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WILFRED WATSON, DESMOND PACEY,
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contributors

HUGH MACLENNAN, who here writes on his most recent book, *The Watch that Ends the Night,* is the author of several other well-known novels, including *Two Solitudes, Barometer Rising* and *Each Man's Son.* As an interesting footnote to his account of the genesis of a novel, it might be added that the film rights of *The Watch that Ends the Night* have recently been bought by a Hollywood film company.

WILFRED WATSON gained international recognision when his volume of verse, *Friday's Child,* was published in England in 1955. The *Manifesto* he contributes to this issue is his own way of answering a suggestion from *Canadian Literature* that he might write an article on his views of contemporary poetry.

The critical and biographical works of PETER QUENNELL are too numerous and familiar to need listing here. He is at present joint editor, with Alan Hodge, of *History Today.*

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editorial

A TIME OF PROJECTS

A FAVOURITE WORD among Mexicans is *proyectismo;* it means the rage for making plans without considering the probability of achievement. To the outside observer in recent years the Canadian literary world might at times have seemed to be suffering from *proyectismo,* so many plans for magazines and other publications have been in the air. In fact, a surprising number of these plans have taken concrete form. *Canadian Literature,* here publishing its third number, can regard itself as well out of the project stage, and it is only one of a considerable group of literary magazines which have started in Canada during a comparatively short period and which still flourish. *Fiddlehead* in the Maritimes, *Delta* and *Liberté* in Montreal, *Tamarack* in Toronto, *Prism* in Vancouver — even such an incomplete list shows that the literary magazines are not merely becoming numerous, but also that they healthily represent every region of the country.

Perhaps the most encouraging fact about these new magazines is that they do not seem to be achieving mutual strangulation; on the contrary, those whose circumstances we know appear to be receiving more support than the pioneer Canadian little magazines of the 1940's. Whether the people who support the magazines of today are getting more for their devotion in terms of good writing than the people who supported the early issues of *Northern Review* and *Contemporary Verse* is another matter, and perhaps not yet to be judged; the important fact at present is that those who do write well in Canada can be more sure than in the past of having places to publish, people to read them, and even a payment which at least makes token recognition that writers should receive material as well as moral encouragement.

OUTSIDE THE FIELD of periodicals other projects suggest a liveliness in the general air of Canadian literature and literary scholarship. One of them is the new Readers Club of Canada which started operations towards the end of last year. This is the first book club devoted to the dissemination of work by Canadian writers, and its early selections range interestingly from relatively light biography to works like E. J. Pratt's *Collected Poems* and W. T. Eccles' *Frontenac.*

A SECOND PROJECT of rather different literary interest is under way at the University of Toronto, where preparations are well-advanced for the Dictionary of Canadian Biography, which will differ from its predecessors, the *Dictionary of National Biography* in Britain and the *Dictionary of American Biography,* in adopting the much more practical method of considering its subjects by periods instead of alphabetically. As a result of a continuing endowment, it will become possible to found a permanent centre of biographical information, where the editors of the Dictionary intend that the material gathered in the enquiries they direct may be filed for the use of individual scholars. In other words, we shall have not merely a biographical dictionary which will doubtless increase our knowledge of Canadian literary figures and stimulate the art of biography, but also a new Canadian research institution of great value to writers of all kinds.

FINALLY, as a project of particular interest to readers of *Canadian Literature* we would like to draw attention to the Literary History of Canada which is being prepared under the general editorship of Carl F. Klinck, with an editorial committee that includes Northrop Frye, Roy Daniells and Desmond Pacey. The combined efforts of the editors and twenty other writers will produce, we are told, "a comprehensive reference book (about 600 pages in length) on our literary history, which is due to appear in 1961 or 1962". The collection of essays by many hands has rarely been completely successful in presenting either literary or general history; there is the temptation to produce an anthology rather than a cohesive narrative. Yet variety of viewpoint has its merits, and we can certainly expect that the Literary History will produce new facts and fresh interpretations which will stimulate interest in this field of scholarship.

A FOREST OF SYMBOLS:

An Introduction to Saint-Denys Garneau

David M. Hayne

A NEW ERA in French-Canadian poetry began when Saint-Denys Garneau published a volume of twenty-eight poems early in 1937. The significance of the appearance of *Regards et jeux dans l'espace* was not immediately apparent; indeed, the reputation of this young man, whom Etienne Gilson has called French Canada's greatest poet, dates, for all except a handful of his friends, from the past decade. His *Poésies complètes* (not *quite* complete, of course) appeared in 1949; his *Journal* (substantially less complete) was published in 1954. Six years later it has become impossible to speak of twentieth-century French-Canadian poetry without mentioning his name.

But Canadian life and literature, as Quebec's first premier noted nearly a century ago, find their image in the great double spiral staircase of the Château de Chambord, which two persons can mount simultaneously without ever meeting. It is not surprising that Saint-Denys Garneau, except for a few pages of translated selections and one or two brief critical notices,[1] is almost unknown in English-speaking Canada.

[1] Translations by Jean Beaupré and Gael Turnbull in *The Canadian Forum* XXXVI (Feb. 1957), p. 255; by John Glassco in *Fiddlehead* XXXVI (Spring 1958), pp. 3-5, in *The Tamarack Review* VIII (Summer 1958), pp. 17-35, and in *The Waterloo Review* II 2 (Winter 1960), pp. 50-52; by F. R. Scott in *The Tamarack Review* IV (Summer 1957), pp. 55-59, and in his *Events and Signals,* Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1954, p. 22.

Professor W. E. Collin discussed the *Journal* in "Letters in Canada 1954" in the *University of Toronto Quarterly* XXIV, 3 (April 1955), pp. 321-324.

Born in Montreal on June 13, 1912, Hector de Saint-Denys Garneau was on the paternal side a great-grandson of the historian, François-Xavier Garneau and a grandson of the poet Alfred Garneau; on his mother's side he claimed descent from Jean Juchereau, a contemporary of Champlain and ancestor of one of French Canada's "first families". The young Hector seems to have been baptized "de Saint-Denys" after an illustrious forbear, Nicolas Juchereau de Saint-Denys, to whom Louis XIV granted letters of nobility for his gallantry in the defense of Quebec in 1690.

Saint-Denys Garneau spent his childhood at the ancestral manor-house at Sainte-Catherine de Fossambault, about twenty-five miles north of Quebec. When he was eleven, he was returned to Montreal to take his secondary schooling at a Jesuit classical college. Already his talents for poetry and sketching were apparent, and during some of these years he attended classes at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Montréal. His literary début occurred at the age of thirteen, when he submitted a thirteen-stanza poem in a children's literary competition organized by a Montreal department store. His entry, accompanied by a fearsome sketch, was entitled "Dinosaurus", and it began:

> Il était gigantesque
> Et son nom je vous dis
> Etait presque
> Aussi grand que lui

Except for the lack of punctuation, which remained a characteristic of all his later poetry, this early effort is evidence of precocity and little else. In 1928, however, a Hugolian mood poem with Baudelairian overtones, "L'automne", won for him first prize in a poetry contest conducted by the Canadian Authors' Association. Other poems of this adolescent period show the impact upon him of his reading of various nineteenth-century French poets as well as of his compatriot, Emile Nelligan, but the emancipation of his verse form, which he may owe to Péguy, had not yet taken place.

His classical course was interrupted in 1934 on his doctor's orders because of a rheumatic heart condition. Devoting himself to painting and writing, he now had the leisure to attend concerts, public lectures and art exhibitions. That same year he joined Robert Charbonneau and

others to found a literary magazine, *La Relève,* which was patronized by Jacques Maritain and which lasted, under a rejuvenated title, for fourteen years. During the first three of those years, Garneau contributed essays, book reviews, art criticism and poems to *La Relève;* except for the poetry, these contributions have not been collected in volume form.

The greater part of Saint-Denys Garneau's writing was done before he was thirty, in the five years from 1934 to 1939. In addition to his work for *La Relève,* he was writing poetry and making meticulous preparations for the publication *of Regards et jeux dans l'espace;* about sixty poems not included in that volume or composed subsequently are contained in the collected edition of 1949. He was also keeping the famous *Journal* which caused such a sensation in French-Canadian literary circles when it was published by his friends Robert Elie and Jean Le Moyne in 1954. The published *Journal* extends from January 1935 to January 1939, although we are led to believe that it may have been carried on for another year or two.

By the end of the thirties the still youthful Saint-Denys Garneau was living in quiet retirement. In the summer of 1937 he had set off for Europe, but had returned unexpectedly after spending only three weeks abroad, largely in Paris. Already the spiritual questionings which were to become an obsession with him were making it difficult for him to live and move in ordinary society; withdrawing more and more, he wrote poetry, painted a little, and confided his anguish to his diary. By the end of 1938 even the writing of poetry had stopped. Declining health and increasing periods of depression caused him to retire to the family manorhouse where he lived as a recluse, cared for by his parents. On October 24, 1943, overcome by restlessness, he left the house to paddle his canoe to an island in the river, where he sometimes camped out. He seems to have felt unwell and to have called at a nearby house in the hope of finding a telephone. The next day his body was discovered beside a creek in an adjoining field.

In December, 1944, in an attempt to save him from oblivion, his friends of *La Nouvelle Relève* brought out a special issue of the magazine in his honour. It included three short critical studies, a few unpublished poems, and tributes from his cousin Anne Hébert and from Raissa Maritain, who did not hesitate to rank him beside French authors like Alain-Fournier and Paul Eluard. A similar special issue was devoted to him by

the Montreal newspaper *Notre Temps* in May, 1947.

The real vogue of Saint-Denys Garneau began, however, in 1949, launched by Professor M. B. Ellis in her book-length study of the 1937 edition. Later that year, the collected edition of Garneau's poems appeared, and since that time two more books[2] and a steady stream of articles have been devoted to him.

Admittedly, much of the interest shown in Saint-Denys Garneau has been psychological or religious, occasionally almost hagiological, rather than literary. The revelations of the *Journal,* illuminating as they do the soul-searching of many of the poems, give an unprecedented insight into the spiritual itinerary of a young Canadian intellectual of a particularly sensitive and introspective type, who, while groping for self-realization, feels himself gradually overwhelmed by his irremediable solitude. In April 1931, while still in his teens, he had written to a friend:

> Solitude! Solitude! nous sommes des isolés, des aveugles, des muets qui mourons avec le secret de notre terrible nuit.[3]

In those years solitude had not yet become an obsession for the student confident in the invigorating realization of his intellectual power. By the spring of 1934, he was expressing in *Le Relève* his ambitions for a great spiritual revolution under the aegis of Art:

> Dans la grande révolution qui s'ébauche, et qui devra être le retour de l'humanité au spirituel, il s'impose que l'art, cette couronne de l'homme, l'expression suprême de son âme et de sa volonté, retrouve son sens perdu et soit l'expression splendide de cet élan vers en haut. (Lacroix, p. 37).

That Art failed him, or that he failed Art, is only too clear from passages like the following one in the *Journal* after the publication of *Regards et jeux dans l'espace*:

> C'est ainsi que mon livre ne peut exister puisque je n'existe pas. Il ne peut sans mentir avoir de grandeur ou d'originalité. (p. 124).

[2] M. B. ELLIS, *De Saint-Denys Garneau; art et réalisme.* Montréal. Eds Chantecler, 1949.

FRERE LEVIS FORTIER, *Le message poétique de Saint-Denys Garneau,* Ottawa. Eds de l'Université, 1954. (Bibliography, pp. 225-230).

ROMAIN LEGARE, O.F.M., *L'aventure poétique et spirituelle de Saint-Denys Garneau.* Montréal. Fides, 1957.

[3] BENOIT LACROIX, *Saint-Denys-Garneau; choix de textes* . . . . Montréal: Fides, 1956, p. 21.

A few months later he has abandoned all hope of self-realization through art: "C'est cela qui ne va pas: faire ma vie avec mon art, mon esprit" (p. 202). Meantime his sense of solitude has been growing. In the early pages of the *Journal* he had reported a spiritual crisis involving both a sense of abandonment and exhaustion and a moral revelation:

> J'ai connu la semaine dernière [i.e., at the end of January, 1935] une expérience intérieure de délaissement, d'humiliation, de solitude . . . J'ai, la semaine dernière, été mis en face du dilemme du bien et du mal, et d'une façon si nette dans la vue des deux termes, qu'il m'était *impossible* de choisir le mal. (pp. 51-52).

By 1937 the obsessive character of his sense of solitude is evident: "Je suis traqué. Je me sens traqué comme un criminel. Depuis longtemps. Mais cela devient vraiment insupportable" (p. 119). He tries desperately to strengthen his spiritual intention, to seek the path to God, but feels himself "rompu, brisé, pulverisé" (p. 135). He clings to his diary as a means of stabilizing himself, and records with satisfaction his brief moods of serenity, of communication with Jesus Christ. On days when he does not detect the presence of God in any way, he is plunged into despair. In a more tranquil period in October, 1937 he imagines himself approaching a state of spiritual "engagement", and he aspires to make the gift of himself. "Il me faut m'engager et jusqu'aux os. A vrai dire, il ne me reste plus que les os" (p. 183). But a new disillusionment follows, and in January 1938 he feels submerged by the weight of despair, hoping for nothing, aware of nothing. He scrutinizes his poems and rejects the majority of them as insignificant and insincere. Despite the fleeting comfort of the presence of the Communion of Saints, he now sees himself as a lifeless hulk, amputated and meaningless, like a tree with its branches lopped off. "Maintenant, c'est l'idée de l'épine dorsale avec cette impression en plus d'une hache qui (sans douleur) en détache les côtes, l'impression d'être ébranché" (p. 237). And so the published *Journal* trails off into silence; its last fragmentary lines are references to death and suicide in Baudelaire and Bernanos.

Despite the undoubted fascination of his spiritual adventure, it is probably for his poetic theories and achievements that Saint-Denys Garneau will retain a place in the history of French-Canadian letters. In poetic theory he belongs to the long tradition of Symbolism in the widest sense, a tradition that links Baudelaire and Mallarmé, Claudel and Valéry.

Under the influence of Maritain's *Art et scolastique,* Saint-Denys Garneau at first spoke of art in Thomistic terms, although confessing in the *Journal* (p. 250) his limited comprehension of Thomism. "L'art est harmonie", he wrote in 1934; "il est vérité ordonnée parfaitement . . . ." "Mais la vérité en art", he hastened to add, "n'est pas dans les choses tant que dans la façon de les envisager, le sens qu'on leur donne".[4] Thus he rejected both Romantic emotionalism and Parnassian realism in favour of the "Idéal" of the Symbolists:

> Celui qui est sensible aux chatoiements de la couleur, à l'agitation tumultueuse de la passion, ne peut pas être placé sur le même plan que celui qui recherche la pureté dégagée de la forme et l'éternelle sérénité de l'idée. L'un parle davantage aux sens, l'autre davantage à l'esprit. (*ibid.*).

The artist takes possession of the world in its mysterious reality. "Ce que je cherche, c'est une sorte de possession du monde par l'esprit au moyen de l'art" (Lacroix, p. 89). Art is thus an inverted form of metaphysics:

> Le métaphysician atteint le particulier, l'intimité unique des choses à force de général, d'universel. L'artiste atteint à l'universel à force de particulier, d'unicité . . . Ainsi compris, l'art est un mode d'assomption du monde. (*Journal,* p. 153).

The business of the artist is to detect the beauty of reality under the appearances that, in the eyes of other men, pass for reality. "Il a vocation de reconnaître la beauté à travers la création" (Lacroix, p. 90). What the artist then presents as his work of art must be "transparent à la beauté" (*Journal,* p. 158), since it reveals "la transparence de la forme à l'être" (p. 175). The two levels of "transparency" are explained in an essay on Alphonse de Chateaubriant:

> . . . Transparence d'abord [du style] aux choses dans un effort à y mouler l'expression, à en restituer la vie dans l'exactitude de sa forme.
>
> Puis, à mesure d'un approfondissement, transparence des choses à ce que nous pourrions appeler *l'arrière-fond mystérieux de leur vie dans une correspondance à l'humain.*
>
> Et jusqu'à ne plus faire des choses que des signes non plus seulement transparents à leur vie profonde et à l'harmonie métaphysique qu'elles figurent, mais des symboles, des représentants d'idées, de faits spirituels, de lois.[5]

[4] "L'art spiritualiste", *La Relève* I (1934), p. 40. (Quoted in Lacroix, p. 36).

[5] *La Relève* II (1936), p. 253 (Quoted in Légaré, p. 141).

The same theory of transparency could be illustrated from Saint-Denys Garneau's criticism of music and painting. Mozart and Debussy delight him by the "simplicité transparente des thèmes" (*Journal,* p. 57); Beethoven, on the other hand, is too emotional, Handel diffuse. In painting he admires the clear vision of Matisse, and in Renoir "l'intention et le spectacle sont dès l'abord sur le même plan transparent . . ." (p. 95). But Picasso's abstractions or "la féroce caricature de Rouault" leave him bewildered (Lacroix, p. 53).

In Saint-Denys Garneau's view, transparency implies Symbolism. His jottings in the *Journal* and elsewhere often provide unconscious echoes of passages from Symbolist theorists.[6] For Mallarmé, "tout, au monde, existe pour aboutir à un livre"; for Saint-Denys Garneau, ". . . tout est poème; il s'agit qu'il y ait un poète" (Lacroix, p. 89). Speaking of the underlying unity of all existence as expressed by the artist, Charles Morice had written in 1889, "Ce retour à la simplicité, c'est tout l'art"; in 1935, Saint-Denys Garneau was urging "un grand retour général à la simplicité" (Lacroix, p. 39). Saint-Pol-Roux had related Beauty to God: "La beauté étant la forme de Dieu, il appert que la chercher induit à chercher Dieu, que la montrer, c'est le montrer"; Saint-Denys Garneau confesses in his *Journal* "Et quand je saisis la Beauté, je ne puis le voir opposé à Dieu, au salut" (p. 169). It is unlikely that there is any direct imitation in these passages; they are merely indications of Saint-Denys Garneau's general sympathy with Symbolist point of view.

In his own poems, Saint-Denys Garneau had a habit of using a certain symbol in a few poems while he was absorbed by a certain problem — the parallel passages can usually be traced in the *Journal* — and then abandoning it, although retaining almost unconsciously some of the images into which the original symbol had ramified in his mind. His symbols thus tend to group themselves about the themes which concerned him at various times: poetic creation, solitude, authenticity and death.

The first of these, poetic creation, will serve to illustrate both the ramification process, and the parallel preoccupations of the poems and the *Journal.* This theme is dominant in the period preceding the publication

[6] GUY MICHAUD, *La doctrine symboliste (documents).* Paris: Nizet, 1947. The quotations from Mallarmé, Morice and Saint-Pol-Roux are found on pp. 16, 17 and 42 respectively.

of *Regards et jeux dans l'espace* early in 1937, at which time his *Journal* is filled with discussions of aesthetic problems. As the title of the collection suggests, poetic creation is seen as a combination of the artist's insight ("le regard") and his representation of the reality he perceives. ("les jeux du poète"). It is by his "regard" that the poet seeks to take possession of reality and to make contact with humanity.

> Quelle grande chose qu'un regard pur, non pas cette recherche chez les passants de ce qui en eux correspond à notre bassesse, mais l'avidité de l'âme des autres, de la vie des autres, de l'être salvable et joyeux dans les autres! Le regard transparent qui est comme une bonne parole. Le regard qui ne s'arrête pas au sens charnel des formes, mais qui pénètre jusqu'aux éléments de salut.
>
> Comme ce regard en effet transforme le monde, en fait un monde de joie et d'espérance, presque déjà ressuscité! (*Journal,* p. 82)

The process is not one of interpreting or of judging, but of perceiving; the poet withdraws into his own mind, into a tiny room in his skull "où l'on se retire de tout, de soi-même, pour s'asseoir et pour regarder. Là, on n'a plus affaire avec rien: on est étranger. On regarde seulement" (*Journal,* p. 106). But the "regard" is not directed only at the world outside. It is a double-edged sword.

> Regard, la lame à double sens. La distance où il pénètre au dehors, il faut qu'il la perce au dedans, sans quoi voilà qu'il bascule et nous à sa suite, entraîné à un écoulement perfide, funeste.
>
> Pour supporter la percée rétroactive du regard, il faut que le pays intérieur ait la profondeur, et la solidité, l'authenticité, la force et la santé . . .
>
> (*Journal,* p. 228)

It was in the inward direction that Saint-Denys Garneau felt his own "regard" to be "bourbeux et dévasté" despite his longing for a "regard pur et libre" (p. 142).

In the poems, the "regard pur et libre" is frequently symbolized by the insight of a child:

> Tout le monde peut voir une piastre de papier vert
> Mais qui peut voir au travers
> si ce n'est un enfant
> Qui peu comme lui voir au travers et toute liberté . . .
>
> (*Poésies complètes,* p. 38).

As early as 1932, Saint-Denys Garneau had written to a friend, "Je crois que si dans l'enfance on est plus éloigné des vérités, on est plus près

toutefois de la vérité."[7] The eyes of a child are "grands pour tout prendre" (*Poésies complètes,* p. 38). The child sees without difficulty, notices everything, "mais son regard est rarement dehors; il retourne aussitôt à la forge prochaine derrière de son imagination, où il est absorbé" (*Journal,* p. 220).

When the child looks outward, he takes possession of the world about him,

> Il ne regarde que pour vous embrasser
> Autrement il ne sait pas quoi faire
> avec ses yeux
> Où les poser . . . .
>
> (*Poésies complètes,* p. 47)

The poet tries similarly to seize upon the essence of reality, the beauty of the world:

> Et mon regard part en chasse effrénément
> De cette spendeur qui s'en va
> De la clarté qui s'échappe
> Par les fissures du temps
>
> (*Poésies complètes,* p. 86)

But as the poet moves farther and farther from the simplicity and inner tranquillity of a child, his "regard" is obscured; the world is too much with him, and

> La ville coupe le regard au début
> Coupe à l'épaule le regard manchot
>
> (*Poésies complètes,* p. 39)

Even external nature ceases to satisfy his glance: "nos regards sont fatigués d'être fauchés / par les mêmes arbres" (p. 176), and he confesses despondently that he has failed in his attempt to take possession of reality:

> Mes regards ne sont pas allés commes des glaneuses
> Par le monde alentour
> Faire des gerbes lourdes de choses
> Ils ne rapportent rien pour peupler mes yeux déserts
> Et c'est comme exactement s'ils étaient
> demeurés en dedans
> Et que la porte fût restée fermée.
>
> (*Poésies complètes,* p. 150)

[7] *La Nouvelle Relève* III (1944), p. 517.

The second stage of the poetic process is the representation of reality, the creation or construction by which the poet attempts to present the reality he has perceived:

> De là, les jeux du poète, les jeux féconds du poète qui se met à raconter comme c'est beau, et qui s'y prend de mille manières, ne pouvant arriver à dire assez comme c'est beau. (*Journal,* pp. 251-2)

The poet's medium is language, but his words are not units of meaning in the simple sense:

> Ses paroles qui ne sont pas du temps
> Mais qui représentent le temps dans l'éternel,
> Des manières de représentants
> Ailleurs de ce qui passe ici,
> Des manières de symboles
> Des manières d'évidences de l'éternité qui passe ici.
>
> (*Poésies complètes,* p. 122)

By an extension of the symbol of the poet-child, poetic creations become games: "l'art, lui, est une manifestation, un libre exercice, un jeu" (*Journal,* p. 230). The "play" theme is developed at length in the poem "Le jeu",

> Ne me dérangez pas je suis profondément occupé
>
> Un enfant est en train de bâtir un village
> C'est une ville, un comté
> Et qui sait
> Tantôt l'univers.
> Il joue . . . . . .
>
> (*Poésies complètes,* p. 35)

The poet-child plays with his toy-box, "pleine de mots pour faire de merveilleux enlacements" (p. 36),

> Il vous arrange les mots comme si c'étaient de simples chansons
> Et dans ses yeux on peut lire son espiègle plaisir
> A voir que sous les mots il déplace toutes choses . . . (p. 37)

In an essay entitled "Monologue fantaisiste sur le mot", published in *La Relève*[8], Saint-Denys Garneau had stressed "la terrible exigence des

[8] *La Relève* III (1937), pp. 71-73. The quotations in the remainder of this paragraph are all from this short essay. (Reproduced in Lacroix, pp. 63-66).

mots qui ont soif de substance". Words are not mere instruments of expression; "le mot contient toute une culture, toute une réflexion". One must strive to *enter* the word, to possess it, to draw upon its substance and to add to its substance in return. Culture consists in the possession of words in this intimate sense:

> Le poète reconnaît le mot comme sien. Il est libre du mot pour en jouer. Il joue de tout par le mot. Le mot est l'instrument dont il joue pour rendre sensible le jeu qu'il fait de toute choses.

