a Canadian Rake's Progress. At first sight its inexorable and highly formalized pattern of retribution seems at variance with Callaghan's expressed aim of direct and natural writing. Is this really, one wonders, Cézanne's apples? But the inconsistency is only apparent. For the aim of stripping the language, of seeing things as they are and using writing to make statements about them is as much a moral as an aesthetic aim; it is part of the puritanical or Jansenist revolt against luxury in art and thought as well as in life. The great moralist writers have always sought for a renewed directness of language, from Bunyan and Swift to Orwell and Gide. But in none of them is this simplification

of style an expression of fictional realism; in fact it tends to remove such writers from the true business of the realist novel, that objective exploration of character which, as Flaubert and Tolstoy knew, requires all the subtlety, all the mutability and all the richness of suggestion of which language is capable. *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Gulliver's Travels* are neither novels nor realistic, and even the typical works of the later moralists, like *Strait is the Gate* and *1984*, deliberately abandon plausibility to achieve the highly formal and artificial pattern of the moral parable. Callaghan belongs in this company; his view of style is essentially moralistic, and every one of his works fails or succeeds according to the success with which he manipulates the element of parable within it.

This is the underlying motivation of Callaghan's desire to "strip down" which, as his art grows, he carries forward into such larger elements as action and character. It is the essence of the parable-novel to keep attention focussed closely on the moral question which the author is posing to the reader. Hence the multiplication of sub-plots is to be avoided, the leading characters must be few and well-defined, the minor characters must be used at crucial points to perform actions or make statements that help to illuminate the theme. Gide and Camus found in the peculiarly French *récit* the ideal form and volume for the moral parable, and Orwell's best work in this vein was his slightest and least complicated, *Animal Farm*.

Similarly, in Callaghan, we see a progression in his earlier novels toward the simplification of structure. At the same time there is compensating enrichment of the language which reveals an inevitable relaxation of the rules Callaghan had set himself as an apprentice writer. It is true that his characters continue to speak in that peculiar rough patois which is his personal version — a kind of Basic Vernacular — of the impoverished language of contemporary North American man; in fact the dialogue becomes more laconic from novel to novel, but when it is well done the very sparseness provides an effective contrast to the fuller narrative style.

Callaghan, even at this point, rarely resorts to obvious metaphor. But there are ways of being metaphorical without seeming so. The Imagists discovered one of them, for the objects they presented with such clear delineation were so evocative as to acquire metaphorical status. When an orthodox Imagist like H. D. says:

> In my garden
> even the wind-flowers lie flat
> broken by the wind at last . . .

those wind-flowers are a great deal more than botanical specimens. The very absence of specific links, like those which are made in a simile, make images of this kind productive of a rich overgrowth of association. That objects have their own ambiguity and mean more in the mind than facts has been well understood by a later generation of writers, like Robbe-Grillet and Butor.

It is to this quasi-metaphorical use of imagery that Callaghan turns abundantly in his second novel, *It's Never Over*. This is a novel of the everlasting return; it begins and ends with a street car journey; it concerns three people who are close to a man hanged for murder and who find themselves drawn into an inescapable circle of emotions which arouse unadmitted hatreds and loves and which lead the hero — the dead man's friend — to the edge of a second murder. At one point the hero and the sister of the hanged man sit on the back porch of the house where he had lived.

> "Practically all the flowers are gone now," Isabelle said.
>
> Stems of flowers were still standing in the garden earth; withered flowers with broken stems; a few asters and zinnias still in bloom but fading in the daytime sun; tall stalks of flowers lying dry and dead against the fence. The leaves were still thick on the grape-vine.
>
> "I hate to see the last of them go," she said. "I worked with them all summer."

The fading of the flowers is clearly linked with Isabelle's appearance on that day.

> Since she had become so much thinner her nose now was almost too large for her face, and her forehead and chin were too prominent . . . She had on a black crepe dress, a collar high on her neck. The dress was a little too large, there was no movement under it, the cloth folds were unnaturally still.

Everything in this passage, even if Callaghan does not present it as metaphor, in fact means something more than itself. The withering of the flowers suggests the withering of Isabelle's hopes of life, the ending of summer is linked with the winter of death that hangs over the minds of the characters throughout the novel, and Isabelle's black dress, with no movement beneath it and its "unnaturally still" cloth folds, brings to one's mind the idea of a mort-cloth and recalls the funeral of the hanged man that had taken place earlier in the day. In fact, as we see, Callaghan's primrose is no longer "nothing more". He is using, like other writers, the traditional devices of literature.

This becomes increasingly evident in his third novel, *A Broken Journey*, written at the beginning of the thirties. This is a very undisciplined novel, in which the characters are far less clearly realized than the central trio in *It's Never*

Over. It is also a longer book than either of its predecessors, and it anticipates such later long novels as *The Many Colored Coat* and *Passion in Rome* in its failure to focus clearly on significant action, in its limping pace and in the author's inability to provide a structure that will discipline the volume of material.

A Broken Journey deals with such themes as love and infidelity, the aspects of innocence, and the contrast between the indifferent natural world and the ideals by which we try to approach it. In their own ways, all the characters suffer tragedy because of the distortions of love which their own natures conspire with external circumstances to force upon them. Peter Gould, temporarily paralyzed after being pushed downstairs by a rejected mistress, and thus rendered incapable of becoming the lover of Marion Gibbons on the trip they take into the wilderness, represents on a physical level the deprivation of the other characters. Marion loses her prized virginity to the boatman, Steve, a man of the wilderness, and feels only disappointment and "a strange impersonal tenderness". She departs, defeated, and leaves Peter to the closeness of his clearly symbolic "small white room". Indeed, *A Broken Journey* is packed with symbolic objects — the roses that stand for doomed innocence, the threatening waterweeds that clog the river in the wilderness, the white unattainable mountain peak "that looked like an immense, crude rugged cathedral of rock . . ." Furthermore, in this novel Callaghan introduces long stretches of landscape description which is intended partly to evoke the impersonal power of the natural world and partly to deepen the shadows of mood in the depiction of a series of doomed relationships.

IN THE TWO YEARS — 1932 to 1934 — that separate *A Broken Journey* from *Such is My Beloved*, the leap forward is extraordinary. *A Broken Journey* might have been the product of a young promise disintegrating; *Such is My Beloved* is the work of a writer who has — at least for a period — found his true direction. Since this and Callaghan's other novels of the 1930's form a closely related group it may be well to start by indicating some of their common characteristics. All of them are novels of their time, in which the writer shows a deep consciousness of existing social ills; it is depression conditions that originally drive Ronnie to prostitution in *Such is My Beloved* and scar Michael Aikenhead's young manhood with unemployment in *They Shall Inherit the Earth.* At the same time there is no suggestion — at least in Callaghan's own

attitude — of the political messianism that spoilt so many novels in the thirties; he is well enough aware of the arguments of those who call themselves the socially conscious, as the harangues of Bill Johnson show in *They Shall Inherit the Earth*, but he passes no Marxist judgment and the effects of a depression environment on his characters are observed objectively. But, while at times Callaghan appears to present a realistic picture of the social landscape of his decade, and skilfully reinforces the illusion by an effectively controlled description of the physical setting in which his characters move, these are no more novels of social analysis than they are of political propaganda.

They are essentially, as their biblical titles suggest, novels of moral predicament. Each asks its question. What are the bounds of Christian love? How far can a man be free when all his acts affect the lives of others? Can the prodigal ever return to the world against which he has risen in rebellion? Can the individual assert and maintain his human dignity in an acquisitive society? Each novel asks its questions; none provides the glib and easy answer.

It is these moral questions that dominate and shape the novels of Callaghan's middle period to the virtual exclusion of other considerations. While the apparent plausibility of background and of minor action may at first deceive the reader, neither the characters nor the structures of action in these novels are in any sense realistic. Considered as probable human beings, Father Dowling and Kip Caley are absurd; considered as the God's Fools of moral allegory they at once assume authenticity. Similarly the two Aikenheads, Michael and his father Andrew in *They Shall Inherit the Earth*, are radically simplified individuals who live fully only in terms of their essential moral predicament; everything else about them — their relationships with people outside the circle affected by the death of Dave Choat, their naïve loves and ambitions — is roughly sketched. As in a picture by Tintoretto, the almost slurred vagueness of detail has the effect of concentrating our attention on the central pattern, the moral heart of the work.

The patterns of action are equally simplified, and, as in Callaghan's first novel and in all the novels of the classic moralist tradition, the chain of consequences works out inexorably. Kip is not allowed to become merely disillusioned with the society to which he returns; he has to be physically as well as morally destroyed. Andrew Aikenhead is only reprieved after he has endured all the bitter stages of a moral crucifixion. The actions of the characters themselves are as unrealistic as the destinies that rule them. Father Dowling's haunting of the prostitutes he decides to befriend is plausible only as a manifestation of neurotic obsession; but, despite the priest's eventual mental breakdown — another blow

of relentless fate — it is obvious that Callaghan is not wasting his time on a clinical picture of mental aberration. Father Dowling's actions, like his character, assume meaning — even in merely asthetic terms — only if we regard them as contributing to the symbolic structure of a moral statement. Kip Caley's gross naiveté, his optimism, his extraordinary blindness to the implications of anything outside the almost messianic mission that inspires him — all of these characteristics and all of the actions that stem from them would seem improbably childish if we did not apply in reading *More Joy in Heaven* similar standards to those we apply in reading *Don Quixote*. Kip Caley is not a likely human being, nor does he seem intended to be one, in spite of the fact that the record of a real-life criminal provided the hints on which Callaghan worked in writing the novel.

It is in fact within a clearly established moral spectrum that all the characters and their actions in Callaghan's three central novels are to be observed. They range from the innocent full circle to innocence's parody, the amoral. The innocence of Julie in *More Joy in Heaven*, an innocence which experience cannot soil, is doubled by the frightening cynicism of the fur-thief Foley who leads Kip to his doom. In *They Shall Inherit the Earth* the joyful natural innocence of Anna saves Michael morally and brings him to the final reconciliation with his father and his own conscience, but Anna herself is for one perilous evening endangered by the ophidian lust of the amoral Huck Farr, every man's comrade and every woman's enemy. The amoral characters in these novels always appear as tempters; it is another of them, Lou, who holds the prostitute Ronnie in *Such is My Beloved* to her path of degradation and profits by it. Hence the ultimates of the spectrum must be regarded as the innocent and the diabolical, and in the gulf between them the central characters wage their struggles not merely within their own hearts, but also externally, with the great amorphous being of a conscienceless society represented by the chorus of minor characters, the indifferent, the cowardly, the proud and the corrupt.

Callaghan's rebels, as he presents them, are not anarchistic rebels; it is essential to the drama of Kip Caley that he should return to society repenting just such a rebellion. The actual martyr figures in all three novels suffer acutely because normal society misunderstands and rejects them. It is the knowledge that his fellow citizens are wrongly accusing him of the murder of his stepson that breaks Andrew Aikenhead's spirit; Father Dowling's calvary begins when he discovers that a devout Catholic family, famous for its charitable works, will not accept as human beings the prostitutes he befriends; Kip Caley's catastrophe comes when he realizes that the people who appeared full of enthusiastic admiration

for his desire to live by good works have been merely enjoying the thrill of associating with a notorious and reformed ex-criminal and have never understood the moral urge that burnt within him. Not merely do such characters seek reconciliation with the society that rejects them; they also try to bring about the reconciliation of other rejected ones who have sought refuge in the sub-societies of prostitution and crime. The sinister unresponsiveness of society, and the moral insensitiveness of its symbolic figures — judges, bishops, politicians — suggests that Callaghan is posing the classic opposition between moral man and immoral society, between the actions urged by conscience and the actions dictated by custom and institution. The ambiguous symbolism of the Cathedral, particularly in *Such is My Beloved*, extends this dichotomy into the world of religion, into the difference between acts spurred by Christian compassion and acts necessary for the institutional stability of the church on earth.

In writing these novels Callaghan used effectively the limited resources of a talent which his own statements on his early aims in writing have defined. Like the French writers of the *récits*, he chose a simple moral theme and gave it flesh and substance through the lives of his characters. Economy of structure and action, simplicity of language and imagery, a bold use of a few key symbolic settings in each novel, such as the hotel room in *More Joy In Heaven*, the lake and the rooming house in *They Shall Inherit the Earth;* these elements provide an appropriate form for the kind of parable Callaghan set out to write at this period. The novels are not flawless. At times the feeling softens into sentimentality; at times the clear writing muddies into dullness; at times the characters are not plausible even within their own allegorical framework. But as a group these three novels, all published between 1934 and 1937, represent Callaghan's best work outside some of his short stories, and one of the real achievements in Canadian writing.

FOURTEEN YEARS passed before Callaghan's next novel, *The Loved and The Lost*, appeared in 1951, and another nine years before *The Many Colored Coat* was published in 1960, to be followed by *A Passion in Rome* in 1961. I do not know the reason for the long interval between the novels of the 1930's and *The Loved and the Lost* (with its curious Fitzgeraldish title) in the 1950's. But for the purposes of this essay the biographical details are un-

important. What is important is that since the last war Callaghan has been trying a somewhat different kind of novel, which has brought him on a long and not entirely successful journey away from his early aims in writing. Abandoning the *récit*-like form of his best period, he has sought the complexity of the classic realistic novel. *A Passion in Rome* is described twice on the dust jacket as "A Major Novel", and, while the publisher may have been responsible for this so patently inaccurate description, there is no doubt that ever since the war Callaghan has been seeking to produce a successful work of greater dimensions than anything he had written before.

Unfortunately his three most recent novels have been large in size but not in texture. Even the monolithic grandeur of moral tragedy that lingers in the mind after reading *Such is My Beloved* or *More Joy in Heaven* is totally absent from one's recollection of *The Loved and the Lost* or either of its successors.

On reading *The Loved and the Lost* one immediately perceives an absence of the unity of conception that marked its predecessors. There is a moral theme of a kind, rather indistinctly embodied in former Professor McAlpine's inner conflict over his infatuation for the ambiguous Peggy Sanderson and his neglect of the cold, career-ensuring Junior Leaguer, Catherine Carver. But in the main Callaghan is seeking other goals, and *The Loved and the Lost* becomes a curious grafting together of the social novel and the romance. The overworld of the Carvers and their quasi-patrician "society" set is opposed by the underworld of the negro cabarets where Peggy Sanderson, even if she rejects conventional society, vainly seeks acceptance by its unconventional substitute. Peggy herself becomes in Jim's sentimental vision a kind of *princesse lointaine*, accompanied by symbolical devices — the carved leopard and the church which the hero can never again discover — that belong in the tradition of courtly romance. Jim's desire for Peggy never seems much more real than its object, and their relationship enters a further stage of romantic mistiness as the novel assumes the form of an Orpheus myth, with Jim going into the underworld to rescue his Eurydice and losing her to death when gaining her seems most assured. The world of the Carvers is hardly more convincing or consistent than that of Peggy Sanderson; one cannot take seriously either Catherine Carver's combination of gentility and vulgarity or McAlpine's odd values when in her company, values which make a scholar of history imagine that he has really found his vocation when he is allowed to become a columnist for the Carver newspaper with its dubious aims.