As Brother Lévis Fortier has shown[9], Saint-Denys Garneau's treatment of poetic creation obviously owes a good deal to Valéry. But the symbols of the poet-child and his games probably go back much further, to Baudelaire, who is referred to more than a dozen times in the *Journal.* Robert Elie confirms that, after his spiritual crisis in 1935, Saint-Denys Garneau "ne lira plus ni Musset ni Loti, mais il découvrira Baudelaire, qui l'accompagnera jusqu'au bout de son aventure."[10] As in *Les Fleurs du mal,* the opening poems of *Regards et jeux dans l'espace* examine the poet's function; in fact, the image of the poet-child occurs in the second poem of Baudelaire's volume ("Bénédiction") precisely as it does in Garneau's book. It is conceivable, however, that the "toy-and-game" symbolism has its source in an essay Baudelaire published in *Le Monde Littéraire* in 1853 and later included in *L'art romantique* under the title "Morale du joujou". In it Baudelaire maintains that "les enfants témoignent par leurs jeux de leur grande faculté d'abstraction et de leur haute puissance imaginative . . . Le joujou est la première initiation de l'enfant à l'art . . . " When a child wants to see what makes his toy work, "Je ne me sens pas le courage de blâmer cette manie enfantine: c'est une première tendance métaphysique . . ."[11] Most of the elements of Saint-Denys Garneau's poem "Le jeu" are to be found in these pages.

To continue the exploration of this single theme of poetic creation in Saint-Denys Garneau would lead us into intriguing byways such as the symbolism of the poet's right and left eyes:

> Et pourtant dans son oeil gauche quand le droit rit
> Une gravité de l'autre monde s'attache à la feuille d'un arbre . . .
>
> (*Poésies complètes,* p. 37)

[9] *Le message poétique de Saint-Denys-Garneau,* pp. 190-201.

[10] *Revue Dominicaine* LVI (1950), p. 99.

[11] *L'art romantique.* Paris: Skira, 1945, pp. 143, 144, 148.

— or of the children's dance:

> Mes enfants vous dansez mal
> Il faut dire qu'il est difficile de danser ici
> Dans ce manque d'air
> Ici sans espace qui est toute la danse . . . (p. 39)

— or of the invisible flowers:

> Et surtout n'allez pas mettre un pied dans la chambre
> On ne sait jamais ce qui peut être dans ce coin
> Et si vous n'allez pas écraser la plus chère des fleurs invisibles (p. 36)

But like a child chasing a butterfly, we should find ourselves wandering deeper into this "fôret de symboles" than we intended. In true Mallarmean fashion, Saint-Denys Garneau tempts his readers to try a "série de déchiffrements" which will unlock the mysteries of these half-transparent, half-hermetic poems, and thereby lures them back into the labyrinth of his *Journal* and of his spiritual adventure.

FREDERICK PHILIP GROVE: AN IMPRESSION

W. B. Holliday

ONE DAY IN THE FALL of 1939 I was wandering among the book stacks in Eaton's Toronto store. A novel, *Two Generations,* by Frederick Philip Grove, caught my eye. Grove's picture was on the dust cover with a brief account of his life. I noted that he owned a farm near Simcoe. The photograph was of a thoughtful man in his forties wearing a high, old-fashioned collar. He was looking away from the photographer with a detached expression. In his eyes a certain kindliness and modesty seemed to mingle with a suggestion of tragedy. He appeared to be somehow vulnerable, approachable. I decided to write to him and ask for work on his farm. I had literary ambitions.

He replied to my letter four days later. He acknowledged that he owned a farm, but a tenant worked it. "Still", he wrote, "if you were here, I might, in the long run, be able to do something for you. We have, for a year or so, had a young man in the house to act as a sort of janitor in return for his board; and we have not yet filled the position for this winter. We conduct a private school here . . ." He named a meeting-place in Brantford which he would be visiting a few days hence.

His tone was cordial but I had misgivings and I allowed the day of the suggested meeting to pass. The following week-end I took the bus to Simcoe and walked the mile from the town to Grove's house. He was in his garden kneeling among the vegetables. He looked up from his weeding. I identified myself. "Oh, yes", he said without surprise. "I thought you'd changed your mind". He pointed out that he would be unable to pay me. I expressed indifference to money. He said nothing.

I studied him closely. His head was massive and well-shaped; I noticed particularly the impressive distance from the top of his head to his ears.

His sandy, cropped hair gave him a youthful appearance and I judged him to be in his fifties. (I learned later that he was sixty-seven.) The day was raw and a drop of moisture clung to the tip of his long nose. His eyes were pale and framed by heavy pouches. He was polite and receptive, but there was something in his manner which made me wonder if he was indifferent to my presence.

I watched his thick fingers expertly grasp the weeds and pull them from the black soil. But it was disillusioning to see the man whose picture I had observed on the jacket of a novel crouching thus upon the earth and performing such a lowly task. I began to question him about books and authors. He offered his views pleasantly but with authority, even with finality. When he expressed esteem for D. H. Lawrence I was reassured.

Presently we went to the house for tea. Mrs. Grove, a business-like person, questioned me discreetly about my intentions. She seemed faintly incredulous that I was prepared to leave a job in Toronto in order to live with them. Grove, smoking a cigarette in a holder, sat with his long legs crossed, occasionally interjecting a remark.

When the time came for me to catch the bus, Grove rose and shook my hand, looking down at me in a friendly way. "I'd like to come", I said. Both appeared to welcome my words yet plainly they wished the decision to be made solely by me. I returned to Toronto, resigned my office position and within three weeks I was living with the Groves.

Life in the household ran a simple, Spartan course. There were four of us, including Leonard the son. We rose early and by seven-thirty we were at breakfast. Everyone ate oatmeal porridge, soaked overnight. By eight o'clock Grove had sharpened his pencils in a school room and was on his way upstairs to his study. He was typing the final draft of *In Search of Myself* and the rattle of his typewriter was heard until noon. After lunch he returned to his study to read or he worked in the garden; on two afternoons a week he taught French to the dozen or so pupils attending the school. (Teaching the students bored him). After supper he and I walked together or he spent some time with Leonard; frequently he went to his study and played solitaire while solving the problems his writing posed him; he rarely made social calls though occasionally friends visited the house; he never went to a motion picture. By ten o'clock the house was quiet.

Grove was essentially a European. He was, one critic has stated, the

Canadian Thomas Hardy. To him life was complex, full of tortuous depths, hidden motives, inevitable suffering; a struggle against a blind, impersonal fate. One must have patience, endurance; these brought resignation and with resignation might come wisdom. His opposition to Magna Charta — it replaced the tyranny of the king with the tyranny of the masses — together with his admiration for Goethe, the enemy of the French Revolution, baffled me at first; his views seemed perverse, at war with the bland assumptions, the facile optimism of the North American. I concluded that he must have reflected with wonder during his years in Canada upon the strange twist of fortune which had placed him as a youth in an environment so alien to all that was congenial to him.

In 1941 he wrote to me: "You will probably see through the papers . . . that I have been elected a fellow of the Royal Society, the highest honour which can come to a Canadian man of letters; so be sure to put the 'FRSC' behind my name henceforth. It's as good as a title they tell me." Obviously, under the banter, he was deeply touched by the distinction. Nevertheless, apart from a few discerning critics and a small but growing audience, popular acclaim never came to him. He told me that the works of George Meredith met with indifference until the author's death; afterwards Meredith's heirs reaped the rewards of posthumous fame. In cheerfully dismissing the public he ascribed its inattention to distaste for his forthright message. "I am hard at work", he wrote to me in December, 1940, "on another of those novels which I shall never publish; I have half a dozen such on my shelves. If I published them the people of Canada would have *me* stoned or call *them* pornography. You see, publication means nothing. What matters is solely that the work be done, the book be written, the beauty created. The rest of my work counts for little. But I once published the least "objectionable" of those novels which comprise my real work (*Settlers of the Marsh*) and the libraries barred me; and my friends cut me in the street. So why should I even try to publish. Quite apart from the fact that I can't. But that is no reason for not writing those books, to me". He declared his independence of the reader again in a letter of November, 1941. "Work on a long book makes the rest of life seem irrelevant. What difference does it make whether, from day to day, you are dissatisfied with what you are doing, whether, perhaps, you are almost starving; even whether your book progresses satisfactorily; so long as it either is alive or is coming to life; gestation is not

a fast process; it demands time, and you can't hurry it. But when the book is born, it is a miracle to you, like every birth".

Grove's words betrayed a certain gnawing contrariness of which I was to see other examples. On the one hand he is pleased with the few honours that have come his way — honours, though, which only the appearance of his books could bring him; on the other hand publication means "nothing". He was contemptuous of politicians, inferring that, in the main, they act out of self interest; yet he showed me, with some satisfaction, a letter he had received from Mackenzie King thanking him for the copy of *Two Generations* Grove had sent him. To my doubts that I was sufficiently independent of public opinion to write as my heart willed he encouraged me: "As far as that normality of which you speak, naturally we are anything but 'normal people'; and we hold those that are a bit in horror; at least I do; my wife certainly to a less extent." He affected to despise cities; they were monuments to a soulless materialism. Yet as an affluent youth astir with dreams of great accomplishments he had moved with ease in the great cities of Europe. I suspected that his professed dislike was based on the knowledge that when among the inhabitants of those places he was unknown, anonymous like themselves; their indifference to him was the measure of his failure as a writer. And he was ready to overturn my pride as a Torontonian in the Canadian National Exhibition by dismissing it briefly in 1941: "The exhibition was a disaappointment to everyone of us. We went home about 3 p.m."

From a perspective of twenty years I believe Grove was disappointed that his pen had failed to earn him a decent livelihood. He was a patrician by nature as well as by birth and wealth would have allowed him to live in style. During my stay he was earning a modest sum as a reader for Macmillan's. His own works were paying him little; he told me with amusement that once he received a royalty cheque amounting to sixty cents.

Yet Grove would have spurned the suggestion that he debase his talent for money although, on one occasion, when his wife needed a refrigerator, he wrote a pot boiler to get it. But this deliberate act must have been a rare perversion of his muse for deep within him burned a constant flame that was his integrity. He knew what he had to say and he knew the only way in which he could in all honesty say it. As an impressionable youth I found this almost stubborn probity an impressive and exhilarating in-

fluence. Doubtless never very far from Grove's thoughts were his models, the great writers of the past, and I believe that their example was supported ultimately by a strong belief in his own worth as a novelist of importance.

I have listened with Grove to the Ninth Symphony, observing how Beethoven's hammer blows seemed to parallel his own searching views on the human condition. And watching his studying a folio of the frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, I have marked his love for the eternally beautiful. But it was Grove's opinions as a writer that I wished to know. And he gave his views willingly. *War and Peace* was the greatest novel ever written; *Anna Karenina* was next in importance. When I surmised that Galsworthy had little sympathy for Irene Forsyte, he said: "You must have read the book with little understanding; he pleads her cause on every page." He denied that Dickens was merely a caricaturist; he was a "great psychologist", a novelist with few peers; "he is underrated just now". Grove appeared to have little interest in American writers, though he admired Thoreau deeply possibly because of Thoreau's rejection of the superfluous in life. Several times during my stay he repeated with thoughtful amusement Thoreau's dictum that it is wise to avoid the beginnings of evil. He said: "A novel is essentially the road pursued from an idea to an act that bears it out." He told me that once, during a short illness, he had read the complete works of Shakespeare. He referred to Stefan George, André Gide and Rainer Maria Rilke admiringly. He told me that one day, in his youth, he had brashly called upon Swinburne.

But I doubted, as I listened to him day after day, that he felt for the mass of human kind that high regard which he had for his intellectual peers. He was kind and magnanimous in his daily relationships but he was inclined to scoff at the pretensions of little men and at the weaknesses of those in public life. I think that, to him, mankind on the whole made a poor showing; indeed, the life of many men was scarcely justifiable. In his novel *The Master of the Mill,* a copy of which he gave me, his preoccupation with the forces that impel mankind rather than a feeling for the individual is apparent; his characters are at the mercy of the novel's preconceived design; they lack an inner life of their own; they are shadowy pawns. Thus the book is curiously lacking in warmth. I readily identified the author as the man whose personality I was beginning to know.

When the war began Grove followed events closely. He listened regularly to the dry, factual reporting of Elmer Davis. Subsequently when I left the household and had joined the service he commended my action: "Were I younger, I should no longer hesitate. We live in a world of insanity. I recommend to you *Out of the Night* to allay any lingering scruples. I have no sympathy with the author; but essentially what he says is the truth."

From this time my life took a new direction. But I often thought of Grove; from a distance of two thousand miles the recollection of my stay with him became increasingly precious. In 1943 he sent a short note which proved to be his last letter to me. As usual it was typewritten and signed F. P. G. He was still writing "but it is next to impossible to publish my sort of thing". And he added gloomily: "Life runs its humdrum course; and only Leonard has so much before him that he still looks for great things." His words were dispiriting, but I was heartened to know that in spite of the distractions of a world conflict as well as the realization that he could not expect the acclaim which he may secretly have continued to expect, he was still at his desk. One day, while on leave, I journeyed to Simcoe. Grove had suffered from one of the strokes which ultimately killed him. His right side had been paralysed and he had made an incomplete recovery. He spoke with difficulty. He had received an honorary doctorate from the University of Manitoba, but he seemed more amused than grateful; perhaps the recognition had come too late. His manner was remote, passive. Mrs. Grove told me that he wanted to die. I understood, for he could no longer write: his usefulness, he doubtless believed, was at an end. When I left Grove that day I knew I should never see him again.

No one who knew Grove could fail to be conscious of his profound integrity. It is this attribute to which I return again and again when I think of him. To the end he retained an admiration for that which is excellent; and excellence as a writer was ever his goal. As an interpreter of his adopted country, he never veered from his resolve to portray her with all the honesty of which he was capable. His death was marked with deep regret by a few; but one day Canadians will become aware that no man understood so well the forces shaping their character as the gentle European novelist who dwelt so long unnoticed in their midst.

THE THIRD EYE

JAY MACPHERSON'S *The Boatman*

James Reaney

THE WORLD of Canadian poetry is like some lonely farmhouse at the centre of a remarkably large and bleak farm. One enters the farmhouse to find the inhabitants all busy at making wonderfully strange carvings apparently unrelated to the prairie fields and Yonge streets that lie outside. I say "apparently" unrelated because the more we stay with these carvers the more we realise that the carvings *are* related, related in a very freeing way to the whole farm of ten fields and two wastelands.

On our way home we saw a heron fishing in the bog; Mr. Le Pan is carving that heron into a hollow Silenus figure filled with tiny shapes of gods and goddesses. The old farmer himself, Mr. Pratt, has just completed a dragon, one of many, a dragon that represents the muskeg we had such difficulty with on the road here. There is also Miss Macpherson who has just completed a model of the farmhouse itself — it's a whale. This carving (her volume *The Boatman*) has made a great difference in the world of Canadian poetry. Let us proceed to explain the greatness of this difference.

First, what one must remark about Miss Macpherson's whale or "Leviathan" is that it is so very skillfully carved, and so are all the other beasts inside it, for her Leviathan turns out to be a Noah's Ark as well. It can also be said that she is the first Canadian poet to carve angels at all well. No one before had ever told Canadian poets that the Angel was or could be a very suitable and good topic for poetry.

Miss Macpherson's angels, of course, have a lot to do with the fact that she does some very natural but very hard things connected with the Bible. The Bible is still a vexatiously ill-known work in Canada despite all the

nineteenth-century piety and the packed churches of the twentieth century. I mean that it is ill-known as a key to art and as a source for new art. Miss Macpherson knows her Bible, knows that the natural world about us is not natural, knows how her Bible shows you how to deal with this unnaturalness; so nothing seemed more amiable probably than to have lots of angels, for they are the structure of the Bible and they prove to be a subject that immediately creates a tension in which any object or animal or being — Egg, Abominable Snowman and Mary of Egypt — begins to have an outline that glows. In *The Boatman* there is the "faceless angel" of the Storm, the angel who knows what "sways when Noah nods", the "inward angel" — of a poem called that — who has a "diamond self". There are the angels who look on as Leviathan frolics and there are the seraph forms within the "caverned woman" which are later named "flowers, fountains, milk, blood". In this equation we see that what the poet means by an angel is anything or anybody or any being seen in its Eternal aspect, that is, at its most glorious and most real, its most expanded. Actually, in leafing backwards through *The Boatman* and tracking down the angels, I've forgotten to mention the very important angel in the last poem:

> The world was first a private park
> Until the angel, after dark,
> Scattered afar to wests and easts
> The lovers and the friendly beasts.

This angel represents the giant and supernatural force all Creation lost at the Fall. This force, like a cork in a bottle, stands between us and Paradise in the sense that we must attain to it again before we can return to Paradise. This significant angel and his companions are a great part of the reason why *The Boatman* is such an exciting book. Of course, Genesis, St. John, Milton, Blake and Rilke can't be wrong — the concept of the angel is one of the most stunning things man ever stumbled across. To have landed and handled this concept is a real achievement.

NOT ONLY is this poet able to arrive at a skill with a very important symbol; she knows also how to deal with a great variety of topics in a carefully modulated variety of ways. The variety of methods or ways or tones is so cleverly arranged that by the time the reader has

finished the volume he has boxed the compass of the reality which poetry imitates. This should be an ability an enthusiast for poetry would naturally expect from the author of any volume of lyrics. Even the meanest musical composer can manage a suite in which the prelude is different from the gigue which in turn is different from the sarabande. But the average poet cannot manage this, nor does he very often even want to, or know that it is possible. Even in really academic circles where one might naturally expect to meet ultra-theoretical sympathies, the idea that a poet might arrange his lyrics in suites or build up a collection of lyrics around a consistent and observable variety in poetic effects is usually poohpoohed as being rather mechanical or even rather immoral. If Miss Macpherson smashes the spell that still holds many a poetry consumer both inside and outside literary circles in Canada — that the stuff is written more or less as if an undistinguishing frenzy had overtaken one — she will have accomplished one miracle at least. This problem is very much connected with the conspiracy of brute silence about criticism in Canada which Mr. Mandel mentioned in the first issue of this quarterly. Miss Macpherson shows what interesting results can be achieved when one dares to break this silence, dares to accept almost casually the fact that literature can be talked about and described.

Canadian poetry has always been plagued by the book of unrelated lyrics. I often feel that, aside from the fact that for a long while there were no Canadian critics who could help with this problem, the influence of the average collection from England should bear some of the blame. Despite the fact that Yeats, Eliot, Thomas and Sitwell have tried something different, the usual English poet generally dishes out a selection of his latest "real" walks. Canadian poets are unfortunately rather trapped when it comes to writing English poetry about walks, since in some parts of Canada it is impossible to take a walk either because the traffic would kill you or the particular province was designed to be interesting only to birds. Miss Macpherson's angels help tremendously, since it is possible to talk about an angel no matter where you live. One of the proudest conclusions the author of *The Boatman* might draw about her own volume is that very few of the experiences described are "real" or "natural" experiences. The situations, the beings, the speakers are all gloriously artificial like the themes of Bach, which no "real" bird, no "real" train whistle could imitate or has ever imitated. If the tyranny of

the "natural" or unorganised results in the ragbag approach to a volume of lyrics, then the monarchy of the better than "natural", the monarchy of the organised, has resulted in the beautifully articulated structure of this book, and it is a monarchy that shows the way to future ones. I can remember feeling so envious with regard to one of my own earliest poetic enthusiasms — Edith Sitwell; I envied her the idea of a suite such as *Façade* represents. I envied because I felt that to imitate it would be to plagiarize. But *The Boatman* quite persuasively shows that originality consists not in avoiding what has been done before but in doing what has been done over again. So far as the organization of a book of lyrics is concerned William Blake showed the way forever. To transplant that organization into our poetry which so sadly needs it is not the least interesting of *The Boatman's* accomplishments.

In a poem entitled "The Anagogic Man" we are presented with a figure as interesting as the angel, the figure of a sleeping Noah whose head contains all creation. "Consider that your senses keep / A death far deeper than his sleep". This is Blake's Albion, Emerson's Giant in his great early essay "Nature", Joyce's sleeping Finn, and it represents as do these analogues the slumbering imagination of all life, a slumbering imagination that slowly through art and science rearranges the sun, moon, stars and figures of the gods until they are once more under human control. This Noah is the artist, a man who has brought and still brings all of society safely through the flood and tempest of a fallen world's whirlwind of atoms and death-wishes. But Art must be allowed to decide for itself when the time for universal apocalypse has arrived. If we waken him or it beforehand it is akin to building the Tower of Babel, to attempting a leap into Paradise when we are by no means ready for it. The whole collection of poems requires the reader to transfer himself from the sleep our senses keep to Noah's sleep, and from Noah's sleep eventually to the first morning in Paradise. Miss Macpherson's book is a dream that starts off in the world of the senses and slowly lifts us higher and higher until in the final half dozen pages we are as high as we can be.

Other Canadian poets, as a matter of fact, have handled this figure, and he is a figure that a poet has to handle in one shape or another sooner or later, since the very process of being interested in metaphor evidently must lead to an interest in giant and mythical figures. Once you start saying that "my love is like a red, red rose", you might

as well start saying that she is like a great many other beautiful things as well, and then of course if she really is a goddess she is like everything, because a goddess isn't a goddess unless she can control both beautiful and ugly things, even things indifferent. So she *is* everything and contains all the things she is like. If anything is like anything (metaphor) it eventually is everything (myth) and is an anagogic figure similar to Miss Macpherson's.

Douglas Le Pan has a poem about this figure called "Image of Silenus". The motto is from Plato: "He is like one of the images of Silenus. They are made to open in the middle, and inside them are figures of the gods", but the basic image of the poem is from Canadian nature — a heron who is equated with this image of Silenus. Le Pan's Silenus or Noah contains the "shrunken figures of desire". Miniatures rather, toys in a toyshop window" — Dionysus, Christopher, Francis, Apollo, foam-born Aphrodite. The speaker turns and looks down from a railway viaduct at the so-called real world, "real and suffering city". "They are rows of jostling seeds, / Planted too close, unlikely to come to maturity. / Some will shoot up (germs are brave things and hard to kill). / But most will be crushed." This is the world we live in. But in the inner city, the world we think, feel and imagine in, the figures of the gods — ". . . The puppets have looked out / Like sick children with their faces pressed to the window / (Guarded by guiling glass / By an invisible barrier)". Le Pan's glass is Miss Macpherson's golden bubble head of glass which in turn is the container of Noah's anagogic dream life. But in Le Pan's poem it is not time yet for the complete union of the figure of the gods — or completely expressed desire — and frustrated, wretched, longing humanity. "Now the blinds drop, the shop shuts, the mask grins again", and as the Silenus figure closes away his hidden myths to become one more mocking figure imitating our own ugly imprisonment the heron flies away.

The Boatman climbs from Le Pan's seedbed to his figures of the gods. Both poets here remind one of Northrop Frye's concept of the verbal universe which hovers over the seedbed of the so-called real and natural world picking out this or that event for admission into its world of literary forms. Both Noah and Silenus are humanizations of Frye's concept and the idea is, I suppose, that eventually all will be verbal universe. The concept is obviously a very valuable one to poets and should be a far more fruitful one to discuss than the usual chestnut of "obscurity", especially

since one can see it as lying behind these two fine poems, Le Pan's "Silenus" and Miss Macpherson's "Anagogic Man", which achieve so much intensity and communication.

The epiphany of the mysterious heron, the vision of the all-containing head, show as in a lightning flash a sight of what the whole world would be like if it were completely metaphored, completely humanly controlled. One day the sleeper will awaken, the film will be all developed, the images of desire will break through their imprisoning glass. Now I have lined up another poem by another poet with Miss Macpherson's "Anagogic Man" in order to show that the sleeping mythical Noah figure connects up very easily with what most people might consider the more real and more Canadian world of viaducts, herons and cameras. I have also wanted to show one of the things *The Boatman* continually does; after reading it, other poems and poets take on a new design and sharpness. I remember about the time that *The Boatman* came out there was an account in the papers of a doctor who said that it was much more sensible to hang abstractish Braques and Picassos in children's hospitals rather than representational works since the eye can make an endless variety of faces and scenes out of a good abstract painting, only one or two things out of the representational painting. So here Miss Macpherson's "Anagogic Man" is an abstract or mythical design which, as we have seen, lies behind another poet's representational particulars — a heron, a slum district under a viaduct — and it also could lie behind a great many more particular and varied experiences. Mr. Le Pan has attached his concrete particular to the abstract design of Plato's god-bearing Silenus, but Miss Macpherson has taken just this design itself, carried it about as far as it can be carried, so far as precisely probing its clarity is concerned, and so produced a poem to which, as faces and scenes flock into the abstract painting, other poems and a great many experiences can be attached.

In the poem actually called "The Boatman" we have the Anagogic Man in comic, Gilbert and Sullivan terms. Comic mirroring or parody is one of Miss Macpherson's most striking organizational devices; themes usually considered rather august, and often treated elsewhere by the poet with dignity, are quite suddenly unbuttoned and playfully kicked about. One has only to contrast the chuckling rhythm of "You might suppose it easy" from "The Boatman" with the meditative atmosphere of "Noah walks with head bent down" from "The Anagogic Man" to see how skill-

fully the poet can transpose a theme from one mode into another. The reader is asked in this comic anagogic "Boatman" to turn himself inside out in order to get his beasts outside him. Presumably one can't be a Noah whose head is filled with all the images of the world until one has been thoroughly turned upside down and cleansed of the world-parts inside your head in the wrong way; you have to be turned inside out since that is the only way to get ready for rebirth — to be the very opposite of all the so-called real and natural world expects of you. The range exhibited by the distance between this comic rollicking poem and the serious "Anagogic Man" is remarkable. Serious poets often attempt to be the opposite of serious, and Ogden Nash no doubt furtively attempts elegy, but here we have a poet who makes both elegiac and comic equally rich.

One other key poem I should like to glance at before attempting a description of the book as a whole is the last poem, "The Fisherman". Fishing is a much praised Canadian activity, although few Canadians, even the much befisheried National Film Board, ever quite catch as important a fish as this one. What the Anagogic Man, The Boatman ("That's to get his beasts outside him, / For they've got to come aboard him") and the Sleeping Shepherd (another version of anagogic Noah) have been doing is fishing, that is, humanizing the myriad forms of the world which old Adam let slip away. Miss Macpherson's Fisherman is, as Northrop Frye pointed out, a successful Fisher-King. He is also the Emily Carr of Wilfrid Watson's poem who has been coughed up on the shores of Eternity by a green Leviathan. Emily Carr got to Eternity through humanizing or catching Leviathan in her paintings; here the Fisherman catches Leviathan with all the humanizing devices that human imagination provides.

ONE CLUE to the mystery of Miss Macpherson's hold on one's imagination is the feeling she constantly gives of things inside other things. This idea of things within things can be expanded into the most satisfying explanation of existence I think I know of. We live in a Leviathan which God occasionally plays with and is always attempting to catch. Once we played with it and tried to catch it but it caught us

instead. This myth is the essential design of Miss Macpherson's book, and the key poems I have glanced at as well as her ability to organize everything grow naturally out of this myth — the myth of things within things.

In the very first poem the reader can spot the larger fable in the line "A mouse ran away in my wainscot". There the speaker feels only the beginning of an insideness-outsideness which slowly spirals upward into the magnificently final statement of the very last poem where inside and outside disappear for ever. What Miss Macpherson eventually seems to be saying, for example in her Ark poems, is that the God who plays with the monster of our universe has also got this Leviathan or universe within him. Man inside the Leviathan will one day become the God who plays rather than gets entrapped and finally the God with Leviathan inside him — Milton's "all in all".

There is another early poem called "The Third Eye". The Third Eye that made a "Cosmos of miscellany" is the guiding force that can still help us back to the lost world of the second section where "the lost girl gone under sea / Tends her undying grove". The reader must read these poems with a third eye. This is like Eliot asking us to read *The Waste-land* with Tiresias' eyes; Tiresias, the hermaphrodite, represents subject and object joined in the same enlightening way as the third eye here represents a possible freedom from the divided world of left eye, right eye; man, woman, left hand, right hand and so on. The Third Eye loses its power in the first pages of the book, but grows again throughout and reappears in the reader's brow at the end where cosmos is indeed made out of miscellany.

In the third section of the book, "Plowman in Darkness", the feeling which emerges is one probably bubbling to the reader's lips at that very moment. This feeling might be expressed as that "it's damn cosy in this Leviathan and I'm not going to stir an inch":

> Well, the blessed upshot was,
> Mamma worked her way across
> From Egypt to the Holy Land,
> And here repents, among the sand .

When the reader realizes that this particular Mary worked her passage to the Holy Land by prostitution he has no doubt realized the intention

of this section, which seems to be the showing of how useful evil can be. It can get you to the Holy Land. It's amusing and it provides a muddy filthy nest for humanity, which is some sort of protection from complete nothingness until the sleeping shepherd of the next section can dream up something better. The epilogue to this section, "Plowman in Darkness", presents us with the sister birds Procne and Philomela, the swallow and the nightingale. The nightingale broods upon a lost garden world, but the swallow:

> . . . snug in walls of clay
> Performs as she is able:
> Chatters, gabbles, all the day,
> Raises both Cain and Babel.

These two birds are displaced versions of angels and in Miss Macpherson's iconography are to be carefully placed beside the dove and the raven later mentioned in connection with Noah's Ark. "Plowman in Darkness" is a very exhilarating part of the book to read since it performs the difficult feat I have already glanced at of taking myths and symbols usually canonized in deep sanctity and playing them in a different key. I think most poets in Canada could babble a few lines about the phoenix as a very sacred bird indeed, but few are sufficiently trained in literary symbolism to see, as Miss Macpherson does, that the phoenix could be funny, even squalid as well as solemn. The hermaphroditic Phoenix who is a companion bird to the chattering Philomela is certainly a disturbing creature, but needed to be invented. And that's the whole point of this suite filled with holy harlots and second rate Thomas the Rymers — holiness has to fall, has to be laughed at or else it can never be holy again, or rather remain holy.

The fourth suite, "The Sleepers", represents an advance spiritually forward in that the various sleepers, sleeping shepherds for the most part, are dreaming their way out of the prison of Nature. This Nature is the Nurse of the last poem who "spins a sensual shining web". In the world of the Sleepers female figures, partly of the nightingale variety, partly of the babbling swallow type, attend the sleeping male figures. In the "Garden of the Sexes" we see that the natural feminine and fallen world imprisons Man's waking life until he is bound to a Tree; but at night Man escapes from his prison in dreams and it is Nature that finds herself imprisoned there. Babbling and singing and crooning beneath all these

poems, of course, we have the story of the Bible like a ground bass to which classical allusions are connected with great ease. For example, the poem "Helen in Egypt" reminds one of Israel in Egypt and Christ in Egypt. The "Faithful Shepherd" has both Ezekiel and Endymion behind it. In the "Old Enchanter" we get a clue as to what Miss Macpherson means somewhat later on by an island and also what sleep means. Merlin was not "betrayed by love or doting": his enchanted sleep is a skillful retreat to a place where he and the civilization in his bosom can survive the Fall and prepare a new world:

> Long ago,
> Shaken by dragons, swamped with sea-waves, fell
> The island fortress, drowned like any shell.

But the dreamer "hears no tales of overthrow"; he wills that the island which is civilization does not drown but only falls asleep. The exciting crossover between Abraham's bosom and Merlin's bosom should be noted as well as the modulation on the Helen in Egypt theme. Perhaps this begins to indicate what reading this book is like. One poem reminds the reader of another poem in a slightly different key; read one poem eventually and you are reading all the poems at the same time. Simultaneity is the result of Miss Macpherson's method if I am right in seeing the whole book as a set of variations on that very first intimation of the insideness-outsideness theme — the mouse that runs away in the wainscot.

By the time we have come to the "Natural Mother" (a nightingale) at the end of this fourth suite, and just before the "Nurse" (a swallow), we have come as far in the Biblical ground bass as Christ's birth. Actually it seems but yesterday that Cain and Abel fought, Helen waited and Endymion slept. The pressing together here of widely separated historical figures reminds the reader of Spenser's Fairyland in which Adam and Eve meet St. George, and Arthur exists at the same time as Elizabeth. Both the world of the Sleepers and the Elizabethan Fairyland are dedicated to the dream world where time and space are more beautifully arranged than they are in the waking world. The speaker of the very first poem "Ordinary People in the Last Days" has lived to see the third eye disappear, to see the world of two eyes, the world of one eye ("Plowman in Darkness") and then in this suite, like the moon above a fog, the slow return of the third eye. So Man, once a complete Man with Eve in-

side him, has seen himself split into two. He has been content to copulate with the other half (the hideous hemaphroditic Phoenix); now the first Man returns.

In the fifth suite entitled "The Boatman", the point of the Ark poems is that when Man found himself sinking in the fallen world he had enough sense to build an imitation of that world which met it and himself halfway. One day he'll regain his island or Eden, but a floating island will do for now. The poems here have sharper, more urgent tones than those of the "Sleepers", as if all the conjunctions and parallelisms throughout the whole volume were tightening up. The Ark is a Leviathan within Leviathan and it prophesies to Noah that one day he will swallow his own Ark, that is, make mental and controllable what was physical before and not so easily controlled. I suppose primitive religions are as good a meaning for the Ark as any. They did ferry humanity across some frightening abysses, but now we have reached the point where instead of crawling through a Bushman's whale-shaped hut to rebirth we can do all that in our heads:

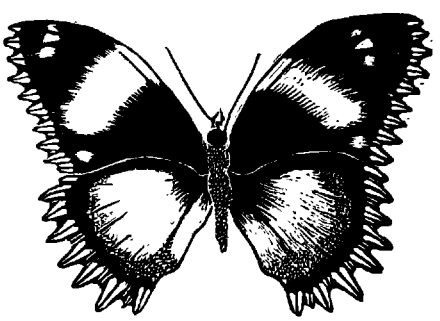
> Shall swim circled by you
> And cradled on your tide
> Who was not even, not ever
> Taken from your side.

The last line reminds us that Eve, the half-man, was a sort of Ark too who one day will be a spiritual controllable reality, not a constantly turning and elusive female Nature. "You dreamed it", says the Ark as like an eggshell it is cast away and Man walks on to his island again. The island or Eden is a new world and the flood that obscured it was after all only the Man's tears. The "Inward Angel", we note, has an inward eye which is the Third Eye; this eye should reappear now that the escaped diamond self has been recaptured.

IF THE READER has really tried to turn himself inside out, that is, discipline and organize his life around a focus of Eternity, then the riddles of the last suite of *The Boatman* are easy. Each riddle is the top of a spiral staircase leading down through the book. In all the riddles the effect is very much like that of the dancing sequence of those

naked ladies on the Acidalian Mount in Spenser's *Legend of Courtesy.* There is an air of release in Spenser — the Mountain of Contemplation is also at last the mountain of love and joy, nakedness and beauty. So here, after learning how from the other poems in *The Boatman,* the reader can look at anything in the world and find joy in it, from a lungfish to an abominable Snowman. This is the world Yeats is talking about where body is not "bruised to pleasure soul", where root, bole and blossom are one. For example the lungfish was once a fish — "a swimmer in the fallen world" — but now is "no Friday faring". It contains both fish and a higher state in the same being. "The Mermaid" is both nightingale and swallow, both romantic and ironic. The Whale is Leviathan and also God's Creature. The last section in effect says to the reader that Creation, Fall and Redemption are part of a dance whose final figure is the scene in which the Fisherman, in the very last poem, having corrected the Fall is himself corrected for all time. But perhaps in Eternity we would never dream of playing with lungfish and mermaids completely scrubbed of their fallen characteristics, which would be their firm graspable outline. Even when one finally achieves the freedom of being outside one keeps very wisely a delight in the perils of insideness.

Perhaps the best way to conclude what should be said in praise of *The Boatman* is that it shows you how to get from "here to there". If "here" is this world and "there" the world of Eternity, then this book of poems shows the reader all the necessary steps of the way. These are steps that I am sure an increasingly great number of readers and writers in Canada are going to find very exciting to take.



THE STORY OF A NOVEL

Hugh MacLennan

This account of his problems as a writer and of the genesis of his most recent novel, *The Watch that Ends the Night,* is a version — somewhat revised — of a talk which Hugh MacLennan originally gave on the CBC *Anthology* programme.

I HAVE NEVER BEFORE spoken intimately in public about my work. Previously I have been too shy or too proud. I have accepted the common professional attitude that a man's work should talk for itself. I have said little or nothing when I have heard, or read, statements about Canadian literature which seemed to me to be sheer nonsense. Only occasionally have I protested, and never in my own case, against the habit of some of our reviewers of selling our best work short. Only once have I written that the most famous reviewers of New York regard our best work as belonging to the literature of the modern world, while many of our reviewers at home still assume that Canadian writers are like ball players competing in a bush league.

But no writer ever should argue with the critics, least of all the writer who is talking to you now. Lately Canadian reviewers have been very kind to me. I know they want to see us do well. I know also that their Canadian pride makes it hard for them to overpraise for fear that they will seem to be provincial, but I do wish, sometimes, that they all knew what the reviewer of a famous American paper said last fall of Colin McDougall's magnificent novel, *Execution*: "This is the final proof," he said, "that the most important writing in the western hemisphere is now coming out of Canada."

If this statement is true—if it is even half true—it is because Canadian writers are hungry writers. They are writers who have had to work exceedingly hard in order to live. They are writers who write, not just for money, but because the excitement of discovering Canada compels them to write.

Writing is a fascinating, arduous and solitary profession. The technical skills necessary to produce even a commonplace novel are quite as complicated as those necessary for a brain operation. It took me two unpublished novels and eight years of continuous disappointment before I even began to learn how difficult it is to write an original novel. The only way I learned how to write was by endlessly re-writing. When I tell aspiring young men how much I rewrite—I do it in order to make my characters and scenes live for myself—they often turn pale. Let me give some figures on that.

My first published novel, which was called *Barometer Rising,* was a relatively simple tale located in my home town of Halifax. When I had finished about two hundred pages I threw them away and started all over again because now the story-line seemed clearer. When I had finished a hundred and fifty pages of this draft I threw them away and started again. *Barometer Rising* in its finished form contains about 100,000 words. In order to arrive at that finished product I wrote about 700,000.

My next novel, *Two Solitudes,* was published at 135,000 words. In the writing of it my wastebasket received approximately a million and a quarter. My third novel, *The Precipice,* was published at the same length as *Two Solitudes.* To the best of my recollection my wastebasket received a million and a half words before the script was mailed. The fourth novel, *Each Man's Son,* was the shortest of them all: it was just under 100,000 words. It was a transitional piece—a kind of bridge between *The Precipice* and my last—and so far as I recall, my wastebasket received no more than a million words on that particular job.

The fifth novel, *The Watch that Ends the Night,* I shall talk about in some detail later on. At the moment, let me say that I lived with it for more than six years, and, in order to produce the 140,000 words the finished script contains, I probably wrote more than three million.

I submit that a practical man will recognize this as a preposterously wasteful manner in which to earn one's living. What is more, he will be still further shocked if he knows the conditions which have developed within the book trade during the time I have been working like this.

In the spring of 1951, when my fourth novel was published, the bottom fell out of the conventional novel market in North America. The reasons for this collapse are now apparent. For years, the chief difficulties in the trade had been concerned with the price of books and the problem of

distributing them to a population scattered between Halifax and Victoria in Canada, and Provincetown and San Diego in the United States. The small communities where most of the population lives could not support regular book stores. In the whole of Canada there were less than twenty-five. The business of keeping a bookstore in a small community was notoriously unprofitable. Not only could the merchant not risk buying the great variety of books on which a healthy trade depends; rising costs of stock and labour were almost pricing first-run cloth editions out of the market except in the large cities.

The economic impasse, so far as the consumer was concerned, was solved by the triumphant success of two relatively new selling agencies: book clubs on the one hand, and paper-back reprints on the other. The book clubs worked like mail order houses, selling masses of cloth covers all over the continent through the mails at cheap prices. The paper-back reprints — utilising drug stores, railway stations, airports, hotel lobbies and even street corners — developed more than two hundred thousand outlets for selling books at cheap prices. This was the greatest revolution in publishing since the invention of the steam press. In 1951, more than 260 million paper-back reprints were sold in the United States alone.

All this looks wonderful for the writer — and it is wonderful if what he wants above all else is a large reading public. But economically it has been little short of disastrous to most of us who depend on writing in order to live. A sale of 50,000 books in cloth through the stores will generally gross the author about $25,000. But a sale of 50,000 paper-backs once grossed me only $250 — in other words, not enough to pay two months' rent. Terms are better now than they used to be, but they are still unsatisfactory.

Still another economic shock followed in the wave of the book club and paper-back revolution. This new competition cut the sales of regular first-run editions to a fraction of what they had been a decade previously. Popular books in the United States in 1946 often sold a million copies in the stores. Since 1951, a top best-seller seldom has gone over the 100,000 mark, and many a book which reached the lower rungs of the *Times* best seller lists grossed the author less than $12,000.

Looking at this situation in 1951, when I should have been established in my career, I recognized that, far from being established, I had become another young man with my way to make. In short, I knew it was im-

possible to try to live by writing novels alone, as I had been doing for nearly ten years. I accordingly took a part-time job at McGill, which turned out to be one of the happiest decisions I ever made. I also began writing regular monthly essays for *The Montrealer* magazine, and did a lot of free-lance articles for *MacLean's, Saturday Night* and the American magazine *Holiday*. It was while carrying this extra load, which I enjoyed carrying, that I wrote *The Watch that Ends the Night.*

BUT ENOUGH about the economics of the trade. No writer in his senses writes solely to make money. If money is what he wants most, he needs his head examined if he becomes a writer. There are hundreds of easier ways to make money than with your pen or your typewriter. Writers who stay with the profession do so because they can't help themselves. They enjoy writing so much — or rather, they are so miserable if they aren't writing — that they will gamble their lives again and again no matter how unfavourable the economic aspects of the trade may be.

Far more serious to me in 1951 was my sudden realisation that the traditional novel was failing in its function. I submit that our basic attitudes to society have changed, inwardly, out of recognition since the war. I submit further that the conventions of the traditional novelists have failed to meet and translate this changed attitude into art.

The traditional English novel dealing with what might be called human destiny has been the unconscious slave of Shakespeare for the past century and a half. Shakespeare's tragedies were based on the assumption that human destiny is to be found in the interplay of human characters. So, to an extent, it is. But Shakespeare wrote for the stage, and the stage requires that actions be made visible. Though the essential action in *Hamlet* is invisible, within the minds of the characters, Shakespeare nonetheless translates it at the end into violent action. The second greatest play in our literature ends in melodramatic absurdity.

Somewhere around 1950 it seems to have occurred to millions of readers that this kind of external action — this drama played as a means of revealing the tragic nature of man — was apt to be both inaccurate and inadequate. Within a civilised society, only goons, primitives and

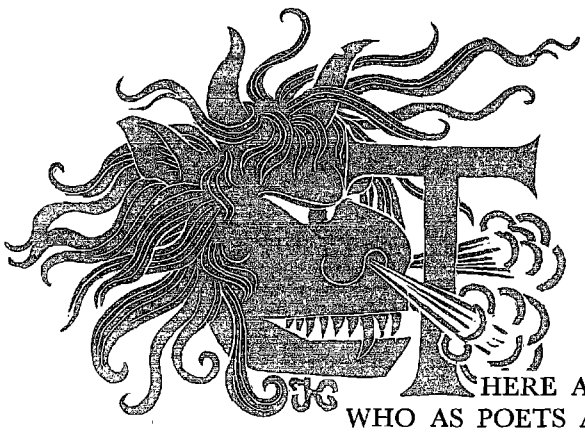
psychotics tend to settle their conflicts as Shakespeare's people settle theirs. Modern psychology reinforced the feelings of intelligent readers that most modern novels had become peripheral. If they were tragic they usually dealt with outcasts, with men excessively violent, with men excessively primitive, with men excessively criminal.

Around this time, it seemed to me, as it seemed to the educated public, that the basic human conflict was *within* the individual. But how to find an artistic form for this concept? That was the question. Certainly the novelists failed who wrote clinically; they absolutely failed to purge the soul of pity and terror, which is art's supreme function. When I began *The Watch that Ends the Night* I was at least clear on that score. I would *not* write a clinical book. But somehow I was going to write a book which would not depend on character-in-action, but on spirit-in-action. The conflict here, the essential one, was between the human spirit of Everyman and Everyman's human condition.

In order to find an accurate fictional form for this concept of life, I wrote millions of words and postponed the publication of *The Watch that Ends the Night* for some eight years. Or rather, I spent more than six years learning how to shape a new bottle for a new kind of wine.

It was an intense, illuminating and at times a wonderful experience. I wrote on and on, I tore up again and again, and all the while, in order to earn a living, I kept on turning out essays and teaching at McGill. I refined my style and discovered new techniques I had previously known nothing about. And finally in the greatest single burst of writing energy I ever had, I began all over again and wrote the whole finished version in a space of five months.

Now this novel has been in the hands of the public for a year and it is mine no longer. Looking back on it, I sometimes have the feeling that it was written by another man. The public has been kind to it. It has had a moderate success in the United States, and in Canada a considerable success in terms of the Canadian market. It will be, or is being, published in England, Sweden and Spain, and probably it will appear in a few more translations before its course is run. Now, like most writers, I am waiting for the emptied well to fill again, and after a while I suppose it will. Meanwhile I again feel like a young man with his way to make, for every novel is a new experience and every experience must be lived through until it is done.



HERE ARE SOME MEN
WHO AS POETS ARE ANIMALS.

Just as some men, when they couple,
Couple in bestial fashion,
So some poets, when they write poetry,
Give themselves over to the inner beast.
To do so, in a pure sense,
Is a very difficult feat.
But this beast poetry, when someone manages to shape it,
Is a very powerful thing

II.

It is of course very difficult of comprehension.
It is an affair of images, without thought.
It is the blood crying
It is the blood crying down the corridors of the arteries
The blood crying as it turns corners in the veins
The blood cying in a passionate mindlessness.
It is always an alien thing

Wilfred Watson

A MANIFESTO FOR BEAST POETRY

"The expression of the soul of
the dumb ox would have a penetrating
beauty of its own, if it were
uttered with genius — with
bovine genius . . . ."

WYNDHAM LEWIS

III.

Don't mistake the failures of the sects of poets
We see in these debased ages
For beast-poetry. Beast-poetry is not puffed up.
It exalts no one. Machinery multiplies
And books, and the dehorsification of dairies
And haulage systems provides a new houyhnhmn
To whinny at every street corner.
But this isn't beast poetry

Beast-poetry isn't the sort of blue-stocking knitting
That Archibald MacLeish or Marianne Moore
Their disciples their imitators and cousins germane
Wage into books.