In some respects *The Many Colored Coat* is nearer the earlier novels. The moral question of the nature of innocence is elaborately posed. A respectable

bank manager, Scotty Bowman, is fascinated by the personality and the company of a free-spending, good-natured publicity man, Harry Lane. The glamour of Harry's world and the easy charms of one of the tarts who move within it arouse in Scotty a longing for the kind of extravagant living he has never allowed himself. He offers Harry a bank loan to buy speculative stocks; he makes a false statement to his head office, and then the stocks crash. Scotty is arrested for embezzlement, and at the trial Harry is shown in a dubious light by a doggedly loyal but rather thick-witted friend of Scotty, the boxer turned tailor Mike Cohn. Scotty commits suicide in prison. The hatred between Harry and Mike grows, and it excites the mocking laughter of the Montreal bar-flies when Harry starts to wear, in and out of season, a shoddy jacket Mike had made for him. In the end, provoked beyond endurance by Harry's clowning, Mike knocks him down a flight of stairs, and Harry is paralyzed temporarily (an echo of Peter Gould's misfortune in *A Broken Journey*). At the trial which follows, Harry, who has suddenly seen the relationship between himself and Scotty in another focus, does not appear; Mike seems triumphant, only to abdicate at that moment the right of judgment he has previously exercised. The moral of the novel — and there seems no description quite so adequate as that old-fashioned term — is summed up in the question Harry asks himself, "if innocence is like a two-edged sword without a handle, and if you gripped it and used it, it cut you so painfully you had to lash out blindly, seeking vengeance on someone for the bleeding."

This is a theme of the same order as those which inspired Callaghan's novels of the thirties, but it is not served by the same simplicity and economy of writing. Rather like Hemingway in *The Old Man and the Sea*, Callaghan drags out to tedium an idea that could have been admirably treated in half the 318 pages to which *The Many Colored Coat* actually runs. The looseness of construction is paralleled in the characterization, which hovers uneasily between the sharpness of caricature and the flabbiness of sentimental pseudo-realism. The women characters are the most ill-drawn. Like most Canadian male authors, Callaghan has always had difficulty in portraying women except as types — the cold, proud pseudo-saint and the easy-hearted, loose-legged floozie; the leading women in *The Many Colored Coat* represent these types at their worst, Mollie an insufferable prig and Annie a kind of soft-centred candy doll.

A Passion in Rome is Callaghan's most recent, most ambitious and least successful novel. Unlike his earlier novels, in all of which the characters were seeking justification and acceptance in their own worlds, *A Passion in Rome* concerns two lonelinesses meeting in an alien setting. From the very moment when Sam

Raymond reaches Rome, feeling scared and alone, the emphasis is on the need, not to find one's world, so much as to find oneself. Sam, an unsuccessful painter turned news-photographer, is another latter-day Orpheus who discovers his particular Eurydice in Anna, a television singer ruined by drink. Each of the two seeks some new accepting world; Sam wonders "if there couldn't still be some one place in the world where a man's life might take on meaning," and Anna, with Italian blood in her veins, lives in a displaced American's fantasy of being "a Roman woman". Both learn that one cannot fly through space away from oneself. The only Rome they can find is the false Rome of tourists, pilgrims, newsmen; the real Rome of the little dark Romans is always closed and hostile, and they are forced to face each other in the closeness of a symbolic single room, where Sam searches into the darkness, draws Anna into the light and then loses this Eurydice whom he is too anxious to keep. In the moment of loss he finds himself, and so the two part heroically to face their individual futures; the novel ends, if not happily, at least triumphantly, as Callaghan tells us in an excruciating last sentence. "He felt all at once fiercely exultant."

A Passion in Rome is clumsily constructed and so verbose that one wonders what has happened to the old vows to achieve a writing "as transparent as glass". The set pieces of the Pope's funeral and the election of his successor project a background of stuccoish unreality against which the human drama never emerges into authenticity. Sam is the kind of improbable romantic fool who in Callaghan's earlier phase might have been raised to something approaching allegorical grandeur. But *A Passion in Rome* has all the signs of being intended as a realistic novel, and in a setting described with such crowded detail a hero of this kind is out of place. Anna comes into the novel fighting, interesting in her sulky perversity, and one expects much of her; but Sam's devotion irons out her individuality to a self-abnegating silliness which the author himself seems to have found unendurable, since at this point he quickly draws the novel to an end.

As characters Sam and Anna are too mechanically exemplary to have any place in a novel in the realist tradition, but at the same time insufficiently distilled to form the core of an effective moral parable. Ultimately the test of characters lies in what they say and how they speak. Callaghan's earlier characters are often laconic in their peculiar Callaghanese way of speaking; but they are usually idiosyncratic enough to be acceptable. The language in which Sam and Anna converse is undifferentiated substandard North American. One opens the book at random and is faced, usually, by something like this:

"Do you really have to go singing there, Carla?" he asked, surprised.

"He'll pay me, Sam. I'll be getting some money. Singing and getting some money."

"You just said he wouldn't pay you much."

"Look, Sam. You're the boss. Don't you want me to sing there?"

"I don't care," he said, laughing awkwardly. "I mean the thing was to have you see you could sing anywhere. There's nothing to stop you doing anything you want. It's settled now, and you're free in your mind about it."

"It means some money for just being myself, Sam. It's easy."

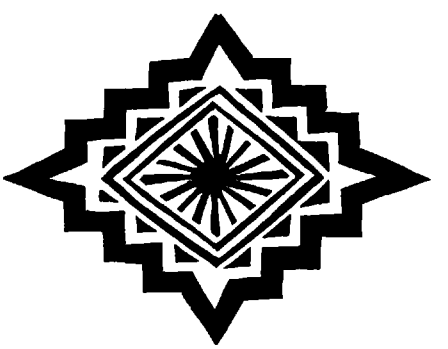
"How much?"

"A couple of hours a night. See that you get ten thousand lire a night out of him, Sam."

"About a hundred a week, eh?"

Such passages proliferate, filling up pages but achieving very little else. Thus the search for transparency in writing has ended in a kind of dialogue so dull that its effect is one of complete opacity.

Has another Eurydice vanished into the darkness? Certainly *A Passion in Rome* demonstrates more convincingly than ever that Callaghan is never likely to be a good novelist in the grand manner; the moralist allegories of the thirties remain his best works of longer fiction. Yet perhaps it is not too late to expect a turn in that devious path which Callaghan's inspiration has followed. The freshness and honesty and directness of *That Summer in Paris*, springing up unexpectedly between two such laborious works as *The Many Colored Coat* and *A Passion in Rome*, showed that Callaghan has not yet lost the qualities which — however he may have recently neglected them — have made him a Canadian writer who cannot be overlooked.



THEY SHALL HAVE ARCANA

E. B. Gose

SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE, the medical profession became more attached to gold and methodology than to the human nature of the patient. Chaucer recorded this in the fourteenth century, as did Paracelsus in the sixteenth. After sixty years of psychiatry, modern readers are probably sympathetic with Paracelsus' concern for the patient's emotions, and perhaps even with his mystical evocation of alchemy. In 1529 he made an attack on the establishment of physicians, looking to the occult for future progress.

> Don't trust you Galen and Avicenna. The Stone will be crushed and the Heaven [i.e., alchemy and astronomy] will make new doctors who know the four elements, magic and Cabbala. They will be *adepts* and *archei.* They will be chemists and possess the quintessence. They shall have arcana, the tinctures, and the mysteries.[1]

The attempt to turn some such yearning for a spiritual key to the secrets of life into active and practical help for man is made by the hero of Gwendolyn MacEwen's novel, *Julian the Magician.*[2] Like the hero of Bergman's movie, *The Magician,* he travels with a small troop in a wagon from town to town. He also meets with "the town elders" and is quizzed by the sceptical town physician whose wife feels an affinity for the magician. Like the other again, Julian both believes and doubts the mysteries and illusions he is involved in. Actually his relation to them is quite different, but before we begin to discover how, let me mention some of the defects of Miss MacEwen's novel.

Bergman's strong point — his mastery of the mood and tone which force us to suspend disbelief — is unfortunately her weak point. The setting of the novel is vaguely post-Renaissance, but the language is poetic and ironic, slangy modern and analytic. The ingredients do not mix smoothly. There remains the story:

Julian is imitating Christ, as indicated not only by chapter titles but by long italicized passages paraphrased from appropriate sections of the New Testament. Consequently, the reader who knows what happened to Christ knows what happens to Julian the Magician. If, therefore, this study, which began in alchemy, now leaves behind any attempt to deal with the story as such, and moves on to more alchemy, a fairy tale, and mystical psychiatry, my excuse is that Miss MacEwen brings it on herself.

Like this study, her book is self-conscious. Especially so is her title character. The parallels with the life of Christ are there mainly because Julian forces them on himself and others. By the time we reach the end of the novel, we are even ready to believe that they are the natural manifestation of an archetypal pattern. I mention this possibility to indicate that Miss MacEwen is also self-conscious. Undigested references to little-read religious figures help attest to this: we are given quotations from Celsus, in his anti-Christian work; Origen, the early church father who answered him; Boehme and Paracelsus; the Zohar, the Kabbalah and the *Pistis Sophia* ("a Christian Gnostic writing with roots in upper Egypt" [p. 113]).

"Undigested," I said, *as references*. But suppose we take seriously the world this opens up to Julian and his author. Suppose we look at the details and patterns of the novel in the light of Julian's main difference with his teacher Kardin. Kardin is a magician whose real interest is in alchemy, that is, in the real if mysterious changes substances can undergo. Julian is a magician whose real interest is "human alchemy," that is, the real if mysterious changes people undergo. Holding the full implications of the "human" part until later, let's begin with the alchemic part of the phrase. Julian scorns the magician who can see no farther than trickery. "Woe to a pig like Cagliostro who shoved gold into a tube during an experiment where he claimed to 'transmute' metal!" (p. 112). This opinion takes on force when we remember Julian's comment on his mother from the previous page: "I think that even after 20 years she still feels that gypsy shoving me into her womb." Add to the verb "shove" the fact that Julian has his gypsy father's dark skin but blond "golden hair", and we realize an intended parallel. Just as Julian has a "dark" past (illegitimacy) but can have a golden future, so as a human alchemist he tries to create gold out of lead, light out of dark.

The two undoubted miracles that Julian performs are first to give an idiot the light of human intelligence and second to give a blind man the light of human vision. Both miracles occur in the same place, by the river in the dark, in the

mud and bullrushes. The first man appears to an outside observer like "a log, a piece of darkness" (p. 31). The second one has his eyes wiped with Julian's spit mixed with dirt; he is then sent to the river whence he returns dripping with riverweed, his sight restored. The crowd hails Julian as a man of God, a "divine black-christ" (p. 56). Julian runs away, partly because he is dazed and humble, but also partly out of self-irony. When, for instance, his disciple Peter asks of the first miracle, "what did you do there?" Julian answers, "Spit spittle! Made charms . . . peed in the bullrushes!" (p. 39 author's ellipses). He also speaks of "magic manure." Earlier, while still an apprentice magician, he had noted in his diary, "bullrushes, by the way — I noticed this yesterday — are actually bulls' feces" (p. 119). He is in other words working from the dark principle which the Gnostics, the alchemists and modern psychiatry have all seen as the true source of "high" aspiration.

An alchemical motto was "Our gold is not vulgar gold." Although early practitioners, as well as late, certainly worked with physical substances, the spiritual theme is present in one of the earliest of alchemical documents, the Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus, a brief, general, and typically obscure series of statements. I quote two:

> What is below, is like what is above, and what is above is like that which is below, for the performing of the marvels of the one thing.
>
> It ascends from the earth into the heaven, and again descends into the earth and receives the power of the superiors and inferiors.[3]

Similarly, Julian in his diary writes,

> The wholes are parts of a Whole and the Whole has all parts and no parts. IAO IAO IAO. Is the High Self going forth in manifestation. IAO is the disciplined lower mind.
>
> IAO is christ and I am iao.[4]

We will follow this central identification or transformation farther presently. But first we must look at the passage preceding the foregoing in Julian's diary. "Saturn devoured his children, says Boehme. What is this? . . . The magician eats his parts. We eat our parts to form wholes" (p. 124). Saturn was lead in alchemic symbolism. He was also the devouring father (Cronos) who ate the younger gods, one of whom was destined to overthrow him. That one, Jupiter (Zeus), forced him to disgorge the glory he contained. We can see a basis, in other words, for the alchemic symbolism. But the same situation can also be phrased in a

pattern with religious overtones: the dark wild man both contains and is the forerunner of the saviour figure.

In case this way of putting it doesn't automatically turn the reader's mind to the New Testament, let's look at the first of Miss MacEwen's italic passages, her version of John the Baptist: "The wild man, standing knee-deep in the water, his coat of camel's hair dripping and absurd . . . acknowledged and baptized him" (p. 14). "Him" is of course Christ, or in the novel Julian. Keeping in mind Julian's golden hair "like the sun rising" (p. 42), and not forgetting Saturn as the heavy father, I would like to turn aside from the novel for a page or two, and assert that Miss MacEwen's description of John the Baptist is strikingly similar to the description given in a German folk tale of its title character, "Iron Hans" (as collected by the brothers Grimm). Because the tale itself is relevant — like alchemy a carryover from the dark ages — I shall simply retell it as briefly as possible.

A MAN HUNTING GAME in a forest where other huntsmen had disappeared saw a naked arm reach out of a deep pool and draw in his dog. When three men had emptied the pool with pails, they discovered at the bottom a wild man whose hair hung down over his face to his knees. This wild man (Iron Hans) was bound and taken to the castle where the king had an iron cage made for him. The key to it was entrusted to the queen. The king's young son, playing alone in the courtyard one day, bounced his golden ball into the cage by mistake. Iron Hans refused to give it back unless freed. When the boy reluctantly agreed, the wild man told him that the key lay under his mother's pillow. The boy got it, but in opening the cage door pinched his fingers. The wild man came out, gave him the golden ball and started to leave. The boy pleaded with him not to go or he would be beaten for freeing him. Iron Hans then set the boy on his shoulder and carried him into the depths of the forest.

There he explained that the boy must stay with him, but that he would be treated well if he did as he was told. "I have treasure and gold enough and to spare, more than anyone in the whole world." The boy's task was to guard a golden well to see that nothing fell in and contaminated it. As he sat by it, however, the boy's finger pained him so much that involuntarily he dipped it in the water. It came out gilded and nothing he could do would take off the gold. Iron Hans discovered it, but let him off. Next a hair from his head fell in. Again

he was let off. The third time, as he was looking at himself in the water, his long hair fell in, and when he pulled it out, it was golden and glittered like the sun. He tied his handkerchief over it, but Iron Hans exposed it and said that this time he must banish the boy. Since he knew the boy's heart was not bad, however, Iron Hans granted him one thing. If he were ever in need, he could come and call for Iron Hans at the edge of the forest.

Keeping a cap over his gold hair, the youth became a cook's helper to a king. When the king asked why he did not take off his cap in the royal presence, the youth answered that he had a bad wound on his head. He then became the gardener's boy. The king's daughter, attracted by the reflection of his hair, asked him for some flowers. To her surprise he brought her wild ones; when he would not take off his cap, she snatched it off. Then she gave him some gold coins. He gave them to the gardener's children to play with. This sequence was repeated a second day. On the third day he foiled her efforts.

War broke out, and the youth was determined to help, despite the ridicule of the warriors. He rode a three-legged horse to the forest where he called "Iron Hans!" Thanks to the wild man, the youth was able to lead an iron troop on a fiery charger and win the day for the king. Afterwards, hoping to find out who his unknown helper was, the king gave a three-day feast. On the first day, the princess threw a golden apple which was caught by the youth, who had been outfitted again by Iron Hans. The second day the same thing happened. The third day, the youth, dressed in black armor, was pursued. He escaped after being wounded in the leg, but his helmet fell off, exposing his golden hair.

Next day the princess asked about the gardener's boy. The gardener said he was working in the garden and had given his children three golden apples. Again the princess removed his cap, and charged him with being the unknown knight. He admitted it, and being asked by the king to name a reward for his help, he chose the princess. During the wedding, a proud king burst into the hall. He identified himself as Iron Hans, whose bewitchment the youth had broken. All his treasure now belonged to the youth.

Despite my abbreviated telling of it, I assume that a sense of the impressiveness of this simple tale comes through. But what about the novel we are ostensibly considering? Comparing the two, we might draw the moral that Miss MacEwen needs a greater mastery of the genre to make the image patterns work for her as naturally as they do in the tale (where the impersonal form of repeated tellings is presumably substituted for the conscious form that a single individual must give). Yet, as we have seen, a great deal of effective patterning does exist in

Julian the Magician, and we can find more now that we have the other to put beside it.

To begin with "Iron Hans", then, I will pass by the Freudian sexual overtones without denying them. Neither will I try at this point to apply Jung directly, even though he deals with three- and four-legged horses among more interesting things in his essay on "The Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairy Tales". Working instead with what we have been dealing with, we must note the alchemic motif. From one point of view the youth is engaged in a process which results in the transformation of base metal into gold (Iron Hans into a king). The boy's actual father could see no use for the wild man but to confine him in iron. But the boy contributes his little bit of gold to liberate Iron Hans, who becomes his guardian father and finally gives him a treasure of gold. We must also note that the youth consistently gives away his gold and never asks for the treasure. On the other hand ("our gold is not vulgar gold"), the youth's unaided actions do cause his hair to turn gold.

At this point, however, we must bring in a second level, the Christian motif, which is also working in the tale. Releasing the wild man, the boy pinches his fingers, one of which he presumably then puts in the well. His head bandaged, he tells the king he has a wound on it. Later, dressed in black, he is wounded just before his gold hair is revealed. Not only is there a conjunction of dark-wound-gold, there is a pattern of the saviour (first of Iron Hans, then of the father of the princess), of his being wounded while helping, of his somehow turning the hurt to help, as if the highest good of gold or sun could be interchangeable with hurt or sacrifice. Although we are only a step from the Legend of the Grail, I will forbear and turn back to Julian.

He also has brought light out of black, using the water. Instead of the golden well he has a river. But Julian does not have what Christ and the youth had, an actual wild man to show him the way. Although John the Baptist is evoked, it is only as an analogue. Julian must baptize himself. To put it another way, we can say that he invokes what the wild man stands for: brute nature, uncivilized yet powerful, potentially divine.[5] We have already seen Miss MacEwen's images for it — darkness, dirt, excrement. In addition, toward the end of the novel, she introduces through Julian's diary an "incident" that contains a wild figure and

explains the "panic" that gripped the crowd after Julian's performances. At the request of his naïve disciple, Julian tells a myth or parable.

> The boy's name was Ernest and he was. A sort of dandelion optimism drove him to do it. . . .
> . . . He began a relentless search for the great dead god Pan, fanning out over the whole countryside. He had two assistants and they split up to form a shifting, searching triangle of which Ernest was the apex. (p. 136)

The triangle is searching for another figure which will make it a square, in Jung's terms change the incomplete trinity into a quaternity, a stable number and relation, if it includes one opposite. This opposite may be brought in by conjunction, in which case she is a woman (as the princess the youth marries or Mary in the Catholic church), or by union, in which case the hero must give himself at some point to night, to the shadow or dark wild man (as the "Devil" or Pan). But the two assistants fall asleep (under three oaks), and Ernest confronts Pan by himself. He berates Pan for being dead and leaves with Pan's apologies for not existing ringing in his ears. (Julian says of the parable: "Satire [can] reflect [a] tragic situation.")

At first we are tempted to take Julian as Ernest, since he can be connected with the gold-topped dandelion. On the other hand, Julian has two lower helpers, Johan and Aubrey, who adding Peter as Ernest, can be seen as the three searchers. The irony of Peter's relation to Julian is similar to that in the Ernest-Pan relation: He wants to help Julian and to be led, but he cannot believe in Julian's divinity or his miracles. Julian, as the "black Christ" whose performances cause panic, is a plausible Pan figure. Instead of an enchanting reed pipe, he has bullrushes by the river; his first miracle is called "the divine cure by the bullrushes" (p. 45).

True union resolves polarities, and we have seen that for Julian the whole process must be internal; he cannot naïvely look for salvation from a god or a process outside himself. In the Saturn passage he said, "The magician eats his parts . . . to form wholes." Clearly he has taken the Freudian concept of the father as a castration threat beyond its biological limitations. He makes a virtue out of castration or the loss of sexual fulfilment, as have comparable figures in history: Origen castrated himself the better to serve God. Paracelsus may have moved as Julian did beyond Celsus to an acceptance of Christ's role of magus, a miracle worker free from the contamination of women.

The search for purity and the protection from contamination links up with the golden well which Iron Hans sent the youth to guard. If he had been success-

ful in this appointed task, we can speculate that the youth would have won through to another kind of victory than that which he achieves in the outside world. Instead of the hero's victory (success in battle followed by conjunction with the princess), he would have achieved the triumph of the patient guardian, the seer, the pure Narcissus (staring at his image in the water without contaminating it). As it works out, the youth has to purge his impurity (his long hair) in action, but this should not keep us from realizing that it was theoretically possible for him to be a successful Narcissus. Julian becomes one, becomes "a perfect gold fish from the water" (p. 81). (The youth in "Iron Hans" saw gold fish swimming in the well.) And Heletius in *The Golden Calf* quotes an adept in "the philosophical mystery" of alchemy: "Break open the glassy seal of Hermes, in which the Sun sends forth a great splendor with his marvellous colored metallic rays, and in which looking glass the eyes of Narcissus behold the transmutable metals, for out of those ways the true adept philosophers gather their fire" (Taylor, p. 147).

(Lest this talk of purity confuse the reader who still recalls the earlier emphasis on darkness and dung, let me re-emphasize the paradox on which alchemy was based: it is out of the impurity of dark matter that divine light comes. Like Christ Julian dies on a cross and is buried in darkness. The youth is technically held captive in a dark forest by Iron Hans while he guards the golden well. One phase of the alchemic process was frequently the heating of a substance by placing its container in dung. A later alchemic phase is conjunction. Not to move on to it could be termed, in the Freudian reduction, to remain in the anal instead of moving out to the sexual. Like other reductionists who are out to break the code, Freud often seems not to get the point that the high is nonetheless high for being rooted in the low.)

To continue our examination of Julian as free from one kind of contamination, we should note that Miss MacEwen goes out of her way to underline his separation from womankind. His refusal of sex gives him a kind of passive power. "My gender is no matter — my mind is decidedly bi-sexual; this I can navigate in both female and male territory as freely as grass, and anticipate both female and male qualities in all things" (p. 121). This condition is a possible stage in the imitation of Christ, yet according to Jung it is a step beyond Christian dualism. "The self is a union of opposites par excellence, and this is where it differs essentially from the Christian symbol. The androgyny of Christ is the utmost concession the Church has made to the problem of opposites."[6]

Early in the book, Julian told his disciples, "Inside the womb . . . of the art,

my dear Peter . . . is a foetus, another art. The virgin craft . . . expands, feeds the other . . ." (p. 29). The art of magic contains within it the seed of another. Julian had to allow a passive feminine process to go on in him for that other to grow. Later he quotes Boehme: "Let the artist but consider . . . how he may awaken the dead and disappeared life which . . . lies hidden and captivated in the curse." Then, "if he does but bring it so far, it works of itself . . ." (p. 35, author's ellipses in foregoing quotations). This process goes on at the religious level as well.

> Man is the unconscious agent of God's creative will. He pushes genesis. . . . And I have become a conscious agent. Have dipped into my own divinity and found it warm. And thus did I approach the conscious state of deity within myself, Julian the Magician.
>
> I am therefore conscious God (p. 150)

The similarity of this conclusion to Jung's unorthodox Christian view is clear.

The unavoidable internal contradictions in the image of the Creator-God can be reconciled in the unity and wholeness of the self as the *coniunctio oppositorum* of the alchemist or as a *unio mystica*. In the experience of the self it is no longer the opposites "God" and "man" that are reconciled, as it was before, but rather the opposites within the God-image itself. That is the meaning of the divine service, of the service which man can render to God, that light may emerge from the darkness, that the Creator may become conscious of His creation, and man conscious of himself.[7]

If Julian's cry is less measured and more triumphant than Jung's, it is because he is about to suffer the fate of the Western man who becomes God: he is about to be re-absorbed into nature.

In conclusion, I would say that by allowing "the dead and disappeared life" to awaken in Julian and through him in other characters in the novel, Miss MacEwen has created patterns which may awaken her readers also. The only thing she lacks is enough control of the novel as a form, and by the time she gets into the diary, she has begun to develop that too. For the reader who can suspend his disbelief, *Julian the Magician* has a lot to offer.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Translation and comment by Henry M. Pachter in *Paracelsus: Magic into Science* (Collier paperback, 1961), pp. 153-54.

[2] By Gwendolyn MacEwen, Macmillan, 1963.

[3] F. Sherwood Taylor, *The Alchemists* (Collier paperback, 1962), p. 79.

[4] P. 124; an interpretation of the letters IAO is given in the Gnostic epigraph to the novel.

[5] These qualities, and more, are discussed by Richard Bernheimer in his interesting book, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages* (Harvard, 1952). He mentions *Iron Hans* briefly. He also mentions the legend of St. John Chrysostom who was discovered in the forest by a hunting party, crawling on all fours, his body covered with hair. He does not mention John the Baptist, nor that Chrysostom means "golden mouth." He does, however, connect the wild man with the problem of death and the religious notion of life out of death. For an essay on St. John Chrysostom that does emphasize the connection of light and dark, see pp. 52-65 of Heinrich Zimmer's fascinating book, *The King and the Corpse* (Bollingen, 1948; Meridian, 1960). Zimmer handles fairy tales and Arthurian romance in the Jungian manner, as examples of the psychic search for integration.

[6] "Introduction to the Religious and Psychological Problems of Alchemy," included in *The Basic Writings of C. G. Jung* (Modern Library, 1959), p. 450.

[7] *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (Pantheon, 1963), p. 338.

MORDECAI RICHLER

Craftsman or Artist

Naim Kattan

IN AN ARTICLE which he wrote for the special number that the American travel magazine *Holiday* recently devoted to Canada, Mordecai Richler said:

> Finally, the best influences in the world reach us from New York. The longest unmanned frontier in the world is an artificial one and I look forward to the day when it will disappear and Canadians will join fully in the American adventure. To say this in Canada is still to invite cat-calls and rotten eggs. We would lose our identity, they say, our independence. But Texas or Maine still have distinctive identities and we are even now economically dependent on the United States.

This is the logical conclusion that can be glimpsed behind Mordecai Richler's whole literary output and behind the intellectual and psychological processes from which it springs. Before accepting the argument of the cultural supremacy of the United States, this Canadian novelist explored all the ways which might have led him to a vigorous affirmation of the cultural autonomy of Canada.

The journey of Mordecai Richler in fact runs along two parallel lines which are actually projections of the same hunger and the same will to succeed; he is an adolescent doubling as the child of an immigrant.

This immigrant's son was born at a time when a middle class was beginning to take shape in the heart of the Jewish community. The child who first saw the light in the old Jewish quarter of Montreal shared the dreams and hopes of a generation which was born in Canada and wished to gather with both hands the possibilities of that American land. For that purpose, it was necessary for him to detach himself from his family, from his group, from his quarter. How

could this be done when the family and the quarter, the traditions of the group and the customs of the household, were inextricably mingled together?

In such circumstances the young man chose to reject them all at the same time. He had neither the determination nor the intellectual power to disentangle the overt and the hidden forces which formed the texture of the collective life in which he had been forced to participate. He therefore chose, as his first step, escape.

His hostility to Canadian provincialism was accentuated by the presence of a provincialism which seemed to him even narrower and which gripped him like an iron halter — that of the family. To affirm himself, he must prove himself not merely as an adult, but also as a man open to all the widest horizons of the universe. He therefore departed from Canada. The ancestral land was neither his destination nor his first port of call. Following the steps of the Lost Generation, this young pilgrim wished to demonstrate that the world in all its breadth belonged to him. Breathing the smoke-laden air of the bars of France and Spain, he thought in this way to pose his candidature for inclusion in the great company of powerful and adventurous writers. But in imagining that he was following in the steps of Hemingway, Richler deceived himself, for he was merely reviving once again and in a more complicated manner the adventures of a past decade described by Bud Schulberg in *What makes Sammy Run?*

At the age of 22, Richler's first novel, *The Acrobats*, brought to light one of the richest promises in the young tradition of Canadian literature. *The Acrobats* is in itself a mediocre novel, but, though it has all the pretentiousness and all the imperfections of a beginner's work, it reveals qualities which could equally well be those of a clever craftsman or those of a true writer.