Beast-poetry has nothing to do with blue guitars.
I expect women, those who love
Below the mind, who live always
In their hearts breasts and bowels
Are best at this sort of poetry.
But — beast-poetry, it would make Gertrude Stein shudder

Beast-poetry never thinks in blue.
It never puts on a blue-thinking stocking.
It never thinks

IV.

In all poetry, everything
Is either in the infinitude or in the limitation.
The be-all of beast-poetry lies in the limitation.
A man playing dog, this is what I mean —
Is not a man excluding
Himself from every level of life except the animal's.
Neither is a man playing dog
Supplying flame to every thorn branch twig or leaf
Of the burning bush which is mankind.
It is very difficult to be a man,
Since the idea of a man
Is, biologically speaking, one of pre-eminence —
Excellence is the first testicle of a man.
A man to be a man must be more than a man playing dog.
A man to be a man must be more than a man.
But to write beast-poetry a man must be no more than a beast

V.

The house is a very large one.
Let us also admit that it is an exceedingly noble one,
Noble, yes, but cracks in the wall, something gone,
An uncanny stink of ghost behind the door,
The smell of human tallow haunts the woodwork, the birth and death smells,
The breast smell and the smell of suckling children,
The smell of love-making and of cooking fat,
The aroma of laundry-business, the fungus-smell of old clothes,
Footleather, bookbindings, newspapers.
We despair of the plumbing, the hand-basins
Invite the auctioneer's hammer, their stain is
Macbeth's, everlastingly water-proof, marked for perdition,
We make the sign of the cross in the dust
Of the mantel-piece marble. We stretch
Out a finger of dust
We shut up the library & reception rooms & the great hall & private chapel &
promenades.
We let the ground go to the statues, the gardens to pot

We eat sandwiches in the kitchen.
In this way, less expense of spirit.
But we don't become — in this way — rats.
It is very difficult to become a rat.
It is difficult enough to be a mouse.
It is, in an opposite and northwest way, still more difficult to become a man

VI.

But beast-poetry is a rare and powerful thing.
We prefer something in between.
In a sense we pay upsidedown homage to Pascal.
We deny, let us say, 'the glory of' with 'the misery of'.

Let's pretend
My god, my god, how bizarre, how very bizarre,
What a sense of humour —
Let's pretend we are mice, squeak, squeak.
But this is pretence. It is not beast-poetry

VII.

The profound the deep
Poetry of the beast doesn't theorize.
It doesn't think at all.
It doesn't think, it is —
It really is. It has no tripe, no stomach for the cerebral
Hypocrisies of Archibald MacLeish *et al.*
It isn't like the visceral poetry of D. H. Lawrence
All bladder bladder bladder
Full of pigheaded opinion.
It has no conceptions whatever of, on, or about anything.
It doesn't take its Hiroshimas from the papers.
A plain matter-of-fact non-mythical anti-mystical Belsen
Is the ordinary keel of its being.
It knows no short-cuts to experience

VIII.

Shallow critics denounce this sort of poetry
They say it is mad
Let us all take hands and go skipping it tripping it back to Wordsworth
Plain living sanity and the simpler humanities
But O Dorothy Dorothy

O Tintern Abbey
Shallower critics praise it for being mad.
The very best critics
Raising their eyes to the white goddess
Observe that it is
Incomprehending with the deep unreason
Of the deep incomprehensible beast,
That is, if it is beast-poetry,
Not a fake

IX.

The very essence
Of being a beast, is to be the remnant of a living soul
That has in obedience to a complex of appetites
Reduced itself to being a machine.
The ant-eater is a machine for eating ants.
The lion is a machine for eating antelopes.
The ant is a machine for eating dead cats, etcetera etcetera.
Nevertheless, there is something ascetic about a beast.
There is even something ascetic about a rabbit —
To become a machine an animal has to give up all but a very nominal sex-life.
A beast can't afford to dally with contraceptives.
There is something profoundly tragic about a beast.
The machinery with which it is invested is ancestral.
This bestial machinery lends a dignity
Which only an ages-old machinery can bestow, every motion a pathos.
Hence, one of the skins of beast-poetry
Is, it is a satire
On human depravity

X.

Don't imagine that a course
In the archetypes of Dr. Jung will provide
Any pass-key to the deep bestiality of the beast.
Quite the contrary.
Dr. Jung takes a mop and bucket of water
And plenty of good old-fashioned eighteenth-century yellow floor soap
The sunlight soap of the enlightenment
To every cluttered up cupboard of the human soul,
He's tried to clean up every bestial corner,
To mop up every untidy stain of nature.

Beast-poetry
Skulks off to some Canada of the unconscious the Herr Doktor misses.
The holy simplicity of psychology
Never comes anywhere near beast-poetry

XI.

The great masters of beast-poetry are, as follows,
Simply none. Beast-poetry is still unwritten.
There is lacking the great renunciation.
This age ought to have written great beast-poetry
For we are the first great age of the machine
But we still pervert the machine to human uses
Instead of, with pure animality, surrendering the human being to the machine.
The machine subsists as a tool, merely.
Affirmation, affirmation & pride, have crept in

Mr. T. S. Eliot with his wonderful beast's nose for images
Might have done it.
When he said
That, had he meant something else, he'd have said something else
He came very close to beast-poetry.
But he wasn't beast enough to write beast-poetry.
He is not even a minor beast-poet.

No, Mr. Eliot is not the John the Baptist of beast-poetry.
He thinks too much, until his images think too.
Eventually
The strict critic of beast-poetry
Catches Mr. Eliot out — his beast-images
Are screens for thought.
He lacked the deep humility of the beast

XII.

Whether a man dances
Or whether a man makes music
Or whether he gestures or paints a picture or carves sculptures
(Or simply is)
Words keep recurring. It isn't
Sufficient merely to dance, this won't do for a man.
He must dance a madrigal.
He must caper to the words of a ballad.
Or if he makes water —

But all this verbal antic, the desperate endeavour to speak
Is quite foreign to beast-poetry.
Let us understand this, that beast-poetry uses words in a totally new way,
It uses words as experiences. It excludes speech.
Beast-poetry is profoundly uneloquent.
Words are used so as to be, not to speak

There is something appallingly mute
About beast-poetry. It is as silent, as uncommunicative
As a mountain. You do not listen
To, or read, or perform exegesis upon
Or write scholarly articles against, the poetry of the beast.
It brutally scorns the academic handmaidens.
You descend mindlessly and alone into its caverns.
Beast-poetry is the most dumbing
Of all human acts

XIII.

I wouldn't openly pretend that we in Canada
Have in our public forests, game-preserves or animal-parks
Bred any great beast-poet.
But in my secret heart
I pretend to myself alone that the great beast-poet
Will cleave from our substance. We have pioneered
The animal-natures, the brutal uneloquences,
The massive contempt for the civilizing influences;
And machines to fit the necessary degradations.
We have the CBC.
It is excusable in a Canadian to believe that the great beast-poetry
Slouches towards Toronto to be born

XIV.

Therefore I call out aloud to the future
I summon the age about to be
Not to debase itself in any petty way to the sub-human,
But to cut itself off boldly from all its ancestors;
To descend impudently down to the shameless depths
Of beast-poetry. I am weary
Of this shabby-parrot, this figurative lingerie,
And of the free & easy verse opinions.
I await the terrible new beast-poetry

A COLONIAL ROMANTIC

MAJOR JOHN RICHARDSON, SOLDIER AND NOVELIST

Desmond Pacey

PART II: RETURN TO AMERICA

THE JOHN RICHARDSON who returned to Canada in February, 1838, was a vastly different being from the ambitious young ensign who had set sail for Europe in 1815. He was now almost forty-two years old, a major, a holder of a decoration from the Spanish queen, an acquaintance of almost all the literary men of London, and a successful novelist. Although his successes had been by no means unmixed with failures, he had some reason for pride in his achievements, and a substantial basis for the expectation that he would be received in his native country with respect if not with deference.

Once again, then, he set forth with high hopes. He had secured a commission from the London *Times* to act as their Canadian correspondent at a salary of £300 a year, and he had furnished himself with a letter of introduction to Sir Francis Bond Head from the Secretary of Colonies, Lord Glenelg.[1] His dream was to secure an influential public position in his native country. Like all his dreams, it was destined to frustration — frustration which was in large part brought about by his own tactless pugnacity.

The first disappointment came in New York, where he found Bond Head *en route* for England. The returning governor, obviously in a state of nervous agitation, said curtly that he could do nothing about the letter

[1] *Eight Years in Canada* (Montreal, 1848). p. 6.

from Lord Glenelg recommending Richardson for an official appointment, and handed it back with the suggestion that Richardson try it on Sir George Arthur. Thus Richardson received the first of many rebuffs from Canadian governors, a succession of whom, for the next ten years, he was to bombard with requests for official posts and pensions.

Proceeding by coach and steamer to Canada, Richardson paid a brief visit to his native Queenston, went on to Toronto, Montreal, and eventually to Quebec where he met the newly arrived Lord Durham. The meeting was a fateful one for Richardson. The two men, similarly haughty and impetuous, were mutually attracted, and Richardson, who had hitherto held the most reactionary views about the Canadian situation, was temporarily converted to the more progressive ideas of Durham. Richardson's first two despatches to the *Times* had been correctly conservative, but now he began sending despatches which favoured Durham and Durham's proposals. Naively, he expressed the hope that the editor of the Thunderer would accept his information as the work of an honest reporter: "I know your object is to obtain facts, and that if in the attempt to elucidate these I should occasionally clash with your own views on the subject, I shall at least have the credit of sincerity and impartiality."[2] The editor gave ample warning of his disapproval by appending a note to the dispatch, stating: "The writer of these letters is an occasional correspondent: it will be seen that he is a sort of partisan of Lord Durham." No more of Richardson's dispatches were printed, and his appointment as correspondent was cancelled. When he informed Durham of this, the latter wrote to Richardson on October 18, 1838 as follows:

> It is indeed most disgusting to see such proof of malignity in those who ought to value truth and fair dealing as the best means of informing the public, of which they profess to be the best possible instructors.
>
> Your course has been that of a man of honour and integrity, and you can hardly regret the dissolution of a connexion which it appears could only have been preserved by the sacrifice on your part of truth and justice — by the *suppressio veri,* if not the *assertio falsi.*[3]

Such praise was a salve to Richardson's injured dignity, but he needed more tangible help. Now that he had lost his position with the *Times,* he was desperately in need of an alternative source of income. He hoped,

[2] *The Times,* "Lord Durham's Administration", Tuesday, Sept. 18, 1838, p. 5.

[3] This letter appears as Appendix 8 of *Eight Years in Canada.*

of course, that Lord Durham would find a means of rewarding his services, and Durham did indeed, through his secretary Charles Buller, promise to do what he could. But Durham's sudden resignation, illness, and early death put an end to these hopes, and Richardson had to begin anew, at the age of forty-two, the task of building a career. For the next seven years, as letters in the Public Archives of Canada testify, he made repeated overtures and petitions to successive governors, begging that his services to Canada as writer and soldier be recompensed by an official appointment or a pension.

The most elaborate of these petitions was addressed to Lord Sydenham on July 20, 1841. Never one to affect a modesty he did not feel, Richardson began by asserting that: "Your Excellency's Petitioner is generally known and acknowledged as the only Author this country has produced, or who has attempted to infuse into it a spirit of literature."[4] He went on to detail his literary activities, his military services, and the services rendered by members of his family, and ended by requesting that he be granted a pension from the Civil List. On this long and beautifully written petition, we can still read Sydenham's hastily scribbled note: "Reply. There are no funds for such a purpose." Such was to be the melancholy fate of all Richardson's petitions until 1845.

Meanwhile, Richardson sought to make a living in his native country by the exercise of his pen. In the fall of 1838, after his dismissal from the *Times,* he remained in Montreal to see his *Personal Memoirs* of the war in Spain through the press. He is also said to have written a pamphlet, the only surviving copy of which is housed in the library of McGill University, entitled *Sketch of the late Battle of the Wind Mill near Prescott.* An unsigned pencilled note on the title page of this pamphlet states, "This was written by Major Richardson who edited the few numbers of the Prescott, Ont. Sentinel which were printed." He also, in characteristic fashion, became involved in a quarrel with some officers of the Grenadier Guards, issued at least five challenges to duels, and was "posted" by the Guards for alleged cowardice when he refused to accept a challenge because the messenger was not, in his opinion, a gentleman.[5]

[4] Public Archives Mgg. G 20, Vol. 4, No. 415.

[5] For an account of this affair see the column "All Our Yesterdays" by A. E. Collard, Montreal *Gazette,* November 12, 1955. For Richardson's version, see his *The Guards in Canada*; or *The Point of Honor* (Montreal, 1848).

Perhaps because Montreal was too uncomfortable for him as a result of such feuds, Richardson went to Amherstburg early in 1839, hoping to settle in the town where so much of his boyhood had been spent. Unable to find a house in Amherstburg, he rented one in nearby Sandwich, and there he completed his third novel, *The Canadian Brothers,* a lively and patriotic tale of the War of 1812. He returned to Montreal early in 1840 to see this book through the press, and after a few weeks there set out for Sandwich driving a new sleigh and a team of spirited black horses. In typical fashion, he had neglected to consider that the sleighing season was almost over, and when he reached the town of Brockville he was stranded by lack of snow. While making arrangements there for a carriage, he saw a large house and extensive grounds which took his fancy, and impulsively bought this "Rock Cottage" at twice its market value. Presumably to meet this payment, he sold his commission in the British Army during the early summer.

At first Richardson found Brockville a dull and dispiriting place; moreover his pugnacious temperament soon got him into trouble with the local inhabitants. He became involved in a quarrel with a certain Colonel Williams at a private card party, and when Williams alluded to Richardson's alleged cowardice in the affair of honour in Montreal, Richardson displayed placards throughout the town accusing Williams of slander; another duel was narrowly averted.[6] He also objected bitterly to the habit of the male youths of the town of bathing in the nude near his house. In a long tirade in the August 19, 1842 issue of his paper, *The New Era,* Richardson lashed such offenders:

> "There is an unblushing depravity, a shameless immorality, among a certain class of beings in Brockville, such as we never knew to be equalled in any town in Europe . . . . We shall make it a point to take down the names of all persons found bathing within view of our premises, after sunrise, whether in or out of the limits, and this list we shall submit to the magistrates at the next Session".

This attack was contained in the final issue of *The New Era;* the first issue had appeared in June, 1841. He wrote and printed the paper himself, using a press he had specially imported from New York for the purpose. He commented on Canadian and foreign news, ran as serials his

[6] See the pamphlet *Major Richardson's Reply to Colonel Williams' Gasconarde* (1840), a copy of which is in the Queen's University Library.

Recollections of the West Indies, Jack Brag in Spain, and *The War of 1812,* and sought to promote the sales of his other books by quoting laudatory reviews of them and soliciting subscriptions. It was, then, a kind of personal house organ of its editor and publisher — and very unlike the lofty journal he had advertised in his grandiloquent Prospectus:

> A journal essentially Literary, and of a moderate, or *juste milieu* tone of politics, having for its object the ultimate good and prosperity of the Country, without undue or slavish bias towards any party, is a desideratum which cannot be more seasonably hailed than at a moment when these stupendous Provinces, emerging from the comparative night in which they have hitherto been enshrouded, are about to take their initiative among Nations. Hence the project of The New Era or Canadian Chronicle, which the educated of all classes of society, and especially the more intellectual portion of the community, as well as the advocates of a consistent and good government are now called upon to support.

Since the support was not forthcoming in sufficient force, Richardson dropped the paper in August 1842 to devote himself to another grandiose project — completing his history of the War of 1812, of which the part printed in *The New Era* was only the first of three projected sections, in order that it might be used as a textbook in Canadian schools. He printed the first part in book form from the *New Era* plates, and then applied to the government for a grant to enable him to complete the remainder. The Assembly voted him £250 for this purpose, but the sale of the First Series was so disappointing that Richardson did not have the heart to proceed with the work. He argued, rather unconvincingly, that the grant had been a reward for previous labour rather than an aid to future publication.

Again Richardson turned to newspaper publishing, and early in 1843 founded in Kingston *The Canadian Loyalist or Spirit of 1812.*[7] *The New Era* had been relatively non-partisan in its political reporting and it had failed; this new paper was pro-Tory, and violent in its denunciations of the Lafontaine-Baldwin ministry and of Francis Hincks; no doubt Richardson hoped in this way to gain readers and to assure himself of preferment when and if the Tories succeeded to office. This, of course,

[7] According to *British Authors of the Nineteenth Century,* edited by Kunitz and Haycraft (New York, 1936) p. 521, this paper is also recorded as the *Native Canadian.* I have been so far unable to trace any surviving copies of it under either name.

was the outcome, in the summer of 1844, and Richardson almost immediately suspended the paper, confidently expecting patronage.

Richardson had to wait almost a year for preferment—but it did finally come, on May 20, 1845, when he was appointed Superintendent of Police on the Welland Canal. At last he had the public position for which he had been vainly petitioning for seven years. It was not a very lucrative post — the pay was only ten shillings a day — nor a very influential one, but Richardson resolved to make the most of it. Unfortunately his own belligerence ruined yet another opportunity. Within two weeks of his appointment he dismissed "several insubordinate and useless characters".[8] Within a month he requested the Chief Engineer on the project to cancel a holiday granted the workmen for July 4, and when asked to give reasons for his request haughtily replied: "I certainly am not aware that I am compelled to give any reason to any person employed on this Canal, the superintendence of which is confided to my judgment and discretion." A fortnight later he was inquiring from the Governor-General what rights he, Richardson, had to punish those constables who disobeyed his orders; and a week later he reported to the Governor that a neighbouring magistrate had sworn out a warrant for the Superintendent's arrest, and that Richardson had actually been arrested by one of his own ex-constables! In the light of such revelations of troublesomeness, it can have afforded the Governor little comfort to be assured of Richardson's efficiency in drilling his men to a high pitch of military precision. "In the meantime", Richardson reported on November 8, 1845, "I have my men regularly drilled to the use of the Broad sword, and taught such cavalry movements as may be most useful on the limited ground on which they would in all probability be required to act."

As a man with more commonsense would have expected, Lord Metcalfe was more impressed by Richardson's feuding than by his drilling. On January 17, 1846, the following letter was despatched to Richardson by Mr. D. Daly, the Provincial Secretary:

[8] This, and the following quotations relating to Richardson's employment as Superintendent of Police, is taken from the pamphlet *Correspondence (submitted to Parliament) Between Major Richardson, Late Superintendent of Police on the Welland Canal and the Honorable Domineck Daly, Provincial Secretary* (Montreal, 1846).

> I have the honor, by command of the Administration of the Government, to acquaint you that His Excellency, in Council, has had under consideration the subject of the Police Force on the Welland Canal, and the question whether such Force may not with propriety be discontinued, and that His Excellency has been pleased to direct that your services and those of the Force under your command be dispensed with from and after the 31st of the present month.

Richardson did not take his dismissal without protest; he complained bitterly that the notice was too short, and that his Force was still needed. All his protests were, of course, in vain. No doubt intelligence had reached the Governor to the effect that were the pugnacious major to remain in command, violence was likely to erupt. In fact it did erupt in spite of his dismissal; at midnight on January 31, Richardson wrote to the Provincial Secretary from his home in Allanburgh:

> I have to acquaint you, for the information of His Excellency the Administrator of the Province, but with sentiments of unmitigated disgust, that this night has been characterized . . . . by a scene of outrage and confusion, and intended personal insult to myself — still the servant of the Government — which can have no parallel even among uncivilized nations.
>
> These atrocities I shall later detail to you: sufficient be it for the present, to observe that more than thirty shots were fired opposite my house, which is situated on the Canal, accompanied by fierce shouts and yells, and that not only Canaliers but discarded Policemen, of my own, were of the number of the scoundrels.

Throughout these exchanges of letters, Richardson never revealed the slightest sense of doubt in the complete correctness of all his actions. His pride perhaps reached its apex on March 12, when he wrote from Montreal to the Provincial Secretary in part as follows:

> As I am by no means prepared to forego my claim to an honorary rank which has been acknowledged by Her Majesty herself, and by the Commander in Chief of the British Army, in several written communications from His Grace, at the caprice of any of Her Majesty's Colonial Subjects, however exalted their local distinction, I enclose and with the seal unbroken, the letter you have done me the honor to send to me, with a view to its being properly addressed.

And yet, six days after sending such an insulting reply to the Provincial Secretary, Richardson had the effrontery to dispatch a long memorial to Earl Cathcart, Lord Metcalfe's successor in the Governorship, detailing all his woes and laying further claims:

> That your memorialist however seeks not as a mere favor, but claims from the Government as a due . . . that he be placed in some situation of trust and emolu- not inferior to that which he has recently filled, or receive a gratuity from the Government whose summary proceedings have seriously affected his private pecuniary interests.

The governor's reply to this memorial, dated March 20, is curt, restrained, but very apt:

> In reply I am to state that His Excellency considers that it would be useless to direct that the unfitness of the manner, in which you have expressed yourself towards the members of His Excellency's Government, should be pointed out to you, since your own sense of propriety has not prevented you from expressing yourself in the way you have done.

Thus, in rioting and ignominious wrangling, ended Richardson's single tenure of public office in Canada.

By this time, 1846, Richardson was fifty years old, a widower (his second wife, Maria Caroline, having died during the first weeks of his Superintendency of Police), and a lonely and embittered man. He had tried and failed twice as a newspaper publisher; he had had a brief taste of public office and had found it bitter; he had sold his army commission to meet his debts; he had tried to sell his books to his countrymen and had found only a handful of buyers; and he had alienated the appointed governor from whom, rather than from the elected assembly, he had always sought favours. He remained in Canada until 1849, writing and publishing *Eight Years in Canada* and *The Guards in Canada* in the interval, but more and more he found himself casting envious glances over the border which as a boy he had defended against the Yankee invaders. Several times during his second stay in Canada he had visited the United States, and had found that his books were better known and more highly esteemed there than at home. Like many another Canadian writer after him, Richardson decided that fame and fortune could be won much more readily abroad.

Once more then, but for the last time, Richardson set out on a new adventure with high hopes. In New York City, it must have seemed to him at first that his long-deferred dreams were to come true. In the space of three years he was able to publish four new novels — *Hardscrabble, Waunangee, The Monk Knight of St. John,* and *Westbrook* — and to

issue new editions of *Wacousta, Ecarté,* and *The Canadian Brothers* (under the new title of *Matilda Montgomery*). He was something of a celebrity in the great American metropolis, as he had formerly been in London, a man whose name could add lustre to a newspaper. Thus we find this passage in the biography of "Frank Forester" (H. W. Herbert), a prominent Anglo-American journalist of the mid-century:

> When *The Sachem* was commenced by the same parties who had essayed the establishment of *The Era,* an editorial position was reserved from motives of friendship for Herbert, although the paper had been designed to serve as a species of Native America organ. Nevertheless, its projectors contemplated the employment of the best available talent in the production of an unrivalled literary paper, regardless of national prejudices . . . . As literary associates to Herbert were conjoined Major Richardson, author of *Wacousta,* a popular Indian romance; William North, author of *The Slave of the Lamp,* and a poet of no mean order . . . .[9]

But it was not long before Richardson's pugnacity got him into further trouble. Shortly after the passage just quoted comes this revealing sentence: "After the contribution of several excellent articles and a few historical sketches, Herbert retired from the paper, in consequence of a misunderstanding with Major Richardson and Mr. North, upon some political questions connected with the rule of England in Canada."

Indeed, although much remains to be discovered about this final phase in Richardson's career, it seems certain that it was no less troubled than the earlier phases had been. The new books were all mere potboilers — *The Monk Knight of Saint John* in particular is the 1850 equivalent of the most lurid and erotically perverse of today's pocketbooks — and they were published by the notorious firm of Dewitt and Davenport in fifty-cent paperback editions which brought their author meagre financial return.