Richler uses every means to avoid speaking directly of Canada and particularly of Canadian Jews. He sets his stage as far as possible from St. Urbain Street — in Valence, in Spain. The complex intrigues, fruits of a fevered imagination, hide imperfectly the real anxieties of the young novelist. Since timidity and bashfulness prevent him from speaking in the first person, Richler disguises his characters to the best of his ability, clothing them in borrowed garments which barely hide the conventional faces of the wicked who succeed and the good who are defeated.

His Canadian hero is not Jewish. He is an English-speaking painter who

wishes to mingle with Jews but merely succeeds in making pregnant a daughter of Israel who dies from an attempted abortion. The real Jew is a bar-keeper, a gentle and corrupted American, generous and unscrupulous, who has lost his bearings and, despite all Richler's efforts, does not emerge as a cynic.

In his second novel, *Son of a Smaller Hero*, the masks fall away. Richler does not speak in the first person, but the autobiographical tone of the book is not entirely deceptive. It is the world of his own childhood that he reveals in fictional form. The adolescent hero deprived of childhood takes his revenge. He sits in judgement on a family which has cut him off too early from an affection he desperately demanded. Three generations face each other: the adolescent Noah, romantic, sentimental, ambitious; Wolf, the father, the false hero; and the grandfather Melech, the patriarch, the guardian of the treasure handed on from generation to generation. The symbolism of the novel is too easily unravelled not to make mention of it. Wolf passes for a hero because he saves from the fire a box which everyone believes contains the rolls of the Torah but which, in his mind, only contains money. Noah is therefore right to rebel against parents who exploit authentic traditions merely to distort them, to empty them of content and meaning. Fortunately the grandfather is there to remind one that this religion which his unscrupulous children have debased had once, in an age now departed, a truth that has since been obscured and concealed.

The adolescent cannot cross the frontiers of the ghetto without doing violence to himself. He is too much affected by the traditions which nourished his childhood for him to be able to reject them except by force. It would be treating this rage of youth too seriously if we were to elevate Richler into the censor and critic of a whole community.

It is to his family that the hero owes a grudge; it is his family he accuses of not bearing the same love and feeling as he does toward a doctrine which he would like to maintain in its pristine purity, that is to say, without modification by the demanding laws of existence.

This is clearly the mental process of the adolescent. And this is what gives the novel movement, if not power. The ambitious youth who has made his reckoning with a narrow society is propelled by an irrepressible impulse. He wishes to deal as a man with adult problems. After all, has he not set himself free? Has he not said what he thinks of those who do not see beyond the wall of the ghetto? Now he must face them with the proofs of his initiation into manhood.

In *A Choice of Enemies* the ghetto, instead of vanishing, gains ground. The young Canadian leaves his country in search of horizons as wide as his ambitions.

He is Canadian, and it is as a Canadian that he wishes to affirm himself. New York? It is too near, and too much like home; he would be drowned there in the mass of thousands of immigrants' sons who hope to devour ravenously the fruits promised by a powerful and prosperous America. In London this subject of the Commonwealth feels that he might not be lost as he would be in a North America that refuses to take his Canadian characteristics seriously. But in the metropolis of the mother country "the aliens knew only other aliens." All the Canadian and American intellectuals, those in flight from McCarthy's America and those seeking the roots of their Canadian origin, are merely tourists when they get there. "For even those who had lived in London for years only knew the true life of the city as a rumour."

In this novel Richler places himself in the centre of great world problems. He brings before us the ex-Communist who fled from East Germany, the ex-Nazi, and a whole assortment of North-American fugitives who keep meeting in that vast city as if they were living in a little village where everyone knows everyone else, knows his petty habits and his grand manias. It is a novel in which skill is more in evidence than true passion.

In *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* Richler returns to his childhood. He has not yet said all there is to be said. To the bitterness, the surly anger of *Son of a Smaller Hero* is added the dream of a world in which frankness, straightforwardness and love reign together. Great is the disenchantment of the unfortunate child who has put all his hopes in the mystery of non-Jewish society and has found there the same recurring faults as elsewhere.

Duddy Kravitz and his brother are both ambitious; they are children who have emerged from the slum and long to fill their lungs with the air of the great outdoors. One of them wishes to become a possessor, to affirm his power by material conquest. The other thinks to obtain prestige and the respect of Society by his studies and his medical profession. It is a young French-Canadian girl who — for Duddy — symbolizes all the mysterious beauties and inexhaustible enchantments of the unknown world which lies beyond the ghetto. But his unhealthy ambition drives him to destroy the loyal love which gratifies him yet which he can do nothing but annihilate.

His brother gains admittance to a closed circle of Anglo-Saxon Christians. It is a bitter victory, for this world conceals nothing but moral corruption and disintegration. These young people of good family come together in order to drink, and as a sign of friendship they ask of him a service which shows how much they really despise him. They ask him to use his medical knowledge to procure an

abortion. The world that is to be encountered outside the walls of the ghetto is hardly a pleasant one.

In this novel, which is without doubt its author's most accomplished work, one can measure his talent against his limitations. Stirred by a demanding passion, he is led to destroy his characters through caricature. Facing a society which he wishes to conquer, he has no time to look at it, to understand it, to perceive its complete ambiguity. His characters are linear, for complexity would deprive them of the artificial consistency which is fabricated by a novelist whose wish to do battle is stronger than his desire to comprehend. This world without love or tenderness is at once sentimental and false — false because sentimental.

Richler manipulates situations and characters to fill a void which no degree of inventiveness can conceal. He does not succeed in breaking the yoke in which his sensibility imprisons him, for he takes no account of the sensibilities of others, and especially of his characters. These are his banner-bearers, the extensions of his own tastes and whims.

It is evident that Richler, who burns with the desire to plunge into the great ocean which he sees beyond the walls of the ghetto, can never quit St. Urbain Street. Whether he walks in England, France or Spain, he carries everywhere his little world, his secret fatherland, for he never succeeds in completing and going beyond his adolescence, which is its product.

In his last novel his choice is made. He is the master of artifice and appearance, and he intends to demonstrate the fact. In fabricating his caricatures he goes to the limit of his powers. He no longer pretends to create living personages or complex situations.

The Incomparable Atuk is a great piece of farce in which the child of the ghetto, once again disguised behind the mask of a fake Eskimo poet, makes his conquest of a world of imposters and hollow men. Richler turns his vengeful anger against all those personalities of swollen reputation and unmerited celebrity who people the intellectual world of Toronto. All of them are provincials puffed up with their false importance, blinded by their degree of influence, corrupted by the ambient complacency. The adolescent who reproached his parents and society in general for responding meagrely to his longing for purity, now directs a burst of mocking laughter against a world which was to blame for the mutilation of his dreams.

THE GREAT DEFEAT and the true failure will be those of Richler himself if he has made his long journey merely to resign himself in the end to marching in step in the ranks of that immense army of script-writers from Hollywood and the various Madison Avenues of the world who fill the pages of the popular magazines and put interminable dialogues into the mouths of the protagonists of the soap stories of television. Can he overcome his sensitiveness? Will he be able to outgrow his childhood? Richler, who is still young, might discover in time that the kind of success he obtains will prove ephemeral if the craftsman in him kills the artist. Recognizing the power of American culture is not itself an insurmountable deterrent. After all, he can tread in the paths of Bellow and Malamud instead of those of Jerome Weidman and Herman Wouk.

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review articles

AN ARTIST'S PROGRESS

George Robertson

MARGARET LAURENCE, *The Stone Angel.* McClelland & Stewart. $5.95.
MARGARET LAURENCE, *The Tomorrow-Tamer, and Other Stories.* McClelland & Stewart. $4.50.

The Stone Angel and *The Tomorrow-Tamer*, a novel and a collection of stories respectively, have come virtually in the same month to remind us of the development of Margaret Laurence as an artist. The stories, written over a period of years, have all but one been published before, in such places as *Prism*, *Tamarack Review*, and *Queen's Quarterly*, and we assume they are roughly contemporaneous with her first novel, *This Side Jordan*, which was set in Africa and published in 1960. The new novel may well have had its inception before the African stories — in some ways it seems a "first novel" — but was presumably written after Mrs. Laurence's return to Canada. Biographical speculation aside, it is written with more of what I can only call professional care, is technically more ambitious, and — unfortunately — is less successful.

Its narrator, Hagar Shipley, is at the age of ninety as unpleasant a heroine as one is likely to meet. It is no part of the author's intention to give us a sweet old lady remembering the past. She is proud, bitter, and vengeful; bloated and distended with a disease she is dying of, unable to control her bladder at night or her flatulence by day, confused by a failing grasp of immediate detail, and utterly without charity, humour, or sympathy. A character without virtues? Her one virtue is her will to stay alive, her blind and selfish rage against death, and it is in the flailing thoughts of Hagar Shipley, "rampant with memory", that Margaret Laurence has formed this extraordinary portrait.

It is a deceptive novel. It begins as though it were to be a familiar tribute to a prairie matriarch, a family portrait through the eyes of a surviving grandmother, one of those obeisances to the pioneer spirit common in the regional literature of North America. It is nothing of the kind. It is a story of a woman flawed by her pride and her concern for respectability, and the story draws in upon its narrator until we are seeing, through her eyes, the total desolation of human relationships about her.

Without the endurance and the rage there would be no novel. They are almost not enough. The chilling portrait which emerges, indirectly (since Hagar Shipley does not waste much time with

self-analysis) has an uncanny truthfulness about it, but it is the energy with which she resists her dependence on others that is the connecting tissue of the novel. Between the present and the past she slips (though the flashback technique is too neat and predictable), regretting the past and cursing the present. The writing compels belief: if anyone wants to know what it is like to wait for the end in a hospital bed, this is it, you say. And when the end comes, there is no escape into sentiment. She is not spared the embarrassment of her grandson standing at the foot of her bed, saying. "You're a great old girl, you know that?" Even those who can squeeze an ounce of affection for her exact a humiliating price for it.

Why, for all its merits, does *The Stone Angel* seem a disappointment after *This Side Jordan*? It is, for one thing, more consciously *written*: one is aware of the stylist without being sufficiently unaware of the style. I have said the flashbacks were neat and predictable. They are very much what one might find as illustrations in a book on the mechanics of writing: "Being alone in a strange place, the nurse's unseeing stare, the receding heat of the day — all bring to mind the time I was first in a hospital, when Marvin was born." "I've waited like this, for things to get better or worse, many and many a time. I should be used to it. So many years I waited at the Shipley place — I've almost lost count of them." "I weary of the game. I'm like the children, playing house. I've nothing better to do. And now I remember some other children, once, playing at house, but in a somewhat different manner." To be fair, it should be said that these are extremes; there are many instances where the slipping back and forth is much more deft. But my point is really that one is too much aware of them when they do occur. Certainly they are justified by the rambling thoughts of a ninety-year old woman, and certainly old people, many of them, live more in the past than in the present. I would have preferred nonetheless to have the jumps, when they came, to be abrupt, disconnected. After reading a novel as well articulated as this, one almost sees the virtue of the Frenchman who writes a novel as a deck of cards, the pages to be read in any order.

The stories in *The Tomorrow-Tamer* are very fine. One doesn't really want to quarrel with the blurb, which says, "One of the best collections of stories to appear in many years." And where in *This Side Jordan*, Mrs. Laurence doesn't always succeed in getting behind the type to the unique individual, in her stories she triumphantly does so. These are real people, both the Africans and the whites, caught in a cruelly changing land. There is a mixture of comedy and tragedy, and sometimes both together, in the severing of two cultures. "The Perfume Sea", which begins:

> "No question of it," Mr. Archipelago said, delicately snipping a wisp of hair, "I am flotsam."

goes on a few lines later to describe the little town in the late-morning sun:

> Past the turquoise-and-red facade of Cowasjee's Silk Bazaar, in the rancid and shadowy room, the shrivelled Parsee sat, only half awake, folding a length of sari cloth and letting the silk slip through his fingers as he dreamed of a town in India, no less ill-smelling and dirty than this African one, but filled with the faces and speech of home.... At the Africa Star Chemists, a young shopgirl dozed, propping her brown arms against a carton of

> Seven Seas codliver oil. Down the street, in the Paradise Chop-Bar, a young man recalled those arms as he sloshed a rag over the tables in preparation for the customers who would soon be lifting the striped bedspread that hung across the doorway and shouting for beer and *kankey*. In the Government Agent's office, and in the offices of Bridgeford and Knight, Exporters-Importers, Englishmen sighed and wilted and saw from their watches that they could not yet legitimately leave for lunch. Pariah dogs on the road snarled over a cat corpse; then, panting, tongues dribbling, defeated by sun, they crawled back to a shaded corner, where their scabrous hides were fondled by an old man in a hashish dream. . . . Babies slung on their mothers' backs allowed their heads to loll forward and whimpered at the sweat that made sticky their faces. . . . Laughter like melted honey poured slowly. . . . Only the children, the fire and gleam of them greater even than the harsh glint of sun, continued to leap and shout as before.

In that story, an ageing hairdresser, himself an exile from Europe, fears that the passing of the white establishment from his dusty town will mean the end of his business and a new exile. In "The Drummer of All the World", an English boy, raised as a missionary's son in an African village, comes back after his English education to find that the African patterns he would like to embrace are changing, that the affection he would give them is scorned as another example of the white man trying to keep the African in his place. Everywhere in these marvellously well-written stories the representatives of the old world and the new are thrown into strange and unaccustomed relationship, and Mrs. Laurence has perceived that the most poignant are those who have tried to step from one world into the other, and belong to neither.

MILTON SEEN ANEW

B. Rajan

ROY DANIELLS, *Milton, Mannerism and Baroque*. University of Toronto Press. $6.00.

THE CONSIDERATION of one kind of artistic achievement in terms of the vocabulary of another is a recognized fallacy, though it was Babbitt, not Wimsatt, who first pointed the reproving finger at it. Fortunately, Professor Daniells is not deterred by the labelling of certain territories as perilous and his exploration is of course conducted with a scholar's sense of caution: "We must avoid the supposition that a façade can be directly compared to a plot structure or that there is some direct, simple analogue in literature for, say, the use made of light in a Baroque chapel." As might be expected, Professor Daniell's exploration brings substantial rewards. The Muses, he reminds us, dance together to the same melody and something is surely to be gained by isolating that melody, before studying how it is orchestrated by the distinctive resources of each art and, most decisively, by the individual accent of the author's genius.