He died, supposedly of erysipelas complicated by malnutrition, on May 12, 1852, at his lodgings at 113 West 29th Street, New York City. Legend has it that he sold his Newfoundland dog, Hector, a few days previously in order to buy food. His obituary notice, as it appeared on May 14 in the New York *Journal of Commerce,* is more matter-of-fact:

[9] *The Life and Writings of Frank Forester (H. W. Herbert)*, edited by David W. Judd, London, n.d.

Died — On the 12th inst. Major John Richardson, late of H. B. M. Gordon Highlanders aged 53 (55) years. His friends are invited to attend his funeral, without further invitation, from the Church of the Holy Communion, corner 6th Avenue and 20th Street, this day at two o'clock, p/m.

Haughty and belligerent to the last, Richardson declared near the end of his life that he had no desire to be ranked among Canada's future men of genius or to share any posthumous honour reserved for them. A man of genius, in a literary sense, he certainly was not; but he was, according to his lights, a man of honour. He was a Hotspur who forever sought, and found, trouble; a romantic whose dreams always outran reality and who was capable of infinite self-pity and infinitesimal self-judgment; a colonial whose insecurity and sense of inferiority led him to distrust and despise his fellow-colonials; a man who did in many ways serve his native country but whose consciousness of those services robbed them of much of their lustre. His chief lack was a sense of humour, a sense of proportion; his chief virtue was that he was never, in any circumstances, merely dull.

FOR REASONS of space, the articles by **Pierre Berton** on the literature of the Klondike and by **Hugo McPherson** on the novels of Robertson Davies which were announced for publication in this issue of *Canadian Literature* have been delayed, but they will certainly appear in the fourth (Spring, 1960) issue.

Among other articles to appear in that and later issues will be essays on the poetic vision of Wilfred Watson, by **John W. Bilsland**, on epic strains in contemporary Canadian poetry by **Paul West**, and on theatrical taste in the Canadian West by **Michael R. Booth**, as well as studies of Canadian anthologies by **Robert Weaver**, of the immigrant in literature by **Ruth McKenzie**, of the CBC Critically Speaking programme by **Tony Emery** and of the plays of Gratien Gélinas by **Marguerite Primeau**, together with a bi-lingual feature on the poet and the translator by **Anne Hébert**, **F. R. Scott** and **Jeanne Lapointe** and further reflections on Canadian Literature by **Ethel Wilson**. Among other features planned for early publication are studies of the teaching of literature in Canadian schools, of children's literature in Canada, and of certain aspects of publishing in this country.

review articles

A VICTORIAN IDEALIST

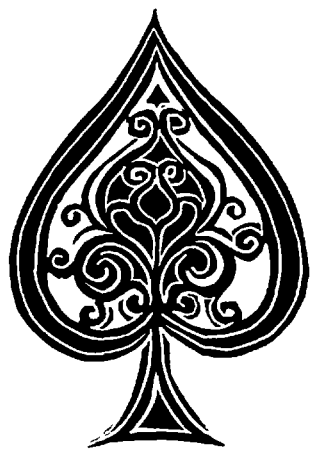
Peter Quennell

WILLIAM ROBBINS. *The Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold.* University of Toronto Press. $3.75.

WHEN BISHOP COLENSO of Natal, an earnest churchman who had run into difficulties while attempting to elucidate the New Testament for the benefit of inquisitive Zulu converts, published in 1862 his momentous work, *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined,* he was accused by at least one eminent cleric of "labouring to destroy and blot out the faith of Jesus Christ from the hearts of the people"; and Bishop Lee of Manchester announced that he could find "no language befitting a gentleman and a Christian" to describe his fellow dignitary's conduct. More unexpected and much more interesting were the protests voiced by Matthew Arnold, a poet whose own religious beliefs were admittedly unorthodox, but who on this occasion felt it his duty to rally to the orthodox side, since Colenso's methods of textual criticism, which tended to persuade the ordinary reader that "the Pentateuch is not to be read as an authentic narrative", failed to remind us that the sacred book was also "a narrative full of divine instruction in morals and religion". Colenso had come to demolish. What could he offer in place of the venerable structure he was endeavouring to sweep away? Like Erasmus, Arnold was firmly convinced that no system of beliefs should be "heedlessly wrecked" until something new and better could be raised upon the same foundations. For Arnold was a middle-of-the-road man; and Professor Robbins' unusually illuminating volume is largely devoted to an exhaustive discussion of how and why he held that path. It explains Arnold's view of the function he performed, and illustrates some of the stresses and conflicts that determined his attitude as a Victorian prophet and thinker.

True, the word "thinker" is possibly a little misleading if applied to a writer of Arnold's temperament. By academic philosophers, including F. H. Bradley, he has frequently been written off as an intellectual light-weight, whose misuse of scientific and philosophical terms should debar him from serious consideration. Even a literary critic, Herbert W. Paul, damns his philosophical essays with faint praise. "Of Matthew Arnold as a philosopher", this critic asserts, "it may be said that, though clear he was not deep, and that, though gentle, he was not dull." Profundity, of course, is a quality diffi-

cult to measure; and metaphysicians are apt to differ on what constitutes the accurate use of language. But there is no doubt, according to Professor Robbins, that Arnold pursued a consistent line of thought, and that he had a clear notion throughout his later life of the nature of the service he had set out to render — which was to mediate between reaction and revolution, and to help preserve all that was best in the old by giving it a new support, freeing religion from the chain of dogmatic theology and re-clothing it in the attributes of feeling and imagination. He hoped that such influence as he had acquired might be of some value, during the troubled times that he saw ahead, "as a healing and reconciling influence". And elsewhere, predicting that "a great change must come, a great plunge must be taken", he wrote that he considered it advisable, instead of dilating—as both the religious and the anti-religious worlds were apt to do — "on the plunge's utterness, tremendousness and awfulness, to show mankind that it need not be in terror and despair, that everything essential to its progress stands firm and unchanged". He envisaged himself as a literary peacemaker; but his courageous efforts proved strangely ineffective; and he succeeded, observes Professor Robbins, not only in avoiding extremes but, on either side of the controversy, in "antagonising the extremists". His defence of religion enraged the agnostics, while "the orthodox Christians were naturally suspicious of a man who set out to rescue religion from 'the extravagances theologians have taught people to utter'."



ARNOLD, in fact, as a religious controversialist, was a man who wished to have his cake and eat it—still attracted towards the idea of faith, which he had learned at his tremendous father's knee, yet held back by the strain of imaginative scepticism he had developed during his early manhood. He has been treated, remarked F. W. H. Myers, "as a flippant and illusory Christian" rather than — which would have been more appropriate —"as a specially devout and conservative agnostic". But, if Arnold remained an agnostic at heart, he was always peculiarly susceptible to the beliefs he had discarded; and, in addition to reconciling the old and new worlds, he sought above all else to reconcile his own tendencies, to arrive at a spiritual *modus vivendi* that would ensure him the inward peace he needed. Here I think that Professor Robbins might have extended his researches into Arnold's life and work, and investigated the origins of the odd dichotomy that seems to have split his personal character in two. A deeply serious-minded person, he retained throughout his existence some touches of disarming pagan

frivolity; his juvenile dandyism was never completely abandoned; nor was the romantic lover of the mysterious "Marguerite" entirely submerged in the devoted husband and parent, and the hard-pressed inspector of elementary schools. "Empedocles", which Professor Robbins praises, strikes me as a decidedly dull poem; but "The Scholar Gipsy", with its haunting, elusive melancholy, is one of the masterpieces of nineteenth-century literature; and Arnold's evocation of the seventeenth-century pilgrim—

> Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
> Still clutching the inviolable shade . . .

bears some resemblance to a self-portrait. "Dover Beach", too, tells us more about Arnold than any of his moral and philosophical discussions.

Professor Robbins, on the other hand, is little concerned with the study of Arnold's character, and is content to describe and analyse the gradual progress of his hero's thought, in relation both to the problems of his own age and to the kindred problems of the present day. This he does lightly and skilfully, without ever employing pompous verbiage. His prose style is easy and fluent; and, although he never indulges in facile witticisms or attempts to thrust home an unworthy gibe, his pages are not devoid of humour, sparkling just beneath the surface of his text. Altogether, this is at once a useful and — from the ordinary reader's point of view — an unexpectedly enjoyable book. Let us hope that he publishes a second volume, covering the poems as well as the controversial essays, and by broadening the scope of his survey gives us a balanced portrait of the whole man.

DEUX POLES

Jean-Guy Pilon

ALAIN GRANDBOIS, ed. Jacques Brault. PAUL MORIN, ed. Jean-Paul Plante. ROBERT CHOQUETTE, ed. André Melançon. Editions Fides: *Collection Les Classiques Canadiens*, $1.00 each.

ROBERT CHOQUETTE, Paul Morin, Alain Grandbois . . . Trois noms qu'il est rare de lire à la suite lorsque l'on parle de poésie canadienne. C'est en les écrivant l'un après l'autre que je m'aperçois soudain qu'ils dessinent comme les étapes majeures de l'histoire poétique du Canada français, histoire que les gens de ma génération s'emploient sans cesse à corriger et dont ils n'ont pas encore réussi à dilapider totalement l'encombrant héritage. Car il arrive parfois qu'on hérite d'un passif, et en littérature il n'est pas possible de refuser l'honneur d'être légataire universel. Les dépouilles spirituelles de nos devanciers nous sont offertes sans rémission.

Je me suis déjà expliqué là-dessus mais j'y reviens parce que cela n'est jamais définitivement compris. Il y a eu ici des premiers essais, des balbutiements, des tentatives qui valent ce que valent des devoirs d'écoliers. Le premier signe avant-coureur d'une véritable poésie

canadienne, c'est Jean-Aubert Loranger qui le lança, oh! bien timidement, vers 1923. J'aime à relire un de ses poèmes qui se termine ainsi et que je ne désavouerais pas:

J'enregistrerai sur le fleuve
La décision d'un tel sillage
Qu'il faudra bien, le golfe atteint,
Que la parallèle des rives
S'ouvre comme deux grands bras
Pour me donner enfin la mer.

Nous n'avons pu mesurer que 15 ans plus tard ce que laissaient entrevoir les poèmes de Loranger. Alain Grandbois et St-Denys Garneau allaient les premiers doter la littérature canadienne d'une poésie véritable et surtout *libérer* le poète. St-Denys Garneau disparut bien vite et c'est Alain Grandbois qui avec *Les Iles de la Nuit* et *Rivages de l'Homme,* ouvrit une écluse et fit naître cet extraordinaire renouveau poétique que la littérature canadienne connaît depuis 7 ou 8 ans. On ne dira jamais assez l'importance de la publication des *Iles de la Nuit.* Ce n'est qu'après ce livre majeur de Grandbois qu'on découvrit St-Denys Garneau, le seul livre publié du vivant de ce dernier, *Regards et Jeux dans L'Espace,* l'ayant été à un très petit nombre d'exemplaires et n'ayant pas reçu l'accueil qu'il eût mérité.

Alain Grandbois est, pour plusieurs d'entre nous, le *premier* poète canadien. Dans le temps et dans l'espace. C'est pourquoi je me réjouis en voyant le petit livre publié sur son oeuvre dans la *Collection Les Classiques Canadiens.* Jacques Brault, dans son introduction, esquisse les thèmes majeurs et les lignes de force de l'oeuvre d'Alain Grandbois d'une façon très objective mais en laissant quand même deviner l'admiration qu'il voue au poète. Il insiste sur les qualités fondamentales de cette oeuvre, qu'elle soit de prose ou de poésie: "écriture racée, quête passionnée des valeurs qui haussent le destin au niveau de la vocation". Brault dégage l'orientation essentielle de la poésie de Grandbois où les mêmes thèmes sont souvent repris comme pour attaquer le mystère d'un autre côté, le maîtriser davantage. L'amour, le cosmos, la mort reviennent à chaque page comme les données essentielles d'une haute démarche spirituelle.

Jacques Brault réfute certaines des objections que l'on entend parfois à propos de la poésie de Grandbois et que des auteurs de manuels scolaires ont tenu à répéter, manifestant bien par là leur étroitesse d'esprit et leur manque de culture poétique. Ces considérations nous paraissent inutiles au premier abord: elles se justifient cependant si l'on tient compte du fait que les livres de cette collection sont destinés principalement aux étudiants de nos maisons d'enseignement secondaire pour qui ils peuvent devenir d'excellents instruments de travail.

Le choix des textes que complètent d'abondantes notes bio-bibliographiques est dans l'ensemble excellent. La première partie est réservée aux oeuvres de prose et on y lira de larges extraits de *Né à Québec, Les Voyages de Marco Polo,* et du recueil de nouvelles *Avant le Chaos,* qui sont au nombre des plus belles pages de prose écrites par un écrivain canadien. La partie réservée aux poèmes groupe les plus célèbres poèmes des *Iles de la Nuit* et de *Rivages de l'Homme.* Il est regrettable que Jacques Brault ait été dans l'impossibilité de citer certains poèmes de *l'Etoile Pourpre,* le dernier recueil de Grandbois, paru aux Editions de l'Hexagone en 1957.

D'Alain Grandbois à Paul Morin, le

saut est presque périlleux. Nous remontons en arrière, nous ne sommes plus éléments d'un monde en marche mais spectateurs larmoyants d'un coucher de soleil ou d'un clair de lune. Je ne peux quand même m'empêcher d'avoir un certain respect pour l'oeuvre de Paul Morin. Une oeuvre à peine esquissée qui laissait entrevoir des possibilités mais que les circonstances ont empêché le poète de mener à bon terme. Paul Morin aura cependant été une étape dans l'élaboration lente d'une poésie canadienne. L'introduction de Jean-Paul Plante est faible et ne fait que suggérer un portrait de Paul Morin remontant sans doute à 1925. Nous aurions aimé autre chose. L'introduction à l'oeuvre de Paul Morin est encore à écrire.

Les poèmes ont été groupés sous des titres choisis, nous prévient Jean-Paul Plante, par Paul Morin lui-même. Ils sont inutiles et créent à l'intérieur de cette oeuvre des divisions arbitraires. Mais lisez plutôt: *Alma Parens, Sonnets, Eléments Latins, Gouaches vénitiennes, L'illusion orientale, Simplicités, Enchantements, Piétés.* Ce n'est pas sérieux. Au surplus, les titres ne correspondent en rien aux poèmes. Pourquoi pas aussi *Portée de chats* ou *Cages à lapins?*

Les poèmes de Paul Morin sous leur fatras littéraire laissent parfois passer des éclairs, comme l'image d'une porte ouverte sur un univers poétique qui aurait pu devenir nécessaire. D'un poème à l'autre, l'on demeure à l'extérieur des choses, dans le paraître, et, il faut bien l'avouer, tout cela date un peu . . .

J'ai voulu réserver pour la fin ce plaisir de rare qualité que j'éprouve en commentant les oeuvres de M. Robert Choquette. Nous avons affaire ici à un *cas étrange*: celui d'un mauvais poète qui a persisté jusqu'à ces derniers temps à *écrire des vers,* alors que le vrai poète écrit ou transcrit de la poésie. C'est toute la différence. M. Choquette, au moment où il a publié ses premiers poèmes, vers 1925, avait un certain talent. N'allez pas croire qu'il avait lu Apollinaire ou Cendrars. Mais on ne pouvait lui nier une certaine jeunesse, une certaine fougue, un désir de la vie qui réussissait à transpercer tout l'appareil de faux romantisme attardé. Pendant 20 ans, de 1933 à 1954, M. Choquette n'a rien publié et ce silence, n'en doutons pas, a profité à la collectivité: pue coincidence sans doute, durant cette période la véritable poésie canadienne est née et a pris l'essor qu'elle connaît aujourd'hui.

En 1954: catastrophe. M. Choquette publie *Suite Marine,* un monstrueux somnifère en sept mille vers. Il aurait dû se taire. Nous aurions dit de lui qu'il avait écrit dans sa jeunesse quelques poèmes acceptables.

Le drame chez M. Choquette, c'est qu'il écrit en 1954 avec une sentimentalité de 1925 et quand on sait l'état de la littérature ici à cette époque, on entrevoit immédiatement les résultats. Ce

mauvais poète n'a pas évolué depuis 30 ans. Sa sensibilité est d'une époque finie et ne nous intéresse plus.

Le surréalisme? Eluard? Char? St. John Perse? Michaux? Rien n'a marqué M. Choquette. Il est resté à l'heure de 1925.

Comment a-t-il pu écrire *Suite Marine* sans s'endormir? Voilà la seule question importante qu'un critique devrait se poser au sujet de M. Choquette .

Non, vraiment, il ne faut pas insister. M. Choquette est un mauvais poète, ou plutôt, il n'est pas poète. Son oeuvre récente — *Suite Marine* — est un anachronisme déprimant. La poésie de Robert Choquette, ça n'existe pas. Je le sais; je l'ai lue. Qu'on n'en parle plus.

RICHLER AND THE FAITHLESS CITY

Warren Tallman

MORDECAI RICHLER. *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz.* André Deutsch. $3.75.

IN SIGNIFICANT fiction the protagonists are likely to wander beyond established social forms to new areas of the imagination from which better forms of truth can be glimpsed. Such wanderings are necessary because there is so little truth in the established forms, so little regard for human need and desire. In his new novel, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz,* Mordecai Richler guides Duddy toward freedom by subjecting the conventions which overrule these forms to a thorough drubbing. Duddy is no Columbus of the imagination, and no one would call the lake property he covets and finally possesses the New America. But these limitations notwithstanding, Richler has here created one of the truer travellers through the chaos of our North American world.

Richler begins Duddy's journey by turning Brian Moore's *The Feast of Lupercal* upside down. In Moore's novel we watch the Irish schoolmaster, Diarmuid Devine, struggling unsuccessfully toward some measure of truth and freedom through the inner knots and outer whips of outrageously restrictive conventions. Richler's novel begins with just such another somewhat older and even more cripplingly caught schoolmaster, John MacPherson. But Richler looks past MacPherson to the young barracuda who slashes away at his feeble attempts to keep afloat — Duddy. MacPherson goes under (his thin blood staining the waters) and the novel cuts out after the barracuda. The pace is fast, the writing is from the wrong side of the tracks, and so is the protagonist. Duddy begins as a most unpromising candidate for anybody's type of truth. But in what amounts to a summation of their clash, MacPherson tells Duddy, "You'll go far Kravitz.

You're going to go very far." And the comic fix is in.

There are funny scenes. But the comedy consists mostly in a reversal of the usual tragic dilemma in which a protagonist wears his hopes and chances away against the high shores of this unobliging world. In this novel the protagonist proposes and the world serves up suitable victims. When Duddy bites he comes away with meat dripping blood called money spelled success. The more outrageous his demands, the more obligingly are they met. Now every right-minded reader will realize that Richler is manoeuvring Duddy into a trap. For even comic success has human consequences, and as Duddy's dream begins to build he comes to value the figures who help him build it — notably his financial, sexual and emotional Girl Friday, Yvette, and his Boy Friday, the wackily devoted epileptic, Virgil. When Duddy's rush toward success forces Virgil into a crippling accident, alienating Yvette, he realizes that he needs their help and regard. At once the fast-swimming barracuda loses force and turns over, soft human underbelly up. Guilt forces him to rent a truck which he drives obsessively, "doing Virgil's job", to quarrel with all of his associates, and finally to hire out driving a cab — his father's trade. Ruined, but at last aware of what it means to be human, Duddy becomes bearable. Such would appear to be the lesson he masters, the saving knowledge he acquires in the course of his apprenticeship.

But fortunately it isn't. The money meat is dangled once again, curing the sick barracuda. In a brief but superbly represented episode, Duddy wakens to his dream, gobbles down Virgil's money in the final and most atrocious of his many swindles, and the lake property he had so intensely coveted becomes his entire, gouged from the world's body. Nor is this the full extent of the reversal. When Duddy was seven, his grandfather illuminated his life by saying, "a man without land is a nobody. Remember that Duddel." And the difference between Duddy and everyone else in the novel is that he wakens to this vision. What is more, he believes. What is most important of all, he has faith. Like the fool who eventually turns up as the type of wisdom, or the outcast who practices those virtues in whose name he has been banished, Duddy emerges as the secret hero of the world he has played at with seeming fast and loose. For no one else in that world has any dreams, faith or a truth: not MacPherson (who vowed never to strap a boy then fell to strapping boys); not uncle Benjy (who wore a false cloak of impotence in order to shield his wife's neurosis and so drove her into a deeper neurosis); not Virgil (the type of devotion who was devoted most deeply to his own illness); not Yvette (who sacrificed herself to Virgil's illness); not even his Zeyda (who sent Duddy on a journey he would not take himself).

None of these best people in Duddy's life have anything to save themselves except those conventions which they put on to hide from shame whenever cold winds blow their human nakedness home. The ominous hero who dominates their dream of human life is Dingleman, the Boy Wonder, a hopeless cripple and a thoroughly vicious man. Duddy is never ashamed of his own humanity — even when it is threadbare — and that makes all the difference. His seeming wrongdoings trace to an inability amounting to

an unwillingness to realize or recognize the crippled condition in which he and all of the others live. At the last, when he orders Dingleman off his land (*"Faster you bastard. Run Dingleman. Let's see you run on those sticks."*) he is ostensibly shooing away his most dangerous rival for ownership of the land. Actually he is possessing his dream. He has done with cripples.

However, this back street prophet of a world in which people are not crippled by the guilt and shame which pervade our lives because they pervade our social forms is only an apprentice. And Richler does no special pleading. Duddy's vision is represented in the vernacular and the vernacular is consistent with a place where "the boys grew up dirty and sad, spiky also like grass beside the railroad tracks". Part of Richler's achievement has been to turn the vernacular into a poetry, making Duddy memorable, without departing from the dirt, the sadness and the spikes. He is memorable because he is so consistently himself. But he is far from liberation. It is one thing to break through the limitations of the conventional world; it is quite another to discover alternatives. The lake property toward which his imagination struggles is almost completely unparticularized. No promised land is truly repossessed until the gods come back, and these are as absent from the limbo of Duddy's lake world as they are from the sick limbo of the world he has passed through. He is intact. But he wants to laugh, he wants to fight, he wants to cry. When the self is born, the struggle is only just begun.

Art is vision, a way of seeing, and in *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* Mordecai Richler has put on comic eyes partly to reveal and partly to soften what he sees. The most melancholy clowning permits him to break through conventional attitudes toward Montreal, and this break through permits him to represent the city as actually (if unwillingly) faithless, truthless, dreamless — that is typically North American. But art cannot stop with such an actuality if only because human beings cannot. To say so is to reach the corner Richler has written himself into. If he is to advance beyond those boundaries to which he has guided his protagonist he will need to discover a way of seeing which will make the lake of life into which Duddy wants to dive a mirror and a source for deeper desires than his present hero even dreams. This of course is much easier for a reader to say than it is for even a gifted novelist to do.

HISTORIANS' VIEW POINTS

Margaret Ormsby

DONALD CREIGHTON. *The Story of Canada.* Macmillan. $3.50.
EDGAR MCINNIS. *Canada: a Political and Social History.* Revised and enlarged. Clarke, Irwin. $9.75.

THESE TWO histories of Canada illustrate the old saw that the historian is the product of his own times. Edgar McInnis first published *Canada: a Political and Social History* in 1947, the heydey of Mackenzie King Liberalism. Most of his research, and probably most of his writing, must have been done during the war, at a time when Canadians, worried about "the conflicting stresses and strains, both internal and external" which challenged the unity of Canada, were inclined to identify the nation with the state. As historian, McInnis took on some colour from his background. He discovered "the essential drama" of the Canadian achievement "in the slow and tenacious advance from one step to another along the road to nationhood, the patient evolution of successive compromises in politics and government, the determined conquest of the physical obstacles to national economic development". The words might well have been Mackenzie King's very own.

Twelve years later, when Canada had just entered its "first Elizabethan Age" and Diefenbaker Progressive-Conservatism had created a "politically reunited" nation, Donald Creighton, seeing signs of a "robust Canadianism", set down on paper an epic which he recounted in terms of "the east-west axis, the all-Canadian, anti-Continental and pro-British elements of national design". In the post-war years Canadian nationalism had become something positive, something separate and individual, and in the writing of Canadian history the emphasis no longer needed to be on frustration and compromise.