The word "Baroque" is now flung freely across the seventeenth century and one is resigned in particular to having the "Nativity Ode" thus labelled. Pro-

fessor Daniells does not consider this poem, but he does suggest that *Comus* and *Lycidas* are Mannerist rather than Baroque. Mannerism we are told, "canvasses the elements of a fixed, traditional pattern, unexpectedly combines them to achieve effects of dissonance, dislocation and surprise, and illuminates the reader's mind, enabling him to reconsider the whole traditional pattern of their relationship." If the description suggests *Lycidas*, it also suggests *The Waste Land* and indeed "Tradition and the Individual Talent" might well bear perusal as the modern mannerist's manual.

One of the important features of Mannerist style is the presence within it of unresolved elements which remain essential to the artistic effect. Thus Professor Daniells concludes that "*Comus* is a great, a memorable and a much loved work not because it has no discrepancies and failures of resolution, and not (as is frequently implied) because its other merits outweigh these deficiencies, but because the lapses and dislocations are such as to evoke an aesthetic response of a new and intensely gratifying kind." Similarly with *Lycidas*, the "refusal to propagate a resounding resolution" is not an artistic flaw "any more than the restless, unstable figures flanking the Medici sarcophagi are to be regarded as Michelangelo's mistakes." This is an interesting deliverance from some recent critical *impasses*, though one is provoked to inquire how the lack of resolution which is indicative of high Mannerist achievement is distinguished from the lack of resolution which is indicative of simple artistic failure. The question needs to be asked even if the answer is likely to be slightly Mannerist. To the present reviewer it seems that a more conservative defence of *Comus* might be organized round the principle that the Lady's business is not to answer Comus but to reject him and that the final resolution is provided by the Epilogue. In *Lycidas*, the violations of decorum, the repeated intrusions of the "higher mood" (to which Milton pointedly draws attention) are part of the poem's strategy of attack. The assault upon convention is the stylistic correlative of the deeper assault of experience upon the sense of order; and the restoration of equilibrium in language corresponds to and validates a more fundamental rehabilitation of reality.

If Mannerist style is characterized by unresolved elements, Baroque is characterized by unity and because the Baroque achievement seeks inclusiveness, that unity is often won by sheer creative strength from the resistance of its material. Tension, ambiguity and paradox (whether structural or verbal) are features of the baroque equilibrium in which otherwise disintegrative forces are held in balance by the power of design. The reader should recognize this as a good description of *Paradise Lost* even if it is not a good enough description of Shakespeare's tragedies, Jeremy Taylor's prose, Jonson's plays and Dryden's drama and poetry, all of which at various times have received the baroque label. Some specificity in the use of this term is demanded if it is not to submerge more distinctions than it makes.

Professor Daniell's chapters on *Paradise Lost* are the best thing in his book and, particularly in his treatment of Milton's cosmography, the architectural analogues come into their own with notable results. If a caveat is to be entered (and to do so is partially to remind ourselves that every approach to *Paradise Lost* is

less than the poem) it would be against the emphatic primacy that is assigned to "will" in the poem's universe. The investigation on pp. 67-78 is impressive but an equally striking case could be made out for "reason" and V 100-102, VI 40-43, VIII 635-37, IX 1127-31 and XII 83-90 are among the passages that might be put into contention. The conclusions that will "holds a whip hand over reason and emotion" and that "both Adam and Milton admit [that] the justice of God's will springs from its being the will of God" are too close to voluntarism to fully reflect the total effect of the epic. If *Paradise Lost* is organized as Professor Daniells suggests, round a single axis driven "through received Christian doctrine", that axis is forged from an alloy rather than from a single element and if the "decisive experience for Baroque is that of man's power in the face of the world" one should add that that experience is qualified in *Paradise Lost* by an equally decisive sense of man's limitations. In any case, organization round a vertical axis is not the only possible picture of *Paradise Lost* and this reviewer is still drawn to a schematization in which good and evil, light and darkness, chaos and creation (the oppositions can be indefinitely extended) are seen massed as opposing armies, each with its own Trinity and with man between them as the centre of conflict and decision. In such a diagram, will exists in two aspects — as separatist, disintegrative and fundamentally Satanic and as unitive, grounded in reason and reality and freely proclaiming the order to which it contributes.

The calm (and some would say frozen) finality of Christ's rejections in *Paradise Regained* continue to fascinate and to disconcert critics. Professor Daniells' comparisons in particular to the Church of Santa Maria della Salute, illuminate the poem's perspectives and dispositions but do not necessarily reconcile one to its moral severity. Perhaps this reconciliation can only be affected if at all, through the recognition that Christ though perfect man, is more than men, that he is essentially uninvolved in the debate with evil, that while man in his mixed nature must feel a sense of loss in preferring Jerusalem to Athens, Christ in his pure nature can dispassionately choose or await the greater good. The still centre of self-control may approach the inhuman; but that it should do so may be part of the poem's necessities.

Samson Agonistes is Baroque not simply because it achieves a new effect in an old form (one could scarcely be a writer without sometimes attempting to do this) but because the new effect proclaims the unity of God's purposes and the absoluteness of his power. It seems to this reviewer that the recognition that the power, providence and glory of God are exemplified in his ways and works is too universal to be called Baroque: and *Samson Agonistes* in any case evokes not only God's power but also "th' unsearchable dispose/Of highest wisdom", the justice that is inscrutable until it is dazzlingly revealed. The pervasive irony of the play (Greek both in its origins and tactics) works to suggest the half-knowledge of man in the face of divine omniscience. Our condition is typically that of darkness at noon; and "calm of mind all passion spent" implies not merely catharsis but understanding.

The main merits of Professor Daniell's book should now be apparent. It deals with the entire body of Milton's major

poetry and sees it in a perspective that is both unified and unusual. Without the microscopy that is the hallmark of modern criticism it sends us back to the text with a renewed recognition of what the text is doing.

HISTORIAN'S BIOGRAPHY

Albert Tucker

BLAIR NEATBY, *William Lyon Mackenzie King, 1924-1932*, University of Toronto Press. $7.95.

WHAT ARE THE TALENTS required of a biographer? Biography is so flexible a form, as various as the ways in which men act and express themselves, that the answer must depend on the purpose of the author and the role of his subject. If the subject is a political figure, then the chances are that his biographer will be an historian, perhaps a political scientist writing history. His purpose cannot be simply described, but central to it must be the insight into important public or political events through the eyes of his subject. Inevitably, certain problems arise.

What events are to be selected, how are letters and diaries to be used, how much of personal and private affairs are to be included, what license will be given to psychological examination, and where does the biographer himself strike a balance between sympathy, detachment, and reflection? If these questions are resolved successfully, the author will write as more than historian; he must be a careful editor and psychologist as well. Professor Neatby has had to face up to all of these requirements, with results that are both admirable and disappointing.

As historian, his thoroughness and his care have been remarkable. By 1924, when this volume opens, King's life was dedicated to politics, to leading the Liberal party and being Prime Minister, and Mr. Neatby relates every issue which went into the making of stable national government. His decision to do so was a wise one. Detailed accounts of freight rates and tariffs, the Hudson Bay Railway and the deficit of the C.N.R., do not provide exciting reading; but they were the stuff of Canadian politics in the nineteen twenties and a successful political leader had to devote considerable time to handling them. In this volume such issues, together with immigration and the budget, are described at great length because they bore directly on the coherence of a national government out of the various sections and regions, with their different economic interests, of so large and divided a country.

His insight into the nature of these divisions and into the need for unity lay at the heart of King's hold on the leadership of the Liberal party. "The cause of Liberalism," says Professor Neatby, "was above all the cause of national unity, and it could be achieved only through a policy of moderation and

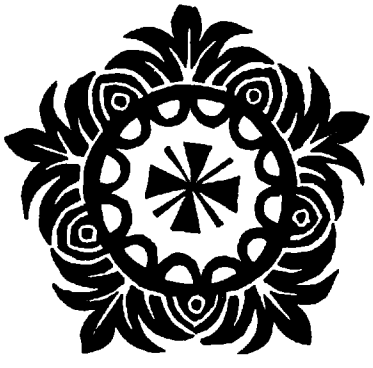
compromise. This was — and always remained — the dominant theme of King's political life." The Tories found their strength in the manufacturing groups of the East, particularly in Ontario, where they stood for protective tariffs. The Progressives were based on the agricultural Prairies where the protective tariff meant higher prices for the manufactured implements and tools which they had to buy. Between these two King moved circumspectly, but always with a view to absorbing the Progressives. From 1921 to 1926 their numbers in the House of Commons dropped from 64 to 12, a remarkable tribute to King's tactics. He would never accept coalition, for that would have given identity to the Progressives. Canadian politics functioned for King within a two-party conflict, with the Liberals based on Quebec and the West. "If we can find," he wrote in 1925, "the things which the men of French Canadian descent have in common with the settlers of the plains and base our policy on this common ground, we need have no fear as to what the result will be at the extremities or near the heart, as I assume Ontario would like to consider itself."

Does this mean that for King Canadian Liberalism had no basic ideas? The charge would be unfair. His whole conception of the social and economic order stemmed from the ideas of late nineteenth-century liberalism. At their core was the integrity of the individual personality; government must intervene only where private rights infringed on the public good. The point of demarcation, however, could not be easily defined. During most of the twenties King was content simply to balance his budgets, to keep down the expenditure of government so that the tariff, the sales tax and the income tax would not interfere with economic growth. For the rest, groups and individuals could be left to promote their own interests, the provinces and the municipalities to cover their own debts or obligations. Prosperity and stability left King himself free to exercise his gifts as conciliator and administrator. Certainly his mind was not prepared for the social crisis which came after 1930; the stock-market crash did not touch him personally, and he did not grasp the means by which unemployment could be mitigated. Because King did not focus on social issues in the election of 1930 it looked as though he had deliberately anticipated defeat, when in fact he had only failed to understand the magnitude of the crisis. Conclusions like this are not entirely new, but they are more fully substantiated by Mr. Neatby's volume than they have ever been before. Any review must first of all pay tribute to this quality of substance which the book possesses in so large a measure.

The tribute should nevertheless be qualified. The biographer of a public man can be expected to keep the private life of his subject in the background, but he is striving also to communicate the vital impression of a man whose private life may often be the source which helps to explain his public one. Mr. Neatby confines his discussion of King as a person to a minimum, stressing only his excessive privacy and his loneliness, which impelled him to spiritual experiments. Since these experiences had little influence on his public decisions or activities, they are judged to have been incidental or idiosyncratic, at the most reassuring him of his own goodness or confirming his judgments. But surely so

complex a man as Mackenzie King is entitled to more reflection than this. One senses that Mr. Neatby was repelled by these experiments as adolescent and embarrassing. He never really confronts the central question: why did King so deliberately avoid passion? How was this repression connected with the repeated emphasis in his diaries on the idea of service, of his life as dedicated to the public good? "A nation," he said in 1927, "like an individual, to find itself must lose itself in the service of others." The conviction undoubtedly stemmed from his Presbyterian upbringing, but that in turn was interwoven with the idealization of his mother. His love for her was placed on the highest plane; she seemed to personify and guide the dedication of his life. At the age of 54, when he signed the Briand-Kellogg Pact in 1928, he noted in his diary: "... as I came to 'Mackenzie' — dear Mother's spirit seemed to come between me and the paper, to almost illumine it." Her image turned marriage into carnal love, unworthy of a higher moral purpose. As a result, he sublimated his ambition and repressed any doubt or probing knowledge of self. His life was one of unremitting industry, but the reasons which drove him also made him indiscriminate in the piling up of details, restless in his constant revisions of speeches, colourless and unimaginative in political appeal, sensitive and diffident in any formal environment, and intent upon the exercise of power as a moral responsibility.

By filing King's private life into separate and minor sections Professor Neatby has avoided tenuous speculation, but he has also deprived his book of a vital quality. There are numerous references to his previous study of economics, none at all to indicate that he considered seriously some study of psychology. Mr. Neatby's gifts are more at home with issues than with people. There is a curiously impersonal quality about the book; repeatedly he calls his subject, "Mackenzie King," so that the reader is kept at a distance rather than drawn in and involved. Of the men around King there are few character sketches that impress their diversity, and while three elections are covered in this book, we never see King as the hardy and efficient campaigner. Above all, what is missing is reflection, the lucid summing up of sections. Like the confined, chronological rails along which the story moves, the style is lean and straight, without the variety of clause or phrase which can give to writing a sustained existence of its own. Mr. Neatby was not writing a journalese or impressionistic biography, but the alternative need not be so objective, thorough, and impersonal that the reader feels he is trudging with effort rather than walking with ease. If that is the only alternative then many Canadian readers, historians included, may ask that we be given less of writing and more of King's letters, diaries and speeches, from Mr. Neatby's skilful editorial hands.



books in review

UP THE FRONT STAIRS

VINCENT MASSEY, *What's Past is Prologue.* Macmillan. $7.50.

THIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY by one of Canada's Elder Statesmen is one of those books which are treacherous for the mere browser or book-nibbler. It begins, as it ends, with a flurry of name-dropping and reads in such sections rather like some elderly socialite's memoirs of palmy days in the past. But persistence is rewarded if the reader ploughs through such remarks as: "Spenny Compton's sister Margaret, now the Dowager Lady Loch, has been a lifelong friend." Or the equally fatuous and thus aggravating: "Harold Macmillan reminded me not long ago that we had been friends for fifty years. My recollection of Harold as a fellow undergraduate is entirely consistent with his most distinguished career."

There is a plethora of this kind of thing in Mr. Massey's narrative, and it is not altogether confined to the beginning and the end. However, there is enough fascinating material for the persevering lector to learn something about human nature, something about history, and something rather special about Canada too.

It is perhaps in the nature of a feat, but in a personal account extending to some five hundred and thirty pages, this distinguished public servant manages to remain as discreet as the popular image of a private one — say a butler. If Mr. Massey were indeed as colourless as his book suggests, then it would give the lie to the account of his experiences that he presents. Yet his accomplishments, as Canada's first Minister to Washington, as High Commissioner in London, and then as Canada's first indigenous Governor-General are palpably convincing as presented in these pages. He does not emerge as an opinionless drudge in his career as a diplomat. As Governor-General he was not the Crown's pale ghost. Unlike a substantial number of his compatriots, including the Prime Minister, Mackenzie King, under whom he served for so many years, he seems to have no ambivalence in his concept of what makes a Canadian a creature apart from his fellow North Americans. When he was Canada's Minister to Washington he leaves us in no doubt as to his grasp of the situation; his concept of Canada is invariably clear and never vitiated by destructive tuggings of empathy from either the United States or the United Kingdom. The same tempered possession of a distinctive Canadianism informs his occupancy of the post of High Commissioner in London. To be sure, he demonstrates a patrician attitude one suspects would find more sympathetic response in an English country house than on an Alberta ranch. But there is never a trace of either that obsequiousness or flagrant rudeness towards his hosts that are demonstrated by some Commonwealth individuals when enjoying the hospitality of the Mother Kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons. He is, par excellence, the balanced man. And perhaps (tell it not in Gath) a somewhat dull man.

His life and career, of course, closely parallels the coming-of-age of Canada as a national entity and it is impossible to think that a serious student of this country's affairs could afford to ignore this autobiography. Nor for that matter, should anyone prone to reflect upon the viability of the Commonwealth connection pass this book up. For those tempted to see Canada as a victim torn between the Scylla of Great Britain and the Charybdis of the United States, Mr. Massey has something refreshing and sane to say. His reflections drawn from personal experience of high places, are likewise equally pertinent for those who smugly see Canada, alternatively, as a blessed inheritor of those two influences, from the south and from the east, which have done so much to shape her present character.

The Massey memoirs are a strange brew of front-stairs gossip and arresting common-sense. We thus have a pot-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

BACK ISSUES

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pourri of everything from news of nobs for snobs and Canada's rôle in the policies that shape the strategies of World War Two, to the myopic vision of Mackenzie King whom Massey patently detested. All the more surprising then, that the personality of the author persists in remaining abstruse, and one is galled by a sense of being served hors d'oeuvres and desserts, with the main course being put away to await another generation's delectation.

DAVID WATMOUGH

A FIRM BEGINNING

JANE RULE, *The Desert of the Heart.* Macmillan. $3.95.

THIS NOVEL PROVES AGAIN that "you can't tell a book by its blurb", and seems to prove also that the person who wrote the blurb did not read the book: the resumé of the plot has little to do with the novel; the names of the main characters are misspelled; the mistaken aura of a Ma Perkins' reject is put on the conflict.

It is perhaps the contrast between the blurb and the book that makes this novel such a pleasure to read. Jane Rule does not fall into any category of contemporary novelists; neither is she, as the blurb suggests, dealing only with a problem of a lesbian relationship (which is, in fact, a very minor theme in the novel). She does not try to register her time on a loud and epic scale; rather, she is measuring smaller conflicts, personal conflicts and hesitations in the people she sees. Though she deals with a homosexual relationship between two women, she is not concerned with that form of innovation which consists in beating back the censors. She has used the novel as a fine instrument and capably records a variety of experience that has rarely been explored before.

This probing into human experience brings about the only major fault of *The Desert of the Heart.* Jane Rule probes the minds of her main characters, Evelyn and Ann, to a depth at which they become more or less alike. So alike they become, in fact, that by the end of the novel Jane Rule finds it almost possible to dispense with them as characters and leave them as an idea. This would be all right if she were doing it on purpose. But the ambiguity at the end — and it may be a deliberate one — as to whether Ann leaves with Evelyn or Evelyn stays with Ann, destroys much of the impact that the first half of the novel suggests and which the last half demands, and deserves. The minor characters, however, have little depth and do not seem possible at all; this is true with them all except for Silver, who is one of the most delightful minor figures in recent fiction in Canada. She has a wonderful ironic view of life which Miss Rule captures in a firm and skilled fashion.

The portrayal of Silver brings about one of the strongest marks of this book, and that is its humour. This humour lies in situation (the wedding near the end), in description (of Silver's home), and in the cartoons which Ann draws. Oh, for one of those cartoons in place of the blurb on the cover! This would, I feel, capture the essence of the novel. It is hoped that Miss Rule goes on into more humour in her next novel, for it is a facet of her writing that is very strong and never wavers.

She does waver, however, in the final sections of the book. The plot becomes

artificial because of the characters; Bill would not threaten to expose the girls — he does not have the strength, or if he does, we never have seen it. And there is a moralizing at the end of the novel which does not fit in with the rest. Not that I would suggest that if a girl were a lesbian she should send this book home to "the parents" so they would understand; but there is a hat-and-gloves quality to the attitudes expressed about the relationship that is out of date. We would not take it if this were a novel about a heterosexual relationship; we do not have to take it because it is about a homosexual one.

All this steers away from the other remarkable facets of the book: the use of landscape to produce a unity rarely explored successfully by contemporary novelists, and the writing itself. Miss Rule has fused landscape so well with her characters that at first one is liable to comment only on the outward manifestation of its importance: the sterile relationship on a sterile landscape, the desert of Reno which becomes the desert of the heart. The descriptions of the gambling houses in Reno, the strong passages of beauty in descriptions of the lake beach, the use of detail in physical analysis — all work together to *dissolve* eventually into a whole impression of the world as Jane Rule sees it in this book. Coupled with the setting and the characters are the images: the recurrent use of glass and mirrors, the almost over subtle dreams (which are in themselves carefully done), and the casual references, so meaningful, to the poetry of Yeats.

But the writing, the style, makes the book. From the powerful first paragraph —

> Conventions, like clichés, have a way of surviving their own usefulness. They are then excused or defended as the idioms of living. For everyone, foreign by birth or by nature, convention is a mark of fluency. That is why, for any woman, marriage is the idiom of life. And she does not give it up out of scorn or indifference but only when she is forced to admit that she has never been able to pronounce it properly and has committed continually its grossest grammatical errors. For such a woman marriage remains a foreign tongue, an alien landscape, and, since she cannot become naturalized, she finally chooses voluntary exile. . . .

to the end, the writing never falters. It has its own peculiar quality in that it appears at first to be in short, simple sentences. But it is the long sentence that Miss Rule uses to such advantage; here is a control of punctuation and rhythm which many writers cannot master. There is a beauty to this prose. Yet it never becomes forced nor do sections of it ever stand out. What is extraordinary about this first novel is its consistency in style, the author's strict attention to the whole world on the Nevada desert. Admittedly she selects, and at times glosses over people, but she is always in the same place. This is a good first novel, with few of the markings of one.

DONALD STEPHENS

DREAMS AND REALITY

JOHN MARLYN, *Under the Ribs of Death*. McClelland & Stewart, (New Canadian Library). $1.50.

WHEN I FIRST READ John Marlyn's *Under the Ribs of Death* in 1957, I was impressed by the spare, sure way of its telling and moved by the central experi-

ence with which Marlyn deals. The qualities which impressed me in 1957 are there still, and it is therefore good to see the book published in the New Canadian Library series, a series, by the way, which is now emerging as one of the really major ventures ever undertaken by a Canadian publisher.

Marlyn's novel is a typical *Bildungsroman*, in which the author traces the attempt of his main character to discover himself as a person and to shape his destiny. In such a novel the *milieu* is of the first importance, and Marlyn's Winnipeg is in its own way as memorable a creation, as say, Farrell's Chicago in *Studs Lonigan*. In the intensely human jungle of Henry Street, Sandor Hunyadi fights for air and for a place in the sun. Like Pip in *Great Expectations*, he wants to become a gentleman. For him this means that he must become as like an Anglo-Saxon as possible — Sandor Hunyadi must become Alex Humphrey or Hunter. The roots of the past must be cut and burned. But they are stubborn roots. They won't burn and they go on bleeding. This attempt on the part of the young boy to deny his self is the most sustained and most powerful part of the book. Nothing in the second part of the book, when Hunyadi has become Hunter, matches it.

Within the primary pattern of the novel Marlyn explores the relationship between men's dreams and illusions and the reality with which they must cope. The central conflict here occurs between Sandor, who believes that the world is a jungle in which every man must fend for himself, even if it means the total suppression of pity and compassion, and his father, who asserts, against the evidence of Henry Street, "that the war of

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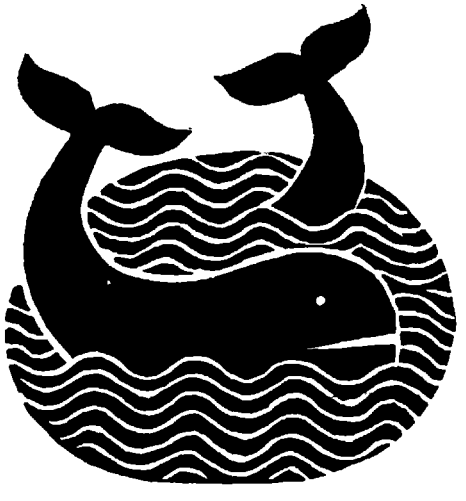
each against all is not a law of nature." What the son sees is that the father, "who loved all men and whose only thought was to help others," is yelled at and ordered around like a dog; what the son sees is that the dashing, exotic Onkel Janos sells himself to a rich, ugly woman who in the end destroys him; what the son sees is that ultimately all that counts is success as defined by a commercial world. But in order to sustain his own illusions, Sandor-Alex must believe that the Anglo-Saxon commercial world is solid and ordered, and that it is managed by wise and thoughtful men. When that illusion collapses in the great depression of the thirties, it crushes Sandor-Alex and sends him back into the depths from which he thought he had forever risen. But Marlyn leaves the central philosophical conflict between father and son unresolved, since he doesn't quite find the fictional situation in which to bring it to a head, and hence the novel ends on a curiously tentative and muted note.

In the Canadian context, as Eli Mandel comments in the admirable introduction to this edition, *Under the Ribs of Death*, when it is seen together with a number of other recent novels, represents the voice of the European immigrants who settled in our cities thirty or forty years ago, and whose children and grandchildren are now beginning to distil that experience and to tell us how it was with them.

HENRY KREISEL



WORDS WITHOUT MUSIC

MARIKA ROBERT, *A Stranger and Afraid*. McClelland & Stewart. $5.95.

A VICTORIA PROFESSOR, writing in a Vancouver paper, pointed a way when, in part, he reviewed the dust jacket of a book of poems. His bravery exceeded his good sense by an armlength or two, but he may have started, albeit unfairly, something that could be valuable to critics in a country like Canada where every book published here has its moment at centre stage, rather like the third shepherd in the Christmas play who shyly indicates the star of Bethlehem and is praised by his elders the next morning at breakfast for his great index finger. This democracy of paucity that has grown up around our search for a place in the artistic sun makes grieving cynics of critics and public alike. The urge to review dust jackets — especially the ones that come from McClelland & Stewart — waxes; the belief that we will be entertained beyond this point wanes. Miss Robert is a very pretty lady and her picture on the back of the book made me wish to lie.

Miss Robert is a Czech by birth who

came, probably as a teenager, to Canada in 1951; perhaps, then, English is not as much the second language it was, say, to Conrad. She has written a good deal of material for various family magazines and papers, and her prose betrays the flabbiness of that undemanding literature. Her model is probably Pierre Berton when it should be, to say the least, someone more rigorously inclined toward stringent communication. Here is the narrator's description of herself on the second page of Chapter One: "I was not yet eighteen, hungry-looking, long-legged, and skinny. My unruly hair, cropped by a refugee barber — who might have been a bank director at home — was always a mess. Though several people had commented on my budding beauty the bud was still very much closed."

The story concerns Kristina, a Hungarian refugee, who comes to Paris and meets André, a high-class blackmarketeer, in whose sumptuous apartment the girl half-lives while running errands for him. One day she disobeys him and delivers a mink coat three hours late. When she comes back to André he orders her into the bedroom, and he takes a belt and beats her. The thing that upsets her is that although she hates him for it, she rather likes it and wants to go back, and eventually she does. He says he knew she would. For the next hundred pages he beats her a few times more and makes love to her often. I was never able to get the exact relationship straight, because Miss Robert has a habit of drawing the curtain of decency or charity or something over every scene just at the moment when real and human interplay is about to occur between her characters. André is thrown from a horse and dies; Kristina comes to Canada, marries a young, weak and extremely nice and undominant male. Their relationship is less than satisfactory. She discovers a "Hush" type tabloid where people advertise discreetly their abnormalities and their desire to meet same. Kristina contacts Claude, rich but a boor (André was rich but a *Parisienne* boor) who is rough, knows the "code" (whatever that is) and can stave off a climax for twenty-four-and-a-half minutes. The ice melts in Kristina's love-life, and her guilt tightens until it almost strangles her. She loves her Canadian undominant male, and eventually goes to a psychiatrist who tells her it isn't necessarily bad to be abnormal. The book ends happily: "I decided to count my blessings and let fate take care of the rest. To be different wasn't a crime, it was only a problem. I was still a stranger but no longer afraid."

The book is better than this — and worse. Like Mrs. Twain's attempt at swearing, Miss Robert has the words but not the music. Kristina is not big enough to encompass the double-soul required; the author's insight into her theme and her characters is only slight. What she probably can do is be light and bright, and with different material, she could be entertaining. This, at least, would be better than putting herself into another situation where fate would have, again, to take care of the rest.

ROBERT HARLOW

He "endured great hardships in traveling to make peace amongst the northern Indians."

This was William Stewart, sent in 1715 from York Factory on a peace mission to the Athabascan tribes north of Churchill. After travelling for almost a year across hundreds of miles of "Barren Desarts", Stewart did succeed in reconciling the differences between the Crees and the Chipewyans.

Great men — past and present — build a great Company.

Hudson's Bay Company.
INCORPORATED 2ND MAY 1670.

MORE TO IT THAN THAT

Poésie/Poetry 64. Edited by Jacques Godbout and John Robert Colombo. Les Editions du Jour & Ryerson Press. Paper $2.00. Cloth $4.00.

ANY ANTHOLOGY which contains the work of sixteen poets writing in two languages is bound to seem a little divided against itself, and, in fact, *Poésie/Poetry 64* is two books in one. The first is composed of work by Gérard Godin, André Brochu, André Major, Françoise Bujold, Paul Chamberland, and Michael Garneau, and owes a good deal to current French poetry. This is not only understandable, but healthy; though sometimes the rhetorical insistence and the melodramatic imagery are overdone, the poetry fuses European and North American traditions. Thus we get in the French half of this collection a much surer sense of diction and of form than in the English half; we also get a more musical verse handled both with and without irony. Take the opening lines of André Brochu's "Romance", for example.

Amour du mois de mai amour
La femme pavoise nos tours
Et le pays a bout d'ecorce
Comme le bouleau de la cour
Se resseve a meme la force. . . .

Rhythmically this is well organized, and the consonants and vowel sounds are used subtly. André Brochu is, in this, not untypical of his companions. He is, however, very unlike the poets in the English section of the book.