In planning and writing their books, each historian had in mind a different segment of the reading public. McInnis was writing a textbook for university students. So he produced a sober and restrained analytic narrative. Creighton, through his biographical study of Sir John A. Macdonald, had already reached a wide "popular" audience; but there was always the chance that some of this audience might have been lost to the script-writer, the man who could employ sound, dramatic action and colourful reconstruction to make history palatable. With a sense of mission, and the conviction that the written word outlives the spoken, Professor Creighton undertook to win back readers for the professional historian. Boldly, he compressed into 276 pages a history of Canada that has all the vividness of pictorial reconstruction — and much more besides.

As the writer of a textbook, McInnis felt compelled to be encyclopaedic. Creighton, on the other hand, could afford to be the artist, employing the technique of simplifying the outline and

rejecting the extraneous detail in order that attention might be focussed on a great central theme. Writing for students, McInnis eschewed private opinion and personal bias. Writing for the general public, and bound only by the code of the academic historian, Creighton could permit his readers to share his enthusiasms. As a result, his book has a glowing, pulsating quality previously lacking in general histories of Canada.

Generally speaking, McInnis's book belongs to the tradition of "history as science" and Creighton's to "history as literature". In the matter of scientific exactitude, however, *The Story of Canada* yields nothing to *Canada: a Political and Social History.* (For one thing, Creighton always seems to be closer to, or at least more familiar with, manuscript sources.) What it does do, is to go beyond the process of sifting, evaluating and corroborating, the limit which satisfies so many "scientific" historians. Like the great scientist, Creighton allows his own intuitive imagination full play. He is not satisfied merely to *describe* "events", "developments" and "trends"; seeking explanations, he probes personality, character and setting. He is never obviously schematic; yet he has a central theme, and minor strands are not allowed to obscure the pattern he is weaving.

The story of Canada, as Creighton tells it, is the story of adventurers in a new land, who are attracted first by the enchantment and compulsion of the St. Lawrence, "the River of Canada", and then by the enchantment and compulsion of the north-west. Led inland, they extend their reach until their "continental inheritance" is within their grasp. Interpreted in this fashion, in terms of an innate urge to create and to preserve a separate, independent existence, Canadian history acquires vitality and pace.

These attributes are lacking in McInnis's book. For his theme is the search for a middle ground on which "numerous and conflicting stresses, internal and external" may be reconciled. With such a theme, he is forced to make official policy his main concern. Although, of course, the political figures are present, his history tends to be dehumanized.

Creighton clothes his figures and lets them walk on the stage. At the time of Confederation he tells us, Sir John A. Macdonald was in the prime of life and the height of his powers. "There was no sign of portliness in his tall, slight, jaunty figure. The defiant panache of his dark, curly hair had subsided only a little; and the ugly charm of his face, with its big nose and generally sardonic smile, was as attractive as ever." When Mackenzie King, by securing the incorporation of Newfoundland in 1949 succeeded in carrying to completion the grand design of 1864, he was still "an ordinary yet curiously unusual man, courteous but friendless, unobtrusive but dominating, with odd dark complexities beneath his correctly commonplace exterior, [who] had made himself appear a political necessity without ever acquiring much respect or inspiring any great affection". Equally effectively, lesser figures are brought to life. Who is likely to forget Lord Durham after reading that:

> His luggage took two days to land. The buffet at his lavish receptions and supper parties was resplendent with family plate and racing trophies. His Byronic moods, his imperious yet gracious manner, the carelessly baroque magnificence of his style of life soon became almost legendary in the Canadas. He had once confided to Creevey

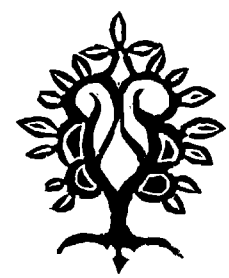
> that he could 'jog along' on forty thousand pounds a year. He was known privately as 'King Jog'; but his political sobriquet was 'Radical Jack'.

There are wonderful vignettes in Creighton's story. Champlain confers with the Montagnais, "the dark natives, with their feathered scalp-locks, their breech-clouts, their rough leggings of hide, and their shapeless garments of skins and furs [sitting] in solemn conclave". The Battle of the Plains of Abraham reaches its climax: "Montcalm was mortally wounded while he tried in vain to rally his men. There was no rallying them. They broke, turned and fled. And Montcalm's black horse walked his dying master slowly back into the city through the St. Louis gates." The Canadian Pacific Railway, the symbol of unity, is completed at the very moment when insurrection in the west is brought to a dramatic conclusion:

> On November 7th [1885], far out in the mountains, at a spot which Stephen determined must be called Craigellachie in memory of his clan's meeting-place and battle slogan, the bearded Donald Smith drove home the last spike in the railway's transcontinental line; and nine days later, on November 16th, while the autumnal sun rose late over plains which were white with hoar frost, the sprung trap in the Regina prison gave and Riel dropped to his extinction.

The Story of Canada offers more than personality and action. The fur trade is seen as "the glory and folly of the St. Lawrence"; Canada as following until 1874 a "dependent career as a favoured producer of staple products for more mature metropolitan economies"; and the west as creating "new contradictions, new and exciting tensions. But it had done far more than that. It had also promoted a new and dominant sense of national unity." There is less emphasis on a topic still beloved when McInnis was writing his book. The "advance to nationhood" is not the steady progress that it once was; instead we are reminded that Laurier had "a rather parochial and suspicious Canadianism" and that with the signing of the Atlantic Charter, "Canada, who for a year had been the second big power engaged in the conflict, became the submissive satellite of the Big Three."

It is these new insights that make the book so fascinating and so compelling. The specialist, as well as the layman, finds his attention caught and held by new perspectives, perspectives which emerge when familiar events are set in a wider context. For too long Canadian history has been written by men who have been too close to the Canadian scene; trained in the scientific method, encumbered by masses of published material, they have done little more than describe "the outside" of an event. McInnis, sad to relate, belongs to this group. His book is comprehensive, detailed and "accurate"; but the scaffolding dates from an earlier age of historical writing and the whole structure is flat, and even rather flaccid.



LEACOCK IN LIMBO

R. E. Watters

RALPH L. CURRY. *Stephen Leacock, Humorist and Humanist.* Doubleday & Co. $4.95.

IMAGINE, if you can, a biographer of Mark Twain who sees no personal or literary significance in the fact that his subject was American rather than English, grew up on the banks of the Mississippi rather than the Clyde, and published his first writings in frontier newspapers rather than in *Punch*. Such a biographer would be Ralph L. Curry, if we judge him by his book on Stephen Leacock, a book that misses its aim completely because Mr. Curry never discovered where his target was located.

This book grew out of a doctoral dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania, at which time it bore the title "Stephen Leacock, American Humorist". Subsequently, somebody decided that kidnapping is better not advertised, but no one thought of restoring the victim to his own family as "Canadian Humorist". Instead of releasing him to such a narrower freedom, how much better to de-nationalize the man and thereby suggest a significant universality! Everyone knows that a Canadian author, unlike his British or American betters, can become "universal" only by surrendering his local habitation and its name. But although the kidnapping is no longer advertised, Leacock was not actually released to either the lesser or the larger liberty, for in this book he still remains in American custody:

> Stephen Leacock represented in a way the paradox which is Canada. Born in England, he moved to Canada and wrote American humor. But this was the simplest of the inconsistencies that his life and personality presented.

If Canada is a "paradox" for the reason here suggested, is the United States also one for the same reason? As for Leacock himself, the only "paradox" or "inconsistency" about his humour is the fact that sometimes Englishmen kidnap him with the excuse that his first six years (out of 75!) were spent in England, and sometimes Americans (like Mr. Curry) do so on the assumption that they possess sole title to the adjective "American".

"By his own admission in his criticism", claims Mr. Curry, "Leacock was an American humorist, by heritage" (p. 349). Leacock's "American" heritage, however, was not the sadly shrunken national one which is all his biographer can envisage. As Leacock himself often took pains to assert, he was a *continental* American. Here is a passage from *Humor and Humanity*:

> A great many of us in North America (the United States and Canada, which last the word America *seems* to omit), will admit that the whole of *our* literature . . . has not equalled in volume or value that of the older English-speaking world . . . But many of us think that humour is an exception to this, and that here the *American product* . . . is equal to anything . . . . [My italics]

No meaning for the adjective "American" other than the narrowly national one ever occurs to Mr. Curry. Although

he discusses various United States humorists such as Artemus Ward and Mark Twain as part of Leacock's "American heritage", he omits altogether any examination of Leacock's Canadian predecessors from Haliburton down, including the contributors to *Grip,* in which Leacock's first writings appeared.

Though our border is undefended, it is surely not indistinguishable; the unhappy results of an inadequate awareness of our differences vary from the slight to the momentous. Here are some examples: a paraphrase of Leacock's "snake fences" to "snaky rail fences" (p. 25); the apparent belief that Canada has only one railway (p. 272), that a "large tract" for an Ontario farm is 100 acres (pp. 22, 23), and that the term "the war year of 1917" somehow distinguishes this year from 1916 or 1915; the unsurprised acceptance of "second base" as a term in cricket (p. 48); the assertion that Leacock could not expect a suggested knighthood in 1933 "because such appointments . . . were controlled by the Liberal Prime Minister" (p. 218) — a belief that presumably explains why no investigation was made into Prime Minister Bennett's failure to nominate such a "staunch Conservative" as Leacock rather than Roberts. More important is Mr. Curry's apparent ignorance of what went on in our election campaign of 1911, since only ignorance can explain his viewing the Mariposa election in *Sunshine Sketches* as "gentle fun" (p. 97). And finally there is for Mr. Curry an "inconsistency" in a Leacock who strongly preferred private enterprise to socialism but who simultaneously felt that the former was unlikely to serve the needs of social justice and that therefore government "would have to extend its protection" (p. 348, *et al.*). Deeper knowledge of Canadians might have suggested to Mr. Curry that here Leacock was much like most other Canadians who steadfastly refuse to elect a C.C.F. government but enthusiastically support any "private enterprise" party which will steal the most attractive planks of the "socialist" platform.

The fact that he had to cross the 49th parallel in his attempt to portray the heart and mind of a great Canadian made so little impression on Mr. Curry that he misunderstands Leacock's relationship to Canada and Canada's to Leacock. For instance, in describing Leacock's reception in England in 1921, Mr. Curry declares that the English "were not like Canadians dealing with their own prophet" (p. 151). Yet only a few pages earlier we had been told that for his literary efforts Leacock had already been awarded honorary degrees at both Queen's and Toronto, and still earlier that the whole 3,000 copies of the first edition of *Literary Lapses* were sold out in Montreal in only two months.

Leacock's devotion to Canada eludes or baffles Mr. Curry completely. He reports Leacock's refusal "to charge for speeches in Canada, though he accepted payment for addresses made in the States," but he explains this perversity as "a kind of chauvanistic [*sic*] stubbornness" (p. 149). Later, reporting that Bishop's University conferred a Doctor of Civil Law degree on Leacock, Mr. Curry proceeds (my italics):

> *Perhaps it was in answer to this favor* that he published the articles he did in 1934; *at any rate* they were, except two on American humor, Canadian writing about Dominion subjects. "Revision of Democracy" was about a dominion's status in a democratic empire. "The Stirring Pageant of Canadian History" was a mildly chauvanistic [*sic*] reminder of the struggle for the

> settlement of Canada, and the other two were concerned with the contemporary economic and social structure of his country . . . (p. 228).

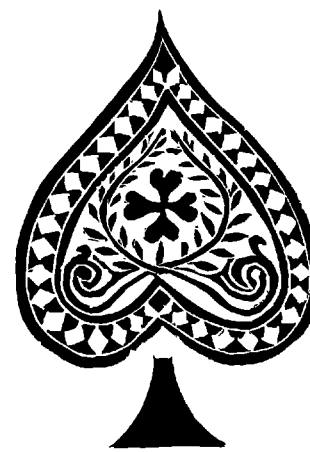
Obviously, that a Canadian should concern himself with the mildly stirring pageant of Canada's past and present is, for Mr. Curry, so extraordinary an aberration that any explanation at all is better than letting the reader consider it sheer lunacy.

Mr. Curry faithfully reports the amount of Leacock's serious writing, the great bulk of which concerned things Canadian; yet the plain inference to be drawn is missed completely. When a man in his serious moments is devotedly Canadian, surely the possibility exists that his humour might also reflect his homeland? Such a possibility never arises in this book, though a good deal of attention is given to the supposed characteristics and themes of Leacock's humour. To demonstrate how wrong Mr. Curry can be would take more space than I can command here. Instead, I shall quote a few sentences which, if Mr. Curry had read them, might have started him thinking more sharply than he does anywhere in his book. The sentences were written by J. B. Priestley in the introduction to his admirable selections for *The Bodley Head Leacock* (1957) — and they deserve our national thanks:

> Canada should not only be proud of Stephen Leacock but also be specially grateful to him. The best of his humour does something very difficult to do — it expresses an essential Canadian quality . . . The Canadian is often a baffled man because he feels different from his British kindred and his American neighbours, sharply refuses to be lumped with either of them, yet cannot make plain this difference. But Leacock was doing it in his humour . . . . And when he is very good indeed . . . he achieves an outlook, manner, style, that typically British or American humorists find it impossible to achieve. These belong to the man but they also belong to the nation.

Rescued at last, though posthumously, from kidnappers on both sides of the Atlantic, Leacock should be spared further foolishness about where he belongs.

No, Mr. Curry; you've missed by many a mile. We still need a study of Stephen Leacock, Canadian humorist, heir to the continent and host to the world.



books in review

UNE ROMANCIERE DE VINGT ANS

MARIE-CLAIRE BLAIS. *La belle bête.* Institut littéraire du Québec.

MARIE-CLAIRE BLAIS a vingt ans, et *La belle bête* n'est pas son premièr, mais son cinquième ou sixième roman[1]. Une telle prodigalité d'écriture a de quoi confondre, dans un pays où les écrivains généralement ne s'expriment qu'au compte-gouttes. Non moins étonnante est la sûreté d'expression, la fidélité à un rêve intérieur étrangement cruel et tendre, qui font de *La belle bête* l'une des oeuvres les plus saisissantes parues ces dernières années au Canada français, et peut-être même au Canada. Ce livre offre beaucoup plus que l'intérêt passager d'une précocité. Il accomplit son dessein avec la rigueur de la maturité, et demande à être reçu comme une oeuvre de plein droit.

A vrai dire, il faut faire violence à la notion communément admise du roman pour l'appliquer à *La belle bête.* Le quotidien, l'univers des apparences, échappent presque entièrement à Marie-Claire Blais, et quand elle s'y aventure, c'est d'une démarche mal assurée. L'essentiel de son roman se passe au delà de l'ordinaire mesure, dans un monde de demi-rêve où les êtres obéissent sans tarder à des raisons secrètes qui les dominent et les dépassent. Patrice, la "belle bête", ne s'appartient pas. Il est, à la fois par sa perfection physique et par son inconscience (il est idiot de naissance), l'image d'une Beauté aveugle qui est la passion dévorante de tous les personnages du roman. Il lui suffit de se contempler, et d'être contemplé: par sa mère, qui voit en lui la confirmation de sa propre beauté, mais aussi par sa soeur Isabelle-Marie qui, laide, élève contre lui la revendication d'une douloureuse humanité. Précisément parce qu'elle est laide, et qu'elle souffre, Isabelle-Marie est ici la seule à ne pas subir l'inhumaine fascination de la Beauté. Elle croira, l'espace d'un été, pouvoir rejoindre les autres au sein de la parfaite illusion, en se disant belle pour un jeune aveugle, mais celui-ci la rejettera sitôt la guérison venue. Isabelle-Marie n'échappe pas à son destin d'humanité, et elle se retrouve face à Patrice, dans un combat qui est celui de la conscience contre l'inconscience, de la vie imparfaite contre un rêve stérile. Elle *doit* détruire la beauté de Patrice, briser ce masque atrocement parfait qui n'offre aucune prise à l'amour et à la pensée. Une premiêre fois, alors que Patrice était confié à sa garde, elle l'a privé de pain; plus tard, elle lui plongera le visage dans l'eau bouillante. Ce ne sont pas là des actes de pure cruauté, de simple sadisme, et il faut observer que, de tous les personnages du roman, Isabelle-Marie est la seule à éprouver de la pitié pour Patrice, à le considérer dans sa qualité d'homme. En le défigurant, en lui faisant connaître par là le dénûment et la souffrance, elle lui ouvre les voies de la conscience. L'art de Marie-Claire Blais n'est nulle part plus

[1] Les autres ne sont pas encore publiés. Marie-Claire Blais a également écrit de nombreux poèmes, dont une série a récemment paru dans le cinquième volume des *Ecrits du Canada français* (Montréal).

subtil et plus sûr que dans la description de la sourde évolution qui fera accéder la "belle bête" à une aurore d'humanité. Mais, dans le monde fasciné que crée la romancière, il n'y a pas place pour l'humain. A la fin Isabelle-Marie et Patrice se suicident, la première aprés avoir été jusqu'au bout de sa révolte et brûlé la ferme de sa mère, le second après avoir soupçonné qu'il avait une âme. Parce qu'ils *savaient,* parce qu'ils s'étaient retrouvés eux-mêmes, ils devaient mourir; la mort seule pouvait briser le cercle enchanté.

Ce serait trop demander qu'une oeuvre aussi exigeante, aussi profondément troublante, fût sans défauts. Marie-Claire Blais décrit maladroitement les comportements extérieurs, et ses personnages adultes — la mère et son nouvel époux, Lanz — sont réduits souvent à des rôles de fantoches. Même dans l'ordre des images et des symboles, où elle se meut d'ordinaire avec une si prodigieuse agilité, il lui arrive de suppléer à une expérience défaillante par des souvenirs littéraires. Mais la logique interne, les articulations essentielles, et aussi l'écriture du roman manifestent dans l'ensemble une étonnante solidité. *La belle bête* n'est du reste pas une oeuvre isolée dans la littérature canadienne-française contemporaine. Elle se situe dans un climat de primitivité, de commencement du monde, où s'amorce également — mais pour s'ouvrir à une espérance de vie—le beau roman d'Anne Hébert, *Les Chambres de bois.* Ainsi le roman reprend les interrogations principales de notre poésie, et va chercher à la naissance même du geste les signes d'une existence qui se gagne dans la difficulté et l'angoisse.

GILLES MARCOTTE

A BATTLE RE-TOLD

C. P. STACEY. *Quebec, 1759: The Siege and the Battle.* Macmillan. $5.00.

FRONTENAC and now Wolfe in his last months have sat for a long hard look from two diligent historians and have emerged from this scrutiny with altered reputations. It seems that documentary sources connected with most historical happenings—especially Canadian ones—have to be brought out every fifty years or so and re-examined, and a search made for new ones. The result is entirely salutary, judging from these two recent examples, though it is disconcerting to all who have been taken in by one or another of the misconceptions triumphantly exposed by the specialists. If this keeps on, our histories, both academic and popular, will have to be rewritten. Can. Hist. is becoming a bottomless well of possible books, which should make writers happy; the reading public, perhaps, just a little weary.

This is not to take away from the painstaking, fair, and lucid manner in which Colonel Stacey has set about his task of re-examining the evidence surrounding the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. Two of his main points—that Wolfe, far from being a great strategist, was amazingly indecisive and ineffectual except in action, and that luck had most to do with his ultimate success—are clear, it seems to me, from a reading of the documents in Doughty's still-invaluable *Siege of Quebec* (1901). (The writings of Doughty and others come in for some cutting comments from Colonel Stacey. I feel that a word or two in a note at the end would have been sufficient, in a book of such

authority, to draw attention to his predecessor's errors.) However, countless historians have appeared to be blind to these detractions—because it didn't suit their purpose to notice them, perhaps—and Colonel Stacey elucidates both facts once and for all. He presents in addition other convincing evidence to correct some oft-repeated though minor fallacies. He finds that Mackellar's plan of Quebec made in 1756-7 was erroneous; Wolfe's relations with his subordinates were poor; the French-speaking Scot, when challenged before landing at the Anse au Foulon, did *not* identify himself as being of the Régiment de la Reine; it is *not* likely that Wolfe broke the silence by reciting Gray's *Elegy* at this time; he was *not* the first to jump out at the Anse; Vaudreuil's interference with the disposition of French troops on the eve of battle cannot be proved convincingly; Montcalm, a competent though not a great commander, was strikingly unperceptive when it came to foretelling British intentions, etc., etc. In spite of the hesitations and inefficiency in all that led up to the climax, the final British achievement is not underrated, however, and Colonel Stacey gives credit where credit is due: "The army did its part with dexterity and boldness that matched the navy's. This night's work fully supports the reputation of the enterprise as a classic of combined operations. It was a professional triumph."

It is hardly surprising that such a dramatic event has been over-romanticized through the years; that the final victory of the sickly Wolfe should have obscured the nature of his actions leading up to it; that detail after detail of misinformation has been perpetuated by those who have not had the prolonged access to documents that Colonel Stacey had. His exhaustive investigations and his graceful presentation of his findings can only be welcomed. To me it is this second accomplishment that is most impressive. You rarely find analyses, arguments, rebuttals, descriptions, quotations, minute examinations of the old claims, presentations of the new, set forth in such a smooth and readable style. Colonel Stacey's purpose — to re-examine evidence, to put the record straight — precluded the dramatic, imaginative treatment that has placed Parkman's telling of the story, errors and all, so firmly in our affections. But his book is a model of the scholarly investigation that everywhere bears a good writer's touch. It is a fine achievement and a valuable one. It should stand virtually unchallenged—for at least another fifty years.

WILLIAM TOYE

POLITICAL PROPHET

KENNETH MCNAUGHT. *A Prophet in Politics; A Biography of J. S. Woodsworth.* University of Toronto Press. $5.95.

THERE WAS nothing flamboyant about J. S. Woodsworth, except perhaps the little beard (inappropriately aristocratic) which he always wore. But in its broader outlines his life was of such an extraordinary (one is tempted to say un-Canadian) quality, that in another country we would expect it to be a fruitful source for legend, fiction, the film and T.V. Indeed, one Canadian novelist, F. P. Grove, in his bizarre study of capitalism and automation, *The Master of the Mill,* has given us "Mr. Birkin-

shaw", whose name suggests G. B. S., but whose career and character reflect a popular image of Woodsworth: the uncompromising idealist held impotent by his ignorance of political necessities while more worldly men ruled. Kenneth McNaught's new biography does not exploit the drama of Woodsworth's life nor does it cater to the popular image of the man, despite the somewhat misleading title. It focusses instead on the political significance of Woodsworth and becomes essentially (as Woodsworth himself would no doubt have wished) a scathing critique of fifty years of Conservative and Liberal rule in Canada.

A Prophet in Politics dispels the image of an ineffectual and impracticable Woodsworth more successfully than any of the previous biographies or studies of the C.C.F. Party. It describes intimately his costly decision to leave the church in order to preach the Social Gospel and gradualist socialism, a decision based on years of wide first-hand experience of the real conditions of Canadian life that surely could not be surpassed in range by any man in Parliament. Professor McNaught marshals the substance of his book — Woodsworth's parliamentary career and its large and small crises of some two decades — clearly and often dramatically. The member for Winnipeg (1922-42) was always a strong moral force, but rarely a direct political power in Parliament, and his influence is therefore open to different interpretations. Did Woodsworth and his supporters goad the pusillanimous and reluctant horse of social progress, or did Mackenzie King and the Liberals willingly ride ahead with the reins in sure and steady hands? Professor McNaught is highly persuasive. The Woodsworth he shows us was indeed an idealist and a prophet, indeed an uncompromising non-conformist all his life, but also a man whose idealism was based on practical, humane wisdom, and whose non-conformity was that creative stand taken by one who is truly ahead of his time. Non-conformity involved thirty years of pacifism in the most war-torn century in history, and political suicide in 1939 when the C.C.F. would not follow his lead in opposing Canada's entry into World War II. History is full of surprises. This apparent aberration, lamentably unworldly and unpatriotic, now reemerges not only as a keystone in Woodsworth's thinking, but as a Christian decision that challenges attention anew.

Though the biography is carefully documented, the author is throughout an enthusiastic, energetic advocate. This makes for an intense and lively book, but also accounts for its limitation. How little one gets to know Woodsworth personally! Did he really expend his life so fully in his political role? The preacher who abandoned a religious for a political sect was, it appears, obsessed by biblical archetypes of lonely leadership: John the Baptist, the Christ figure, solitary in the wilderness, or freely sacrificing Himself. How far is such a myth the key to his astonishing moral courage and determination? *A Prophet in Politics* displays the statesman impressively, but as a portrait of a man's life it is frustrating, and not merely to vulgar curiosity. Because Woodsworth was so remarkable a man, so close to a kind of greatness when we see him in the gallery of Canadian politicians, the desire to understand him is not easily satisfied, even by Professor McNaught's admirable study. The next biography of J. S. Woodsworth can now afford to give us less political history and

more of what, in defining biography, the Oxford Dictionary calls the "life-course of a living being."

F. R. WATT

THE CONTEMPLATIVE MAN'S RECREATION

RODERICK HAIG-BROWN. *Fisherman's Summer.* Collins. $4.50.

EARLY IN 1951 Mr. Haig-Brown completed *Fisherman's Spring,* the first of a planned series of four volumes that were to range over the activities and meditations of a particular — and an extraordinary — fisherman-philosopher during the four seasons of the year. *Fisherman's Summer* is the third volume in the series. *Fisherman's Winter* went through the presses in 1954; the autumnal volume is still to come, a fact for which all anglers may be thankful, for the feast is good and its conclusion will be met with reluctance.

It is inevitable by the very nature and purpose of the book that many of the essays of which it is composed will appeal in the main only to the true disciples of the venerable and saintly Walton, who not merely wrote on fish and how to catch them, but quietly and sincerely stated his faith in fishing as an art that would worthily provide for the "contemplative man's recreation". Haig-Brown is, as all who have met him know, a superlatively fine fisherman, who can not only cast a long line, but who can drop a dry fly in the circle of a rising fish with uncommon accuracy and rare gentleness. He knows the art of fishing, and he has studied with painstaking care the habits of fish — their feed, their migrations, their reactions to their physical surroundings, their birth, their mating, and their death. On these matters he writes with that authority which comes from a knowledge acquired by years of patient observation, wide reading, and rich experience. But he also has deep and lasting impressions of many of the rivers that he has fished — the Black Birch, the Coppermine, the Parsnip, the Nimpkish, the historic Beaverkill, and, above all, the Campbell, on the lovely banks of which he has lived for many years. He likes these rivers — and many others — for their fish, for the excitement that comes from the hard and sudden strike and the subsequent battle; but he loves them for their beauty, and for the joy and peace they have given him — either at the moment of seeing or later when recollected in tranquillity.

These particular essays on fishing—for rainbow, cutthroat, steelhead, grayling, and salmon—are the reminiscences of a fisherman written for fishermen. But there are essays in the volume that are wider in interest. They range from accounts of what the early explorers saw of fish and fishing in British Columbia to a thoroughly delightful satire on modern fish derbies. Among them are a number of deeply provocative and serious essays on certain developments in our ever-changing civilization that threaten the recreational areas of our land and the valuable commercial resources of streams and oceans: more specifically, the indiscriminate and, in the eyes of the writer, the unscientific use of insecticides over wide areas of forest, causing tragic destruction of fish and game alike; and the short-sighted development of hydro-

electric power, with a subsequent loss in the great runs of commercial fish that depend upon streams and ocean for their existence. These are essays that should be read by all who are interested in the shape of things still to come. For Haig-Brown is not only fisherman and writer; he is a dedicated conservationist, bold in his stand and unabashed by the opposition he meets from industrialists and politicians alike.

It has been frequently said of Haig-Brown (especially by American critics) that he is a modern Walton or a twentieth century Gilbert White. These comments have been meant as compliments, but they are not accurate nor do they do justice to Haig-Brown as writer and as man. Walton, learned and religious, wrote with an even, quietly poetic tranquillity that has only slight tonal variations. Even the landing of a good fish seems to have engendered little excitement in the old master's being. As for the Vicar of Selborne, though he was a most skilled observer of nature and a fine writer, he too was placid — something of a recluse who participated little in the affairs of his world. In his writings, Haig-Brown can be as poetic as Walton and as detailed in his observations as White and as learned as both of them; but he can also write with anger when his feelings are moved, and he can bring to the long run of a fish through a pool or to the flight of a kingfisher along a river's edge a feeling of intense excitement found in neither of his great predecessors. But above all, he shows in his writings the unflagging interest of a man devoted to the improvement of the society in which he lives, an interest rarely seen in *The Complete Angler* and *The Natural History of Selborne.*

Fisherman's Summer bears witness to all these things. It is a good book for the man or the woman who loves fishing as one of the minor arts; it is a book that should be read, in parts at least, by every citizen who is concerned with the preservation of irreplaceable natural wealth.

S. E. READ

WORLDS WITHOUT MEN

Our Living Tradition (Second and Third Series), ed. R. L. MCDOUGALL. University of Toronto Press. $6.50.

The Face of Canada (by various contributors). Clarke, Irwin. $4.95.

OF THESE two books *Our Living Tradition* is the more seriously intended. It is a dozen pieces written for a lecture series sponsored by Carleton University's Institute of Canadian Affairs. The list of contributors is impressive and the subjects they have chosen, to highlight some of our living traditions, are potentially of the highest order. The authors are all experts in their fields and they have some very good and interesting things to say about Canada and Canadian Politics and literature. If these things could be communicated by mathematical formula or telepathy it would be fine, but language must be used and the results are some unhappy distortions that are not the faults of either poor scholarship or shallow thinking.

In the opening lecture of the third series, (the second and third series are printed in this volume) Baker Failey points out that Canadian painting so far "shows us the face of the world without a

man in it, almost as if it were uninhabited". If the two books under review here were the sum total of Canadian writing left on some atomic beach for the perusal of a future outer-galactic anthropologist, he would have to conclude that the same statement also described Canadian letters. Perhaps this absence would pass unnoticed if it weren't for the fact that three authors in the two volumes (A. J. M. Smith, C. L. Bennet and Roderick Haig-Brown) are writers who are not bound up either with themselves or movements or events. Perhaps this is not bad. Perhaps we will be the first country to produce a literature where only mammoths representing the colossus of geography on the one hand, and the complaining and / or boasting "I" on the other, battle with superlatives and dead-level logic to conclusions reached by men writing about men a hundred generations ago.

It is sad, then, not to say unnerving, to read *Our Living Tradition,* a book of twelve essays about twelve different men by twelve carefully selected Canadian thinkers and find only A. J. M. Smith capable of seeing a man's work as proceeding from a human being (he is assessing Duncan Campbell Scott) whose world is carried with him as a joy and a curse and a revelation — to quote Eliot via Smith, "as a fascination and a repulsion".

Fairley, in his headlong attack on non-objective painting, mentions his subject Varley (a man of considerable parts) only once or twice; Dr. Birney uses E. J. Pratt and his critics as a pad from which to launch a long cry about the injustice of being a prophet honoured only in one's own country; Reaney unearths Isabella Valency Crawford and immediately relegates her without grace or form to mere exegesis and a general judgment that she is "a second-rate grannie" who discovered one good way of writing about living in Canada; Louis Joseph Papineau has to run hard after Jean Bruchesi's Ambassadorial prose to keep from fading altogether from the page; and only the Devil himself would be able to suggest what George Brown would say to Professor Careless if he read his essay. Mr. Brown was used to being damned with more than faint praise.

God give us some writers, and let our living traditions fall where they may. But let me add, and fervently, that I think Carleton's Institute of Canadian Studies and that Institute's continuing series of lectures are good things. The printed record of what is written for that forum, forcing some of our leading lecturers into naked print, will perhaps produce some writers without God's help.

The Face of Canada should be taken more lightly, even though the same failure is evident in it as in *Our Living Tradition.* It is a book put out for the tourist and for some new, and probably old, Canadians who want to know more about the geographical behemoth that is Canada. It is a series of fifty-page essays by five writers about the five large regions in the country. The Atlantic and Pacific provinces are served best. Both C. L. Bennet and Roderick Haig-Brown write as men at ease with their adopted homes and with the language. Bennet is especially good about the Atlantic Provinces, as he talks truthfully and unsentimentally to the reader about the landscape and the relevant history, and the people he loves and admires. The Carleton lecture series could use him. Mr. Haig-Brown finds B.C. a beautiful

place — if it weren't for the people who want to soot it up and tear it down. He has a love of it and a fear for it, and his genuine concern as a resident and as a man makes a good frame of reference for the reader unfamiliar with the province. Gerard Filion's writing about Quebec has, along with caution and reserve, the air of having been stiffly translated. It is perhaps not too harsh to say that the result is dull. The Prairies, too, are flat, and this despite Miss Campbell's trying to divert us with more superlatives than there are oil rigs in Alberta. The forty-mile horizons, her absolute dog-delight at the thought of a Regina tree and the assurance that all those Winnipegonians living in Victoria talk about nothing but home, only serve to obscure the real Prairies. But, of all the regions, Ontario perhaps comes off the worst. Gregory Clark, the journalist, circles aimlessly around the outbacks for a few pages and then homes rapidly on his very own Toronto. His essay on that city is a masterpiece.

The illustrations, some three dozen of them isolated in the center of the book, are too familiar, too often seen on calendars. The book needs an editor.

ROBERT HARLOW

MASQUERADES IN FICTION

PHILLIS BRETT YOUNG. *Psyche*. Longmans Green. $4.50.

THOMAS B. COSTAIN. *The Darkness and the Dawn*. Doubleday. $4.50.

IT IS CLEARLY Mrs. Young's intention in *Psyche* to create a narrative symbolic of man's search for his own identity. Psyche, a child born to wealth, beauty, intelligence and love, is kidnapped at the age of two and then left for dead at the side of a road, but two tramps find her and leave her on the doorstep of a shack, where she is discovered and taken in by a miner and his wife. Because they cannot pronounce the name embroidered on her night dress, they call her simply "kid". If her childhood is anonymous, if she is taught to swear, to avoid washing, to play poker, the miner and his wife are, nevertheless, kind. But Psyche recognizes these people as neither her source nor her destiny. Forced to leave when she is seventeen, she begins her actual search for her own identity. An artist teaches her to pronounce her own name, to wash, to speak correctly, but, when she realizes that he is interested in her image and not in her person, she moves on. Befriended by prostitutes, she is tolerant but rejects their way of life. And even a brain surgeon, practicing psychoanalysis, does not give Psyche an image of herself that she can accept.

The tension of the plot would be greater if Mrs. Young did not make it clear from the beginning that heredity dominates environment. The experiences Psyche is subject to are simply tests to prove her inability to be influenced by environment. But, if the idea threatens the plot, the plot destroys the idea. For neither Psyche's heredity nor her search is real. Her parents, who enter the novel periodically in italics, are as shallowly idealized as a couple in an advertisement for silverware. Against their perfection, which is Psyche's identity and goal, the other characters in the book are judged and found wanting. It is to Mrs. Young's credit that she occasionally creates believable and interesting characters, particularly in the miner's wife, but too often

the author's imagination produces hoboes and prostitutes who have never lived anywhere but in books of this kind. *Psyche* is a fairy tale, a story of wish fulfilment, masquerading as a novel of psychological reality.

The Darkness and the Dawn is an intended masquerade. Set in the period just prior to the sack of Rome, the characters in authentic dress play Huns and Romans across an accurate landscape. But they are not twentieth century figures in disguise. If it seems significant that a small nation finds itself trapped between two great powers of barbarism and decadence, it is only because Mr. Costain has chosen the convention of being timely. He does not stoop to political allegory. Nor is any moral implied when the hero discovers that he needn't choose between the Huns and the Romans but can be converted to Christianity and the service of his own little country instead. As Mr. Costain says, in his bold Victorian voice, "This is not the story of Nicolan's conversion." As a matter of fact, Mr. Costain uses motivation as a mystery story writer uses his most obvious clue. He keeps it well out of the way of the plot. The plot is the purpose of *The Darkness and the Dawn*. One episode of tension arbitarily, and sometimes historically, follows another, each climaxed by torture, execution, or mass murder, but always the final escape of the hero. And the heroine, pursued by the Hun leader, rides a black stallion over the countryside to suffer capture, marriage, but not the loss of her virginity, for the Hun leader drops dead on her marriage bed. Unnerved but unharmed, she rides off with the hero and "they lived in accord for the most part and with as much happiness as is possible between two reasonable people". Everywhere, as in this conclusion, Mr. Costain shows the same moderation. For people who are fond of reading historical novels and haven't read too many of this kind already, *The Darkness and the Dawn* offers professional entertainment.

JANE RULE

PUBLISHERS' PRIZE-DAY

ARTHUR G. STOREY. *Prairie Harvest.* Ryerson. $4.00.

G. T. RITCHIE. *Black Angels.* Abelard-Schuman. $3.50.

ORDINARILY, books of the calibre of *Prairie Harvest* would not merit a review. When one learns, however, that it received the Ryerson Fiction Award for 1959 one is persuaded to examine it with some care in an effort to discover qualities which would entitle it to such special favour. At the end of such an examination one can only be astonished that this novel even attained publication.

The book deals with the fortunes of a family on the Saskatchewan prairies. It would appear that it is based on actual incidents. The fact that the events take place in and around the town of Haultain where Mr. Storey was born reinforces this view. Maybe the old-timers of Haultain will obtain enjoyment in trying to identify the prototypes of the various characters, but most readers will become weary at the steady flow of anecdotes which are recorded with a lack of variation that is absolutely deadening. Incidents that might have been exciting, or revealing, or meaningful, receive exactly the same amount of space and emphasis

as trivial incidents that seem to have been dragged in "because they really happened".

The strongest note which does appear is a dislike that is close to hatred for any Canadians whose roots are not in the British Isles. Not only in the dialogue and through the mouths of his characters, but also in the body of the novel, Mr. Storey continually refers to immigrants of Germanic origin as "bohunks".

> The bohunks surrounding the farm were ignorant people of the land and she saw them creeping over its face like locusts.

And, referring to the "land scavengers" who occupied deserted homesteads after the depression and dust storms had rendered them worthless, Mr. Storey has this to say:

> A bath, shave, and change of clothes would have made many of the males of the tribe resemble men. The women, however, seemed to be closely related to the apes.

In a book with no positive outlook, a book without tenderness or compassion, this vein of hatred is disturbing.

However, even this comment might be considered to give the novel an importance it does not have. The only surprising thing about it is that such untalented writing would receive an award of one thousand dollars as the best piece of fiction submitted to this publisher during the year 1959. It would be far better to make no award at all. In giving a prize to this effort the publishers do disservice to Canadian literature.

Mr. Ritchie's book, *Black Angels,* is slick and, as the publisher's blurb has it, moves at "breathtaking speed". It is a historical novel that opens shortly after the Monmouth Rebellion in England and then moves to the New World. It contains chases, fights, torturing Indians — everything. Unfortunately at the end of its 250 odd pages the reader couldn't care less about all these frantic goings-on because none of the characters come to life except in the most superficial way.

DOUGLAS FORRESTER

GIANTS OR POETS?

PETER MILLER. *Sonata for Frog and Man.* Contact Press. $2.00.

R. CYNEWULF ROBBINS. *Out of Solitude.* Linden Press, London. 7/6.

DOROTHY ROBERTS. *In Star and Stalk.* Emblem Books. 50c.

The Varsity Chapbook. Ed. JOHN R. COLOMBO. Ryerson Press. $1.00.

The McGill Chapbook. Ed. LESLIE L. KAYE. Ryerson Press. $1.00.

THE FIVE VOLUMES of poetry under review represent in all the work of thirty-two Canadian poets. The least one could reasonably expect from examining them is variety. But, in fact, the general impression is one of sameness: sameness in style, in theme, in execution; sameness in the failure to explore in depth and to engage the emotions. We become aware, when inept technique and immature sentiment do not interfere, that the poets are responding feelingly to their perceptions of the world and its ways, but seldom do we feel caught up in specific experiences which enable us to share the poets' responses. The majority of these poems are lustreless; they do not crush, caress, pound, twist, inflame, enrapture; they simply expound undramatically.

The outstanding exception is Peter Miller's second volume of verse, *Sonata for Frog and Man.* Here indeed we find individuality of style, versatility in tech-

nique, exciting use of imagery and diction, and insight. The collection, however, is uneven, and would have been more impressive had the editors been more critically selective. The earlier of the eight titled sections into which the poems are needlessly divided contain individual poems which are interesting: "Juke Box", "Past President", and "Sketch for a Canvas, Later", vivid with colour and dancing with vowels. The sixth section, "Editorial Comment", is the most rewarding. It provides a variety of moods: anger, satiric humour, poignancy, irony, pathos, serious self-appraisal. With the exception of "Men of the Age", which is rather trite and self-conscious, the poems in this group all provide delights of one kind or another: a memorable image from "Transvestite", for instance:

> But . . . you, quick to the call of Kay!
> Who first sucked breath as Tom;
> you, eyes inward, spectacle shorn,
> drive blue augurs deep:
> seeing what maggots there, that nibble
> your indeterminate core?

or the effective movement in tone and diction in "Fate and the Fissionists":

> His mind of peace
> gentles helpless hands to war.
> Knowledge his aim, and betterment,
> he struggles, salmon of the ether,
> still counter to the stream of sunlight
> and must spawn in blast-heat a poison
> of ignorance and nullity.

Peter Miller's *Sonata for Frog and Man* is the work of a poet whose imaginative grasp and ability to use words meaningfully and powerfully provide a sound foundation for development.

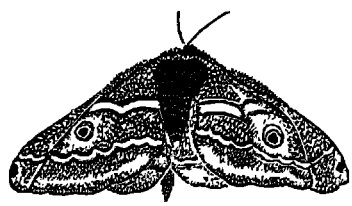
The little volume, *Out of Solitude,* by R. Cynewulf Robbins, does little to support the contention on the dust cover that "Here is a new, strong voice", whose mastery of words "enables him to indulge at will in intricate forms or bold, plain rhyme to give full range to his intensely religious purpose." In fact, the treatment of time-worn themes lacks both originality and vitality, and, although form and style are varied, the verse generally is undistinguished:

> Watch the wind a deep breath take
> To puff and blow across the lake;
> He kicks a wave up here and there
> And tumbles a boat without a care.

Fleeting moments of pleasing lyricism, and of light wit (as in "The Drip" and "Election") fail to save the volume from mediocrity.

Dorothy Roberts' *In Star and Stalk* contains eleven poems dealing with the beauty and paradoxes of nature, with childhood, and with "our deep desire to last". Her conclusions sometimes destroy moods and meanings as in "Two Children" and "Bus into Night", and occasionally her expression deteriorates into banality, when, for example, she explains the central symbol of her poem "The Apple"; "That was autumn objectified." "The Setting", a reminiscence about the stolid old age of her rigid and religious grandparents — "the advancing / Of age in its uniform on the towers of loss" — is the best she offers.

The Varsity Chapbook fails to fulfill the hope of its editor that it "will shatter, once and for all, the illusion that, of Canadian universities, only McGill is



producing its quota of top-flight poets." James Reaney's "The Man Hunter", which opens the volume, is characteristically individual in style and theme. Gerry Vise reveals strong lyrical sense in his four poems, and the simplicity of his presentation gives them charm and character. Priestly, a most promising writer, exhibits both technical adroitness and an imaginative grasp of the core of his material. But much of the other material in this chapbook is immature, poorly executed and sometimes sentimental.

The McGill Chapbook is a more impressive collection. It reflects a maturity lacking in *The Varsity Chapbook,* and, on the whole, greater competence. Again the editor's hopes are somewhat overexuberant when he suggests that "it may be that one of those represented here has the matter that makes a giant". Though we find no "giants", we do find much of merit. Four poems by D. G. Jones are lyrical and sensitively perceptive, and there is power and depth in Sylvia Bernard's tightly woven "Ballad to Breughel". Daryl Hines' "Trompe l'œil" is finely structured, impressive, controlled, intellectual, but lacking in emotional impact. His "Allegory of Sleep II", however, touches us keenly and is the best piece in the book. Phyllis Webb's energetic poems convey a sense of despair and agony, but leave the reader lost for the centre, the experience. She depends too exclusively upon diction for her effects, and consequently she elicits no clearly defined emotional response.

It would be a salutary experience, I think, for Canadian poets to think less in terms of being "top-flight poets" and "giants" and more in terms of simply writing poetry well.

JAN DE BRUYN

CHRISTMAS IN CANADA

MARY BARBER and FLORA MCPHERSON. *Christmas in Canada.* J. M. Dent. $4.00.

IF THERE ARE disadvantages in reviewing what is frankly, according to the advertising, "a Christmas gift anthology", for the post-Christmas issue of *Canadian Literature,* there are also compensations. Once the notes of the last "Noel" have died away, the reviewer can attempt to evaluate *Christmas in Canada* on its merits as an anthology of Canadian writing rather than dismissing it as yet another attempt to cash in on the spirit of a Freeburgian "Green Christmas" or appearing to sit in judgment on the festive season itself.

So considered, *Christmas in Canada* can hold up its head in the company of most collections of Canadiana, though that is not, perhaps, saying a great deal. To the question which must be asked of all such anthologies, "Does this book give us recognizably and distinctively Canadian material of competent literary quality?", the answer of this reviewer is a qualified "Yes". The greater part of its content achieves a reasonably high standard of literary competence as well as interest, a standard shattered only occasionally by sudden and unpleasant sinkings from the height. If the height represented by the Christmas scenes from Ernest Buckler's *The Mountain and the Valley* is seldom equalled, the depths touched by the slickness of John Fisher's reporting on "Christmas Customs" and the flatness of Dan McCowan's wildlife survey in "A Cricket Singing" are similarly rare, though Edith Tyrell's "Edna Eldorado", which does little more than

transfer Bret Harte's "The Luck of Roaring Camp" to the Canadian Northland, stays well below sea level.

Though the editors have been guilty of one or two lamentable lapses, for the most part their good taste and common sense have enabled them to avoid the pitfalls attendant upon the compilation of an anthology of Canadian sentiment on the theme of Christmas. For one thing, they have not attempted to present a balanced and equitably representative picture of the Canadian scene but have selected, wherever possible, first-hand accounts of interesting, unusual, or typical aspects of Christmas in Canada. Though the decision has placed a heavy emphasis on the past, the primitive, and the polar, it has been justified by the results. The sincerity and simplicity of the extracts from *The Jesuit Relations,* the reports from isolated trading posts, and the journals of early explorers, give them a vigor and vividness too often lacking in the selections from more recent and more sophisticated writing. It is the contemporary items, however, which give the anthology its variety of theme and tone, ranging from Dr. Nadine Hradsky's moving account of "Our First Canadian Christmas" to Eric Nicol's tongue-in-cheek snarling at Christmas trees in "Yule Logging". That poetry receives so scanty a representation is, no doubt, a reflection upon the resources of Canadian literature rather than of the editors. Brébeuf's "Huron Carol" is, of course, included along with a few French Canadian carols — not, mercifully, in translation. Otherwise Frederick B. Watt's "Boarder's Christmas, 1944" and Robert Finch's "The Crib" are the only poems, and of these only the latter inclines one to desire that more rather than less verse had been selected.

Though the critical reader may wish that the editors had been more consistent in applying their criteria of choice and perhaps that they had sauced sentiment more liberally with satire, he will find a good deal of pleasant as well as informative reading in *Christmas in Canada.* Even as after-Christmas fare it is by no means to be equated with cold turkey on Twelfth Night.