Here there seems to be a wilful attempt to throw out any dependence upon the European past of poetry in English, and the consequence is a flatness, a shallowness of language, and a poverty of music that lead to dullness. On the other hand, there is a strong dependence upon the imagistic, anecdotal, narcissistic school of poets who have been affected to their disadvantage by the work of William Carlos Williams, and some of the Black Mountain poets. Too many poems are constructed of asides and weariness; too many poems totter upon the edge of rhythmic decisiveness, then fail to take the plunge. Lionel Kearn's "stacked verse" is no solution to the problem of rhythm, and he handles it clumsily. Frank Davey has a novelist's eye for significant detail, but no sense of cadence. These poems, though written in an aggressively colloquial manner have no real speech quality, and break up their musics with clumsy visual devices.

This criticism is true in part of all the poets here, but two or three of them rise triumphant above such defects. John Newlove has a real structural sense, and he displays it convincingly in poems of toughness and compassion. "For Judith, now about 10 Years Old" looks, at first sight, like yet another clipped anecdotal near-imagist poem whose form is so organic as to be protoplasmic; read it aloud, however, and the rhythm emerges strongly, the alliterative patterns come into focus, and the short jabbing lines are found to be at one with the poem's whole character and attitude.

Judith, niece, red
welted scars on
your not yet
adolescent chest,

slits cut, say,
yearly, so you

may lift your arms, . . .

The same fusion of structure and attitude occurs in the fascinating "The Double-Headed Snake". Newlove, moreover, is exploring for new subjects, developing an idiosyncratic and real vision. His diction still lets him down from time to time, but he is clearly a poet of considerable potentiality.

Myra von Riedemann, Margaret Atwood, and Gwen MacEwen are three others who seem to be driving out into new territory. Margaret Atwood has a savage wit and a capacity for shifting swiftly from burlesque to metaphysics which makes her work most enlivening. Myra von Riedemann, like Gwen MacEwen, is inclined to fall for the wild-eyed archetype a little too often, but she is, at least, searching and working, and she has begun to use interesting syntactical shapes.

Of the rest of the poets it is enough to say that I hope they stop trying to be "poets", throw away their copies of Layton, Souster, and Donald Allen's Anthology, and settle down to work. It is not enough to be disillusioned, self-conscious, tough-minded, and under thirty. There's more to it than that.

ROBIN SKELTON

A COMPLEX MUSIC

GWENDOLYN MACEWEN, *The Rising Fire*. Contact Press. $2.00.

! I want the flowers beheaded,
the garden sink,
the rain deny its claim to princedom there

and stand in a garden of void
applauding, tracing the biographies
of brief past flowers, capturing the moment
of bloom
in a cage of my own sunlight

Gwendolyn MacEwen's poems are filled with the things she wants. And the language of the poems is a language of ambition, of wanting. It stands outside the mainstream of current Canadian poetry, which seems generally to belong to the post-Williams age. That is, Miss MacEwen's language is opposite to the language of (our purest example) Raymond Souster. One is aware of something like poetic diction, not the rhythmic arrangement of a prose line. In a poem like "All The Fine Young Horses", for instance, her "issues" if she claims any, are not of matter and the senses, but of a young, feminine, *personal* imagination. Anthology-makers or those who teach survey courses might call her a Romantic.

This present volume is the first major collection of Miss MacEwen's poetry. According to the dust jacket blurb, she has been publishing it since she was a teenager (she is now in her early twenties), and in 1961 she printed two booklets of her younger verse. Much of that is reprinted here, and the result represents a kind of growth. But the best poems are the later ones, and the book would be more enjoyable if the whole thing were made up of the later poems, like the musical "The Catalogues of Memory". The poem is too long to reprint here, and as always the reader is urged to buy the book and see (listen) for himself. Though it retains some of the poet's characteristic excess

lions . . . the lean loins of them,

it also finishes on one of her high points, where the incantation is beautiful in its simplicity, while at the same time the

fabric of a complex music — in other words, art:

now it is winter; heed, heed
I say, heed
the speech of your hands.
feet, feet, I say,
move swiftly,
leave
no track

I repeat, the reader is urged to buy this book, and to read it over a leisurely period of time. Miss MacEwen's usual unwillingness to be direct sets a distance at first. She is not an immediate poet in this time of immediacy. One may be put off by certain amateur tricks, such as the use of an adverb in place of an adjective ("like darkly trees"); or impatient with her effort to overcome the inertia of a heavy metaphor, as in the poem, "Eden, Eden". But in other poems such as "The Absolute Dance" and "The Dimensions of a Tiger", the voice *responds* as well as expressing, and the work becomes true (see Webster: accurately formed) as well as lovely.

In other words, this is an important book. It contains within it the evidence that a young woman with a marvellous talent is beginning to take charge.

GEORGE BOWERING

PERENNIAL PURITANISM

GEORGE BOWERING, *Points on the Grid*. Contact Press. Paper $2.00. Cloth $3.00.

IT IS REMARKABLE how hard Puritanism dies in Canadian poetry. Crushed and bull-dozed to death by the flamboyant contempt of Irving Layton it nevertheless emerges again as inverse prudery in the work of some of Mr. Layton's staunchest admirers. George Bowering's *Points on the Grid* is a case in point. Mr. Bowering writes a number of poems on the experience of orgasm. It is as valid a subject for poetry as any, but the worth of the experience as poetry depends on what you do with it. Mr. Bowering does exactly what he objects to in D. H. Lawrence, only with a different premise. Both turn sex into a metaphysics and both fall into the same fault, tedium. "Lawrence, you old bore", writes Bowering with justice, "you die young and leave immediacy." So in a sense does Mr. Bowering; he wants to present the power of sex, "the might of it", but the poems in which he attempts to do so are curiously non-erotic, and display nervous intensity rather than passion. They are neural rather than sensual, avoiding the ecstatic as well as the erotic, and thus turn into emotional prudery. We are presented with the mechanics of sex, with some of its obsessiveness but none of its enigma.

Perhaps this is what Mr. Bowering intends, orgasm as crucial reality expressed in a kind of uncompromising stark banality. "I don't want it I'm sick of it/ poetry-PAH- I want/my hands full of woman flesh." Mr. Bowering gets exactly what he asks for; his hands are full of all kinds of things in *Points on the Grid*, but not always of poetry.

One does sympathize with his sense of alienation, of frequent isolation, which forces him to focus on the sexual experience as a crucial and meaningful point of contact; unfortunately his language seldom rises to his need. Intensity is not hysteria and in Mr. Bowering's verse there is a limited emotional range. He adopts not so much a number of masks as a number of poses. Like Alfred Purdy

he is going to give it to us straight and in the vernacular. But whereas Mr. Purdy compels one's respect because of his passionate projection into experience, Mr. Bowering does not.

Lines in raised black capitals are not a satisfactory equivalent for emotional projection, nor is endless repetition. These do not create emotional intensity; they are mere typographical tricks. "Winter coming an injection/ in the veins of September" is more effective as poetry than INDIAN SUMMER FOR GOD'S SAKE! because the former uses language as metaphor and the latter the arbitrary emphasis of typography. However, Mr. Bowering doesn't believe in language as metaphor. He believes in Charles Olson, something called "locus" and a general attitude that might be defined as "the poet as a semi-literate garage mechanic". Were Mr. Bowering a semi-literate garage mechanic, this would be fair enough, but he is not, and he gives himself away by writing a number of lyrics of deceptive simplicity and tender directness. "What joy/ to teach you joy/ of love . . ." These are the lines of *Sunday Poem* "your/ noon day Sun day eyes" are successful in a way "William Faulkner Dead is like my father/ with his balls meat grindered in a machine" can never be, because the latter is not powerful but sensational, the way cheap newspaper headlines are sensational. Of course, the image is a protest against the brutal sterility of death, but its very shock effect lessens the impact of the remaining lines and the meaning of the total poem.

In his foreword Mr. Bowering writes "you can't take an orchestra or a poet to every farmhouse on the Canadian Tundra." This kind of patronizing flippancy makes one suspect the genuineness of Bowering's Angst. Bowering's language is obsessively repetitive; the phrase "margin of the mind" occurs five times in five different poems at least and nowhere is the phrase unexpendable.

The love poems as opposed to those on a sexual theme have a distinctive quality. "I try to be tender/ moving away the long grass/ and pray pagan and greedy/ for human associated soft spearing sunlight." These poems do not reflect a "stand-up mesmerized poet bound in a tunnel of sound" but rather a conscious articulate poet in control and without pose. George Bowering should write like this more often.

MARYA FIAMENGO

DOOMED FRAGRANCE

Peterley Harvest; The Private Diary of David Peterley, edited by Richard Pennington. McClelland & Stewart, $6.50.

> Peterley seems now to be merely the symbol of an England that is lost forever, the *entre-deux guerres* is joining the Edwardian age and the nineteenth century as history. There does not seem to be any present, apart from this waiting for the first shots of the second war. Time and a future may still exist abroad; but here is only a suspension of time and movement, a mere waiting.

This entry for February 1939, sums up the essence of *Peterley Harvest*, a book which is partly a journal of the heart, partly a novel, partly a social history. Peterley, the ancestral home from which the author repeatedly fled and to which, for the thirteen years between 1926 and 1939 he as repeatedly returned, which motivated so many of his actions and inactions, is indeed a symbol, an imaginative reconstruction of a late seventeenth-

century country house pulled down long ago when the family moved elsewhere. Its "harvest" — emotional, cultural and political — is nostalgia for the past, frustration, ambivalence and dilettantism in the present.

Though *Peterley Harvest* is a record of personal failures, and the failures of a class and a nation, to come to terms with reality it is not a depressing book. In a very different way from the speech of Synge's Irish peasants, it is as full of flavour as a nut or an apple, even if the nut is just faintly musty and the apple gone slightly soft. The dust on this bowl of withered roses gives off something of the doomed fragrance of the morning rose, nor is the romantic sentimentality such a comparison suggests unmitigated by the thorns of satire. David Peterley sees his class as clinging to the traditions of the great age of the gentry, and the annual visitant to the card-room at Peterley is not the only eighteenth-century ghost who haunts his pages. His delightful and wholly apocryphal "character" of James Boswell by Dr. Johnson has as companion-piece a thoroughly Chesterfieldian letter from the elder Peterley to his son, the flavour of which is illustrated by the following extract:

> You need not assume that a physical intimancy necessarily entails marriage, and it is prudent to be cautious of any woman who refuses to admit the separateness of these two things, unless it is the woman you intend to marry. Living with women cannot usually be postponed until marriage is convenient, and it is advisable to give some thought to the choice of a mistress. I am of the opinion that the most satisfactory way is to select from the wives of your older acquaintances, or at any rate from the young wives of older husbands. These are often neglected by busy and indifferent men and are eager for a companionship which is as much intellectual as physical. . . .

> I am assuming you would no more dream of having recourse to whores any more than you would hire for an evening party a dress suit that has covered the private parts of any tradesman or commercial traveller.

Faithfully as the author attempts to follow his father's advice on all these points, he is seemingly doomed to fail in the first of them. His entirely suitable, mortgage-lifting, hunt and garden-club wife proves unsatisfactory in other respects, and when divorce leaves him free to do so he fails to marry (fearing that the gardener at Peterley will find her unacceptable) the one woman he wholeheartedly loves who refuses to have him on any other terms. She has lived with him in rewarding companionship and unrewarding chastity for three years, is a Cambridge graduate and a brilliant musician, but her South London origins disqualify her for the Peterley establishment.

David Peterley's flair for the vivid evocation of atmosphere and personality invests with a sense of immediacy a yesterday that seems to us now so long ago and which, to him, was inextricably entangled with a past far more distant.

Was there, in our time, an England in which young gentlemen amused themselves with seventeenth-century researches in the British Museum, flitted at will from the ancestral acres to the flat in town, to the Continent and to Australia and back again? Or arranged the marriages of their rustic mistresses at their "owne coste", and hired beautiful pianists to give a series of private — indeed solitary — recitals when music was the only tangible return for the substantial investment involved? He makes us believe so, and in his search for and flight from commitment to the "present" of the thirties takes us with him into some very good company. We attend with him Housman's lecture on "The Name and Nature of Poetry", are introduced to a number of quite fascinating women, eavesdrop at literary discussion with Machen and Squire and Connolly, visit Prague during the Munich crisis, and ally ourselves with Steed and Seton-Watson in a campaign to save Czecho-Slovakia. With Peterley we are always on the fringe of things, but an interesting and sometimes exciting fringe it is. The reader also identifies himself, however, with the dissatisfactions of the author with the record of a life which seems to lead nowhere, this journal of loose ends:

> There are still the old unsolved problems. One does not escape them by growing up. Time leaves the old ones behind unresolved, and brings different ones we shall not any more successfully solve. . . . One should accept the unknowable, jump into the dark, do all that you were told should never be done.

Peterley's "jump into the dark" is his return to Australia after more than a decade as a prisoner of time in the present-less dream-world of his homeland. "Only the knowledge that I can never go back," the journal ends, "will keep me there."

According to the editor, David Peterley, on his voyage to Australia, selected from his journals "those passages dealing with his private life and wrote them out again so as to produce a more or less continuous autobiographical narrative". He insists also that this "is not the factual biographical story that justifies the printing of an intimate journal" but "the revelation of the inner life of fugitive images in the mind and fitful images of the heart . . . which it is the aim of the official biography to conceal." Yet one wonders how much of its consistency of theme and the impression of self-conscious artistry it conveys is due to Mr. Pennington's careful selection of materials and his restraint in matters of editorial intrusion. The resulting unity, it must be confessed, is achieved at the cost of occasional confusion. Sometimes an explanatory footnote would help the reader to negotiate the tantalizing elipses of this journal, but the wise editor leaves him desiring more rather than less information, and to wise editing this unusual, frequently absorbing and not infrequently unsatisfying journal owes, one suspects, a good deal. MARION B. SMITH

THE EARLIEST VOYAGES

TRYGGVI J. OLESON, *Early Voyages and Northern Approaches, 1000-1632.* Vol. I, The Canadian Centenary Series. McClelland & Stewart. $8.50.

GWYN JONES, *The Norse Atlantic Saga.* Oxford University Press. $7.50.

John Ledyard's Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage. Edited by James Kenneth Munford. Oregon State University Press. $6.00.

A NORWEGIAN AMATEUR NAVIGATOR recently announced his intention of sailing across the Atlantic in the replica of a Viking ship, to prove that the Norsemen really could have travelled to the American continent before Columbus. The gesture seemed highly superfluous, since it was made, not in a lost cause, but in one that, among historians of northern North America at least, must be regarded as won. No history of Canada is now complete without its pious bow to Leif Eiriksson, and the only important questions still open to controversy seem to be just where the Norsemen went in North America and the extent of their penetration into the continent. Columbus is left with the diminished honour of being merely the first captain to reach the Americas across the open Atlantic instead of island-hopping the ocean's northern rim in the manner that brought the Vikings, by relatively safe stages, to Iceland, Greenland, Labrador, the Canadian Arctic and, finally, to Vinland, which the evidence of the sagas suggests must be located somewhere near Cape Cod.

The first two of the books under review deal variously with the existing evidence relating to the Norse explorations. Professor Gwyn Jones, in a most readable analysis of the relevant Icelandic writings, describes the settlement of Iceland and Greenland and the voyages down the eastern seaboard of North America. He portrays an essentially European culture which leaves no lasting impression on life in what is now the Canadian North, and which in Greenland dies out in the late middle ages as soon as the links with Europe decay; he suggests that the returning Eskimos exterminated the vestigial Norse settlements whose inhabitants were already a physically degenerating remnant of the once proud and vigourous Viking explorers. "On the whole, the old theory of the Greenland colony dying out in increasing isolation from an indifferent world must still hold the field." In the view defended by Professor Jones, the voyages to the islands and the mainland of Canada were merely a series of incidents with little bearing on the general fate of the settlements in Greenland.

In *Early Voyages and Northern Approaches*, Tryggvi Oleson, one of the leading authorities in Canada on early Arctic exploration, shifts the perspective both geographically and historically. For him the great exploratory achievement of the Vikings of Greenland lies not in their probe to the south, ending in the quickly abandoned bridgehead on elusive Vinland, but rather in their long-sustained penetration into the Canadian North which, in his view, has an enduring influence on life in the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions.

Professor Oleson identifies the Norsemen with the Tunnits, the tall, fair-skinned men who long ago, according to Eskimo tradition, appeared on the shores of Hudson's Bay. He suggests that the Tunnits were in fact Icelanders who, as hunters of the polar bear, the white falcon and other prized Arctic game, had gradually adapted their life until, when the settlements in Greenland disintegrated through failing communications with Europe, they turned native, intermarried with the dwarfish aborigenes (the Skraelings of the sagas) and produced the hybrid race which we now know as Eskimos. Instead of being destroyed they were absorbed, losing religion and language in the process, but they did

not disappear without contributing to the life of the North not only a blond strain that throws back among modern Eskimos, but also a group of techniques which transformed the primitive Dorset culture of the Skraelings into the relatively sophisticated Thule culture.

Professor Oleson is inclined to make much of minor and often oblique evidence; he conjectures excessively. Yet his main thesis, which is supported by other distinguished Arctic scholars, is by no means far-fetched; there is sound archaeological evidence to suggest that hunters from Greenland did reach Hudson's Bay, while many features of Eskimo life, e.g. the characteristic dress, are most easily explicable if one regards them as derivations from mediaeval Europe. Though Professor Oleson does not use the argument by analogy, it might cogently be brought forward in support of his viewpoint; the white hunter who went native and contributed certain European techniques to Indian life was a familiar figure in the woodlands and prairies of central Canada during the early nineteenth century, while the hybrid *métis* society which actually appeared in the prairies showed regressive tendencies that might well have led to its re-absorption into a modified Indian society had the link with European civilization been broken, as it was in the case of Greenland toward the end of the fifteenth century.

This brilliant reconstruction of what may have happened in the Canadian North when the Greenland settlement disintegrated is the core of Professor Oleson's book; his final chapters on the early explorers of the modern period, from Cabot onwards, are interesting mainly for the evidence he brings forward to suggest that they were at least partly inspired by a surviving lore of far Northern lands which echoed out of the epic past of the Norse voyagers and hunters.

Western Canadian exploration has no such formidable and misty ancestry as that provided by the Vikings. The first voyager to land on our Pacific coasts was Captain Cook, and his explorations are documented not only in the official account by Cook and King, but also in the unauthorized narratives which beat it into print. One of these, the *Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage* by the former marine, John Ledyard, has just been re-published with an extensive apparatus of footnotes and data on the plants and animals which Ledyard mentions. Ledyard is distinguished, among the several participants in Cook's final voyage who found their way into print, by his florid style and his admiration for the Noble Savage. When he writes of the Indians of Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island, he combines the two with devastating effect. On arriving, he remarks: "... we had scarcely entered the inlet before we saw that hardy, that intriped [*sic*], that glorious creature man approaching us from the shore." And of the celebrated whale-fishing of the Nootka Indians he tells us: "They have a harpoon made from a mushel shell only. and yet they have so disposed it as to subdue the great leviathan, and tow the unweildly [*sic*] monster to their shores." For all his heady worship of uncivilized humanity, Ledyard includes enough solid and shrewdly observed (and sometimes borrowed) fact to make his journal well worth the reading for those who are interested in Canada's links with the Pacific world. GEORGE WOODCOCK

A NEGLECTED EXPLORATION

IRENE M. SPRY, *The Palliser Expedition. An Account of John Palliser's British North American Exploring Expedition 1857-1860.* Macmillan. $7.50.

EXCEPT TO PRAIRIE AGRONOMISTS, for whom Palliser's Triangle is a familiar concept, and to citizens of Calgary, where the Palliser Hotel is the leading hostelry, the name of Captain John Palliser is generally unknown to most Canadians. School histories either ignore or refer casually to the expedition under his leadership which undertook the most thorough exploration of the Northwest prior to its acquisition by Canada. One reason for this unwarranted neglect is the scarcity of copies of the British Government publications containing the report of the expedition. Palliser intended to publish a popular account, comparable to his earlier work describing a hunting trip to the American plains region, but this never appeared. Mrs. Irene Spry, a specialist in economic history who resides in London, England, has now provided this popular work, handsomely printed with well chosen illustrations and based mainly on the official reports, supplemented by material secured by assiduous searches in many scattered archival collections.

Palliser, the son of a wealthy Irish landowner, shared the enthusiasm which impelled so many young Britons in the Victorian era to exchange the comforts of their island homeland for exciting and arduous expeditions to the far places of the earth. No simple sportsman, Palliser developed an intelligent interest in the economic potential of western British North America. The prospects for settlement and resource development in this region were unknown, since European activity had hitherto been mainly confined to the fur trade in the forested north. Working through the Royal Geographical Society Palliser secured financial support from the British Government, on the condition that qualified scientists should accompany him — James Hector, physician, geologist and naturalist; Eugene Bourgeau, botanist; Thomas Blakiston, magnetical observer; and John W. Sullivan, surveyor. The scientists secured a great quantity of specimens relating to flora, fauna and geology, and prepared maps and lengthy reports and observations relating to climate, topography, soil and other natural resources, and transportation routes. In addition, Palliser and Hector produced daily journals of the movements of the party, replete with all the incidents of travel under difficult and often dangerous conditions.

It is these incidents of travel which Mrs. Spry has chosen to emphasize in her account of the Palliser expedition, rather than its scientific achievements. This emphasis is at once the strength and the weakness of her book. There is much to interest the general reader in the details of buffalo hunts, the encounters with various Indian tribes, the journey across unmapped prairie, the exciting winter sorties by dog team, and the hazardous searches for passes through the eastern part of the mountain region. Perusing this material, one is forcefully reminded of the constant and formidable threats to human survival in much of Western Canada before the era of rail-

way development and early maturing wheat. But the author's preoccupation with the travel narrative has inevitably involved much paraphrasing and condensing of the fresh, richly detailed, and vivid prose of Palliser and Hector, with the consequence that some parts of the book are pedestrian and tedious.

Palliser's conclusions (discredited within the next twenty years) that much of the prairie portion of present-day Saskatchewan and Alberta was unfit for agriculture, and that no practicable route for a transcontinental railway existed in the mountain region, are the best known aspects of the expedition's reports. Yet, it is obvious from an examination of the originals that an immense amount of sound geographical knowledge was acquired, and it is unfortunate that Mrs. Spry has not devoted more attention to an evaluation of this material, so that the substantial achievements of Hector and the other scientists in the party could be more widely appreciated.

LEWIS H. THOMAS

ROAD TO SARATOGA

THOMAS ANBUREY, *With Burgoyne from Quebec.* Edited by Sydney Jackman. Macmillan. $5.75.

THE MAN OF TRIVIAL MIND who observes great events is always a somewhat difficult witness, largely because he does not realize the telling significance of minor circumstances seen clearly and objectively, but all too often seeks to inflate them with false philosophy. Thomas Anburey, whose *Travels through the Interior Parts of North America* is now in part reprinted under the title of *With Burgoyne to Quebec*, is such a man. He cannot describe an Indian village without long, trite reflection, in the manner of his age, on the relative merits of civilized and savage life:

> How mortifying must this parallel be to civilized nations? And the more painful the reflection, as it awakens the feelings to the cause of their sufferings; no doubt but they will one time or other be convinced from whence it arises; from the confusion of their opinions, from the defects of their political constitutions, and from the capriciousness of their laws, which ever are in continual opposition to the laws of nature . . .

Anburey, one observes sadly, was not without an eye to the vivid detail. Describing cod-fishing off the Grand Banks, for instance, he remarks that "as soon as the fish comes in view, the water magnifies it to such a size that it appears almost impossible to get it on board." Such are the observations which, rightly presented, make the good travel book, the appealing volume of memoirs. Anburey, unfortunately, can rarely leave them unembellished; the moralizing tone tends to take over, particularly in the

early passages of the book, when he is engaged in describing Quebec and its people. The later sections, dealing with Burgoyne's actual expedition, are less marred in this way, partly because the need to describe fairly complicated action leaves scantier room for philosophizing, and partly because — as scholars have pointed out — he filled out his "diary" of the Saratoga campaign with borrowings from other participants who had already written on the events in which he took part.

Admittedly, there are enough original observations in Anburey's narrative to make it useful and necessary for research scholars. But whether a republication was needed is another question; *With Burgoyne to Quebec* is fustian literature and historically of secondary importance. Its inclusion in the series of Pioneer Books, which in the past has published such works of first importance on early Canada as *The Letters and Journals of Simon Fraser*, Samuel Hearne's *Journey to the Northern Ocean* and Daniel Harmon's Journal, suggests that the editors are searching rather hard for titles.

L. T. CORNELIUS

LOYALIST HOUSES

MARION MACRAE and ANTHONY ADAMSON, *The Ancestral Roof; Domestic Architecture of Upper Canada.* Clark, Irwin. $10.00.

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE that *The Ancestral Roof* is the first book to appear on the subject of the houses of early Ontario, since the authors and photographer of this one have so ably revealed the richness, variety, uniqueness and quantity of the available subject matter. And they assure us that they have by no means covered the entire field. They and their publisher have turned out a handsome, glossy-paged volume filled with good, straightforward non-arty photographs and lively but simple and clear pen-and-ink architectural sketches. As Mr. Adamson proclaims in the introduction: "the purpose of this book is to encourage our readers to see, and having seen, to understand". However, Miss Macrae, who wrote the major portion of the text, evidently places less confidence in the ability of the reader to learn through his eye: she believes in bending his ear. One admires her ability to go on and on with seemingly endless concern about mouldings and mouldings, and mantelpiece after mantelpiece, but one also wonders if she really believes that anyone else shares her enthusiasm.

The political, economic and social history which created the house-building ancestors is partially described by Miss Macrae, and this, together with the background of architectural history which dominated the building of the houses, makes the most interesting reading in the book. Now and then one comes across a pretty but dubious literary or philosophical embellishment, such as: "an absolute eye is as rare in the visual arts as is absolute pitch in music", or "Italianate villas graced a number of cities of Ontario but the pruning hook of time has cut them down." The air becomes redolent of a ladies' club on a summer afternoon. And, since exact addresses are given for only a small number of the houses mentioned, and not a single map is provided, it seems that if the reader ever intends to go out and see for himself what the book says is worth seeing, he may indeed have to join a

guided tour sponsored by a Toronto ladies' club some nice, warm day.

The book ends with a kind of epilogue written and drawn by Mr. Adamson and printed on an appropriately virile grey paper. This epilogue, replete with equally virile sketches and an unadorned text-book-like commentary, sums up several very interesting generalities about the houses which have been described earlier, and, having seen, one does begin to understand, and to wish that there could have been more of this visual analysis, more detailed photographs and a few maps, so that this worthwhile book could have been even more worthwhile.

ABRAHAM ROGATNICK

RECOMMENDED REPRINTS

A FURTHER FOUR VOLUMES have just appeared in the *New Canadian Library*, bringing the total number of titles to 42. The new additions include Gabrielle Roy's mordant study of the little man in the murderous grip of metropolitan routine, *The Cashier*, and John Marlyn's novel of immigrant dilemma, *Under the Ribs of Death*. Brian Moore is represented by the least Canadian but still perhaps the best of his books, *Judith Hearne*, while a forgotten writer and a forgotten book are revived in M. Allardale Grainger's quasi-novel of British Columbian coast life, *Woodsmen of the West*.

TO THE EDITOR

SIR,

I have been working on a series of Indexes to major Canadian little magazines. This work is sponsored by the Atkinson Charitable Foundation of Toronto. Beginning in October of this year Indexes will be appearing at regular intervals in monograph form. The first one will be an Index to the first four volumes of Dudek's *Delta*, published by *Delta*, then an Index to Souster's *Direction* to be published both in *Culture* and apart as a booklet. Other periodicals to be indexed are *CIV/n*, *Contemporary Verse*, *Northern Review*, *Preview*, *First Statement*, *Combustion*, *Contact*, *Moment*, *McGill Fortnightly Review*. Anyone having copies of any of these magazines and willing to lend them or sell them should drop me a line.

MICHAEL GNAROWSKI,
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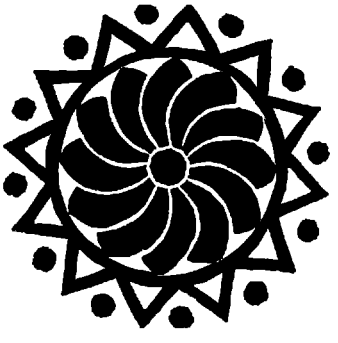

EARLY PHOTOGRAPHY IN CANADA

BY RALPH GREENHILL

THIS beautifully illustrated book is both a history of early photography with special reference to Canada and a photographic history of this country from 1850 to 1885. The first half of the book provides the first documented study of the development of photography in Canada. The second part contains reproductions of 106 of the best Canadian photographs of the time (accompanied by vivid descriptive extracts from contemporary writings), many of which are from the author's own collection and are previously unpublished.

$12.50

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