MARION B. SMITH

FROM THE MARITIMES

Atlantic Anthology, ed. WILL R. BIRD. McClelland & Stewart, $6.00.

THE MOST remarkable thing about *Atlantic Anthology* is that its editors (though Will R. Bird is the editor-in-chief, and is the only name on the cover, the discerning and very capable hand of Alec Lucas, the associate editor, can be seen everywhere) have not attempted to label their collection anything but what it is: a collection of prose and poetry written, and not always in praise, of the Atlantic provinces. So often Canadian editors preach the rather inane theme that all Canadian writing is steeped in universal appeal, that it is part of the great growth of "world literature". The regional quality of Canadian writing is often put into the background, and rather than claiming it for what it is—Canadian —reference is made instead that "this is good minor writing". But the editors here have not attempted to do this. Rather, they have given something to praise as

far as regional writing is concerned, and have shown (as is stated in their foreword) that their hope is that "the reader will sense how different it [the Atlantic region] is from the rest of Canada". They have fulfilled this aim.

This selection of poetry, non-fiction and fiction about the four Atlantic provinces gives a fine interpretation of life there. Very often the rest of Canada forgets that the Maritimes do exist, and when thinking of their writers cynically praises the work of Carman and Roberts and does not think of or remember anyone else. Admittedly, people in the Maritimes often think of no one else, but this anthology presents diversified subjects by many authors. There is "The Settling of Port Royal" by Samuel de Champlain, "The Heroine of Acadia" by James Hannay, and Alfred G. Bailey's "Creative Moments in the Culture of the Maritime Provinces". How easy it would have been for the editors to fill the book with works by the many poets who have their roots in the Atlantic provinces! Instead, their selection has been fine and limited, and they have presented such things as Charles G. D. Roberts' "Tantramar Revisited", the beautiful "The Blue Heron" by T. G. Roberts, and perhaps the best Canadian poem, "Low Tide on Grand Pré", by Bliss Carman.

This anthology has been selected well, and gives varied moods, themes, and approaches which seem to grasp the intangibles that are the gist of the Maritime provinces. For one who wants to learn about this part of Canada in writing that is both vivid and dramatic in style and mood, *Atlantic Anthology* is the answer—and proof that these writers are more than just 'daisy-pickers'.

DONALD STEPHENS

WAVERING RESPONSES

Challenge and Response, ed. CHALMERS & IRVINE. Ryerson. $3.50.

THE "CHALLENGE" of the Toynbeean title of this symposium is, we learn from the sub-title, the challenge of "modern ideas", and the "Response" is that of "religion", as exemplified, presumably, in the authors, seven Canadian University teachers: one President, one archaeologist, two theologians, two literary critics and one philosopher.

The publishers inform us, of this varied group, that "their multi-valent [sic] perspectives are unified by an ultimate religion which underlies the book as a whole". The religion concerned is, clearly, Christianity, though why it should be thus darkly referred to as "*an* ultimate religion", I cannot see.

In any event, title, sub-title and blurb are all misleading. Some of the articles—for instance R. J. Williams' and Millar Maclure's — are in no sense responses, secular or religious, to any specific challenge in modern thought. John A. Irvine proposes a rational and liberal-minded, but not at all religious, response to the challenge of international lawlessness. To the challenge of Marx-Leninism, President Kirkconnell offers a vehement anti-Communism plus a Protestant leaven in the schools brought into fighting trim by sharpening its wits on people like Archbishop Carrington with whom "pericopae in Mark, marked in the margins of the Codex Vaticanus as a dodekad of heptads, become lectionary units in the liturgy of a primitive church, whose synogogic type of public interpretation made it a *Beth Midrash* for the new Scriptures

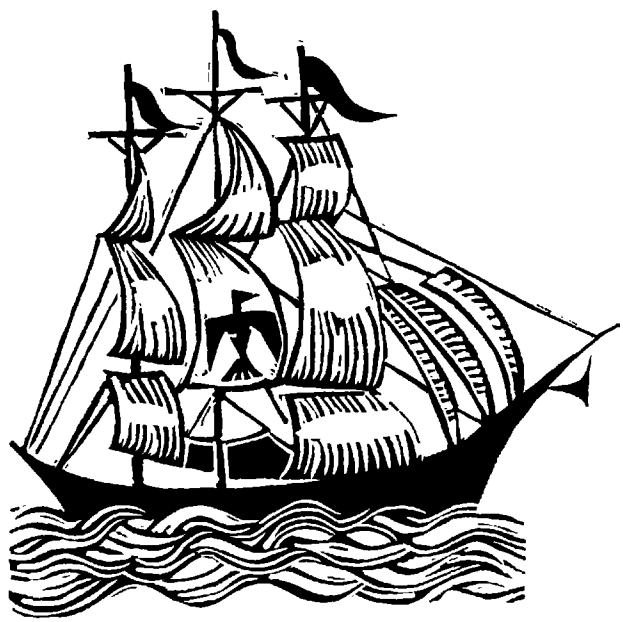
as well". I quote from a final paragraph of extraordinary erudition and irrelevance.

Nevertheless, taken individually, some of the contributions have real interest and merit. Northrop Frye's, for instance, is a masterly combination of incisive criticism and creative insight. Frye has the capacity simultaneously to clarify and to deepen one's own appreciations and responses. Dr. Thomson on Existentialism makes a fair and lucid statement of a genuine challenge in modern thought and of his Christian-theological response. Millar Maclure sweeps confidently through all the ranges of contemporary fiction with the speed and adroitness of an Olympics figure-skater.

In spite of the fact that many of the contributors do not seem to operate in these articles from a primarily Christian basis, I came to suspect, after reading the penultimate essay "Eschatology and its Cultural Relevance" (by one of the editors, Professor Chalmers) that the book is really intended to give aid to the wavering and comfort to the single-minded Christian. If you are open to persuasion about the cultural relevance of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, Professor Chalmers may persuade you. But I imagine that even in this conservative culture there are more than a few who have decided that they cannot forever keep an open mind about everything.

The book does not in fact do what its title, and the publisher's blurb, propose. To the assumption, which underlies at least half the book, that dogmatic Christianity can be "taken for granted", I prefer the kind of humility implied in Northrop Frye's essay and made explicit in his final sentence: "Scripture is poetic and not doctrinal, . . . Jesus taught in parables and not in syllogisms . . . and our spiritual vision is in a riddle."

WATSON THOMSON



opinions and notes

LET'S PAN A MAGAZINE

Anthony Friedson

THE RECENT review of *Prism* in *Canadian Literature* raises some questions about the functions of the reviewing critic and the little magazine. Mr. Emery seems to misunderstand both.

The reviewing critic has certain responsibilities: to the authors he is writing about; to the readers who will, presumably, pay some attention to what he says; and to himself and the literary values behind his criticism. Unfortunately, Mr. Emery's critical method is such that for both writer and reader — and hence for himself — he has written one more short, slick and useless review.

His analysis, in this review at least, seems to depend on two principal techniques: the comparison and the pigeonhole. The first device he employs most generally in glossing off the fiction. Of Kreisel's "Travelling Nude" we are told, with blasé indulgence, that it "unfolds with a humorous, Middle-European irony reminiscent of Svevo . . . ." The comparison becomes more derogatory for Margaret Laurence, whose subject matter and style "invite a comparison with Joyce Cary which she is not yet ready to withstand". The pigeonholing is especially applied to the poets: "Mr. Souster is flippantly amusing in an undergraduate way; Mr. Sowton is probably a born prose-writer, and Mr. Bluestone is obviously an academic . . . ." and so on. Mr. Emery's bouquets are as annoyingly absolute as his brickbats: ". . . Mr. Nowlan, especially in the poem 'Beginning', gives promise of writing good poetry sometime, and is clearly a name to watch." That's all; and now we know. No prolix and vulgar evidence. Simply the statement *ex cathedra*.

These remarks constitute the only particular consideration given to the authors at which they are leveled. Waiving the question of the appropriateness of Mr. Emery's remarks — and he seems skillful enough at this sort of literary name-calling — one is likely to find that, lacking any substantiation or development, they are inane. One may say that Shakespeare is an upstart crow, and Prior a poor man's Pope; Dickens a journalist; James an over-bred eunuch; and, for that matter, Mr. Emery a west-coast John Wain. Everyone is placeable and

reminiscent of everyone else — some admittedly more than others. But what do these generalizations say about the writing, and of what use could they be to the writer—or to readers? Such surface comments promulate the senseless gap between writers and critics, and cause the childish outbursts by writers such as Faulkner against critics in general.

It might be argued that, in so short a review, there is no room for anything more than the Johnsonian pronouncement; that, as long as reviewers are assigned the task of assessing the contents of a magazine in six hundred words, they will be compelled to write pointless reviews. This excuse would serve Mr. Emery better had he not spent approximately half the review in a witty minuet around the prospectus and design of the magazine. Few would disagree with his assessment of these externalia. But they are surely self-condemnatory, easily corrected, and more deserving of hasty treatment than the contents. Mr. Emery gives the prospectus and design four times the wordage he gives the fiction and well over twice the wordage he gives the poetry.

But writers these days should know that they are living in a pitiless universe —an element of which is the cursory review. They should also know that good writing is as viable as bad reviewing is ephemeral. Given the chance of publication, the writer of merit, or potential merit, should be able to hold his own. But Mr. Emery does not seem to want the writer to have his chance. His conclusion, skillfully protected by "wonder" and "perhaps", is that "looking at the current crop of literary magazines, one wonders whether perhaps we have not too many outlets chasing too few writers".

Literary News

The brilliance of scholarship and creative writing in Britain today is illustrated by this sampling from our current list.

For twenty-six centuries, says Robert Graves, Homer's *Iliad* has been murdered by successive generations of schoolmasters.

To resuscitate Homer as a living author and remove the classroom curse from a fascinating human story, Graves provides his own translation from the original Greek text in

THE ANGER OF ACHILLES
$7.00

What is a novel? What are the problems which face a novelist when he sits down to write a work of fiction?

Drawing on the experience of English, French and Russian novelists with quotation and commentary so that one may discover what they have to say about the novel as a literary form, Miriam Allott, lecturer in English at Liverpool University has produced a major work of criticism in

NOVELISTS ON THE NOVEL
$7.00

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This statement, especially when applied to the present situation in Canada, involves a false conception of the literary process and of the role of the little magazine in that process.

The literary process is dynamic. Many writers of talent are searching for the confident form and style for that talent; others have achieved such a form and style but have reached a point at which their confidence has degenerated into staleness. They need to experiment. As Marianne Moore pointed out recently, a traditional and exciting function of the little magazine has been to publish young writers, and writers who are groping. Sometimes—although rarely—the experimenting writer or the developing one turns out to be a frowning babe of real genius. Most little magazines are more interested in developing writers and encouraging new trends than in maintaining the uniform standards of a commercial publication. For this reason their contents are likely to be uneven in quality. And for this reason they usually spring up prolifically in a period of stirring literary achievement.

There is another reason why vigorous literary activity has usually carried with it a number of little magazines publishing a great deal of mediocre material along with some good writing. Any two editors of excellent taste can disagree strongly about the merits of a given piece of writing. (Everyone has his own list of important works which have been turned down by a succession of publishing houses and editors before being printed.) An editor's literary prejudice is often

Oxford

Biographer of Macdonald, friend of Laurier, creator of the Department of External Affairs, and supervisor of numerous Royal Visits, Sir Joseph Pope was at the centre of affairs in Ottawa from 1881 to 1925. He had completed his memoirs to 1907. The rest of the book was written by his son, Lt. General Maurice Pope, who has based it firmly on Sir Joseph's copious diaries. The result is a book which we must read for a full understanding of Canadian history and which will reward the reader by introducing him to a remarkable man and most lovable personality.

Public Servant

THE MEMOIRS OF SIR JOSEPH POPE
$4.50.

complicated by personal, political and provincial considerations. However reprehensible these prejudices may be, they are inevitable in a dappled universe. For this reason it is essential that there be several periodicals, so that a number of editors of divergent tastes can assure publication to any talented writer in any locale.

The above arguments would be greatly weakened if there were, in Canada, a superfluity of little rags publishing worthless writers. But how extensive *is* Mr. Emery's "current crop"? At least as recently as last June, it was possible for *Tamarack Review* to advertise itself, with only a slight distortion of the truth, as "Canada's only national literary magazine". At a generous count, there are only some half a dozen little magazines in Canada which publish any fiction, poetry or drama. There is only one such magazine — *Prism* — west of Toronto. How few periodicals does Mr. Emery want in Western Canada? Only none is fewer than one. At this point, one can see Mr. Emery flick the ash off his dressing gown and, like Jehovah firing Sodom and Gomorrah, reluctantly affirm that if there are no good writers, there should be no magazine. Unfortunately, we have no reason to believe that Mr. Emery has Jehovah's omniscience.

All this is not a plea for indiscriminate literary publication. There is, of course, always a danger that little magazines shall become repositories for poor writing. It is up to writers such as Mr. Emery to help assure that this does not happen. But he will not do it with a few Olympian generalizations and some stale and inapplicable cummings.

The Foundling and The Werwolf

A Literary-Historical Study of *Guillaume de Palerne*

BY CHARLES W. DUNN

The verse romance of *Guillaume de Palerne,* composed about 1200, occupies an honourable place in Old French literature. In this work, Professor Dunn offers a detailed investigation of its contents, background, and possible sources, studied against the wider background of the twelfth century. Old French and Middle English scholars, together with folklorists and medieval historians, will find this a useful, well-documented, independant work. *No. 8 in the University of Toronto Department of English Studies and Texts.* 168 pages, 6 x 9 inches, $4.95.

The Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold

BY WILLIAM ROBBINS

For all those who are interested in the interplay of ideas between science, religion and humanism, this is an important book. *". . . typical of the best sort of American critical writing."* THE OBSERVER; *". . . intelligent and scholarly book."* NEW STATESMAN; *"An important examination of the intellectual milieu in which Matthew Arnold . . . moved."* OTTAWA JOURNAL. xii + 263 pages, 5¾ x 9, $3.75.

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WHO IS PROVINCIAL?

We print below two American comments on Dwight Macdonald's peep at Canadian reviews in *Canadian Literature* No. 1.

* * *

. . . Speaking of landscapes, I find myself carping at Mr. Dwight Macdonald's "glance" at some Canadian magazines. In view of his own avowed ignorance of Canada, I do not see that his criticism of, e.g., "arcane" discussions of some fine points of Canadian history is valid. What may seem "arcane" to him is of liveliest interest to thousands of other better informed readers. As for his objection to the word "Canadian" in connection with the *University of Toronto Quarterly* or *Queen's,* what about the *New Yorker?* Isn't that even more localised as a name? Joking apart, his remarks struck me as smarty, and painfully provincial, and, as an American, I am registering my disagreement and protest.

MARINE LELAND,
Northampton, Massachusetts.

* * *

I hope you pay no attention to Dwight Macdonald and go ahead being as Canadian as you wish. Macdonald, after all, writes for a somewhat provincially-titled and provincially-directed magazine called *The New Yorker.*

RUSSEL B. NYE, DIRECTOR,
Division of Languages and Literature, Michigan State University.

CANADIAN LITERATURE - 1959

A CHECKLIST EDITED BY INGLIS F. BELL

ENGLISH-CANADIAN

compiled by Inglis F. Bell

anthologies

BARBER, MARY and FLORA MCPHERSON, eds. *Christmas in Canada.* Toronto, Dent.
BIRD, WILL R., ed. *Atlantic Anthology.* Toronto, McClelland & Stewart.
WILSON, MILTON, ed. *Recent Canadian Verse;* selected and edited with general introduction. Kingston, Ont., Jackson Press.

fiction

BEATTIE, JEANN. *Behold the Hour.* Toronto, Ryerson.
BODSWORTH, FRED. *The Strange One.* New York, Dodd, Mead.
BRUCE, CHARLES. *The Township of Time.* Toronto, Macmillan.
BUELL, JOHN. *The Pyx.* Toronto, Ambassador.
CALLAGHAN, MORLEY. *Morley Callaghan's Stories.* Toronto, Macmillan.
CHRISTIE, ROBERT. *The Trembling Land.* Toronto, Doubleday.
CLARK, GREGORY. *The Best of Gregory Clark.* Toronto, Ryerson.
CORNISH, JOHN. *Olga.* Toronto, Macmillan.
DENNY, A. DE COURCY. *Swings and Roundabouts;* a Collection of Stories. New York, Greenwich Book Publishers.
HAILEY, ARTHUR. *The Final Diagnosis.* Toronto, Doubleday.
HAMBLETON, RONALD. *Every Man Is an Island.* Toronto, Nelson, Foster & Scott.
HILLIARD, JAN. *Dove Cottage.* Toronto, Nelson, Foster & Scott.
IRWIN, GRACE LILLIAN. *In Little Place.* Toronto, Ryerson.
KIRIAK, ILLIA. *Sons of the Soil.* Toronto, Ryerson.
Klanak Islands: Eight Short Stories. Vancouver, Klanak Press.
MCCOURT, EDWARD. *Walk Through the Valley.* Toronto, McClelland & Stewart.
MACLENNAN, HUGH. *The Watch That Ends the Night.* Toronto, Macmillan.
MCNAMEE, JAMES. *Florencia Bay.* Toronto, McClelland & Stewart.
REYNOLDS, HELEN DICKSON. *He Will Return.* Toronto, Ryerson.
RICHLER, MORDECAL. *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz.* London, André Deutsch.
RITCHIE, CICERO THEODORE. *Black Angels.* New York, Abelard-Schuman.
ROY, KATHERINE. *The Gentle Fraud.* Toronto, McClelland & Stewart.

SANDERSON, DOUGLAS. *Cry Wolfram.* London, Secker & Warburg.
SHIPLEY, NAN. *The Scarlet Lily.* Toronto, Ryerson.
SLUMAN, NORMA. *Blackfoot Crossing.* Toronto, Ryerson.
STOREY, ARTHUR G. *Prairie Harvest.* Toronto, Ryerson.
WATSON, SHEILA. *The Double Hook.* Toronto, McClelland & Stewart.
YOUNG, PATRICIA. *Half Past Yesterday.* London, Ward, Lock.
YOUNG, PHYLLIS BRETT. *Psyche.* Toronto, Longmans, Green.

poetry

BARNARD, SYLVIA. *The Timeless Forest.* Montreal, Contact Press. (McGill Poetry Series, 4).
BATES, RONALD. *The Wandering World.* Toronto, Macmillan.
BAYER, MARY ELIZABETH. *Faces of Love.* Toronto, Ryerson. (Ryerson Poetry Chap-Book 181).
CARPENTER, EDMUND, ed. *Anerca.* Toronto, Dent.
COGSWELL, FRED. *Descent From Eden.* Toronto, Ryerson.
—. *The Stunted Strong.* Fredericton, University of New Brunswick.
COLLIE, MICHAEL. *Poems.* Toronto, Ryerson. (Ryerson Poetry Chap-Book 182).
COLOMBO, JOHN ROBERT, ed. *Ten Poems.* Toronto, Privately Printed.
DOWNES, G. V. *Lost Diver.* Fredericton, University of New Brunswick.
GUSTAFSON, RALPH, ed. *The Penguin Book of Canadian Verse.* Toronto, W. H. Smith Wholesale (Penguin).
HARDEN, VERNA LOVEDAY. *In Her Mind Carrying.* Toronto, Ryerson. (Ryerson Poetry Chap-Book 183)
JOHNSTON, GEORGE. *The Cruising Auk.* Toronto, Oxford University Press.
KAYE. LESLIE L., ed. *The McGill Chap-Book.* Toronto, Ryerson.
LAYTON, IRVING. *A Red Carpet for the Sun.* Toronto, McClelland & Stewart.
LOCHHEAD, DOUGLAS. *The Heart is Fire.* Toronto, Ryerson. (Ryerson Poetry Chap-Book 184).
MILLER, PETER. *Sonata for Frog and Man.* Toronto, Contact Press.
PURDY, ALFRED. *The Crafte So Longe to Lerne.* Toronto, Ryerson. (Ryerson Poetry Chap-Book 186).
—. *Emu, Remember!* Fredericton, University of New Brunswick.
RASHLEY, R. E. *Moon Lake and Other Poems.* Toronto, Ryerson. (Ryerson Poetry Chap-Book 187).
ROBBINS, R. CYNEWULF. *Out of Solitude.* London, Linden Press.
ROBERTS, DOROTHY. *In Star and Stalk.* Toronto, Emblem Books.
THOMSON, THERESA E. and DON W. *River and Realm.* Toronto, Ryerson. (Ryerson Poetry Chap-Book 185).
WALTON, GEORGE. *The Wayward Queen.* Toronto, Contact Press.
WYLE, FLORENCE. *Poems.* Toronto, Ryerson. (Ryerson Poetry Chap-Book 188).

essays

BERTON, PIERRE. *Just Add Water and Stir.* Toronto, McClelland & Stewart.
HAIG-BROWN, RODERICK. *Fisherman's Summer.* Toronto, Collins.
MASSEY, VINCENT. *Speaking of Canada.* Toronto, Macmillan.
SCOTT, JACK. *From Our Town.* Toronto, McClelland & Stewart.

humour

NICOL, ERIC. *In Darkest Domestica.* Toronto, Ryerson.

biography

BEAVERBROOK, LORD. *Friends.* London, Heinemann.
CAMPBELL, ROBERT E. *I Would Do It Again.* Toronto, Ryerson.
CARELESS, J. M. S. *Brown of the Globe.* Vol. 1, The Voices of Upper Canada, 1818-1859. Toronto, Macmillan.
COLLIER, ERIC. *Three Against the Wilderness.* Toronto, Smithers & Bonellie.
CROWE, JOHN CONGDON. *In the Days of the Windjammers.* Toronto, Ryerson.
ECCLES, W. J. *Frontenac: the Courtier Governor.* Toronto, McClelland & Stewart.
GODSELL, JEAN W. *I Was No Lady.* Toronto, Ryerson.
GOLDBLOOM, ALTON. *Small Patients.* Toronto, Longmans, Green.
GREEN, HENRY GORDON. *The Silver Dart;* the Authentic Story of Hon. J. A. McCurdy, Canada's First Pilot. Fredericton, Brunswick Press.
LEVINE, I. E. *The Discoverer of Insulin: Dr. Frederick G. Banting.* Toronto, Copp Clark.
MCDOUGALL, ROBERT L. *Our Living Tradition.* Toronto, University of Toronto Press.
MCNAUGHT, KENNETH. *A Prophet in Politics: A Biography of J. S. Woodsworth.* Toronto, University of Toronto Press.
MOODIE, SUSANNA. *Life in the Clearings.* Edited and with an Introduction by Robert L. McDougall. Toronto, Macmillan.
MOWAT, FARLEY MCGILL. *The Dog Who Wouldn't Be.* New York, Pyramid Books.
NEWMAN, PETER C. *Flame of Power.* Toronto, Longmans Green.
NOBLE, IRIS. *The Doctor Who Dared, William Osler.* Toronto, Copp Clark.
PHILIPS, BLUEBELL. *Something Always Turned Up.* Toronto, Ryerson.
ROHER, MARTIN. *Days of Living: The Journal of Martin Roher.* Toronto, Ryerson.
SANDERSON, CHARLES R., ed. *The Arthur Papers, Volume III.* Toronto, University of Toronto Press.
STEWART, MARGARET and DORIS FRENCH. *Ask No Quarter.* Toronto, Longmans Green.

juveniles

BEATTIE, EARL. *The Day Slippery Ran Away.* Toronto, McClelland & Stewart.

BOYLE, JOYCE. *Bobby's Neighbors.* Toronto, Welch.

CHAPLAN, LUCILLE. *Elephant for Rent.* Toronto, Little, Brown.

CRAIG, JOHN. *The Long Return.* Toronto, McClelland & Stewart.

DAEM, MRS. MARY. *Lucky Lure at Arrow Point.* London, Abelard-Schuman.

DICKIE, DONALDA. *My First History of Canada.* Toronto, Dent.

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