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CANADIAN LITERATURE No. 35

Winter, 1968

WYNDHAM LEWIS IN CANADA

Articles

BY J. STANLEY MURPHY, C.S.B., ANNE WYNDHAM LEWIS, C. J. FOX,
SHEILA WATSON, LORNE PIERCE, W. K. ROSE, WYNDHAM LEWIS

Reviews

BY MIRIAM WADDINGTON, FRANCES FRAZER, A. W. PURDY,
GEORGE WHALLEY, ROBIN SKELTON, W. H. NEW, MAURICE HODGSON,
ABRAHAM ROGATNICK, ROBERT KUBICEK

A QUARTERLY OF
CRITICISM AND REVIEW

Canadian poets are playing an important role in helping Canadians to understand their nation and its peoples. It is our hope that this worthwhile work will continue in the years ahead. Among recent Canadian poets we have published are Michael Collie: *The House*; Robert Finch: *Silverthorn Bush*; Richard Outram: *Exsultate Jubilate*; Michael Parr: *The Green Fig Tree*; David Wevill: *A Christ of the Ice Floes*. Should we be considering your work?

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contributors

The principal items in this special WYNDHAM LEWIS issue are of course the two unpublished pieces by Lewis himself. The article on Canada — the title is ours — and the synopsis of the never-written novel, *Hill 100*, were both produced during his wartime stay in this country. They are published with the permission and co-operation of the author's widow, ANNE WYNDHAM LEWIS, who has also written, in "The Hotel", a remembered impression of life in Canada. The originals of both the pieces by Wyndham Lewis are now in the Cornell University Library, who also have given permission for their publication in this special issue.

FATHER J. STANLEY MURPHY, C.S.B., who writes his recollections of Wyndham Lewis at Windsor, was formerly Associate Professor of English and Registrar of Assumption College, where for a while Lewis taught and lectured. He was also the founder of the Christian Culture Series which first brought Lewis to Windsor as a visiting lecturer, and he is still Chairman of the Series.

C. J. FOX is a Montreal journalist, long interested in Lewis and his writings, who is now living and working in England.

SHEILA WATSON, who teaches English at the University of Alberta, is also a novelist, author of *The Double Hook*. She has made Wyndham Lewis a subject of particular study, and intends eventually to publish a full study of his Canadian connections.

The late LORNE PIERCE was for many years Editor-in-Chief of the Ryerson Press, and a critic of distinction. His letter is reproduced by permission of his estate and of Professor Rose, the recipient, who kindly drew it to our attention.

W. K. ROSE himself is one of the most distinguished of Lewis scholars, and edited *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, which were published in 1963. He teaches English at Vassar College.

For various reasons — space and the accidents of the postal system — we have been unable to print in this issue two further articles which we had originally planned to include. They are "The Last European" by HUGH KENNER, and "Journey out of Anguish" by JOHN REID. These articles, which cast further illumination on Lewis's life in Canada and his reactions to it, will appear as soon as possible in later issues of *Canadian Literature*.

MOMACO REVISITED

WYNDHAM LEWIS had a double claim to glory. Among the seminal writers in English of the period between the two Great Wars, he appeared as fourth to the great trio of Pound, Eliot and Joyce; Eliot in fact described him as "the greatest prose writer of my generation." As the founder of Vorticism and a fine painter in his own right, he was also one of the leaders of British avant garde painting during the same era. Yet for much of his life Lewis lived under an obstinate eclipse, struggling in poverty, officially unrecognized, and never granted the critical acclaim which he and his admirers regarded as his due. The works of Lewis's friends and contemporaries have been widely published and widely read; Eliot and Joyce are among the standbys of freshman English reading in every North American university, and anything Pound ever wrote seems now to be standard equipment for the undergraduate poet. But I have never yet seen a single passage of Wyndham Lewis's writings in a college anthology or reading list, while, until the last year or two, Lewis's books have been mostly out of print and hard to find. True, there has recently been a minor flurry of interest in Lewis, but it still hardly balances the generation of neglect.

In that generation of neglect Canada plays a special role. Lewis's associations with Canada weave a curiously persistent thread through his life. He was born in Canadian waters, when his father's yacht was berthed offshore at Amherst, Nova Scotia. During the First World War he became, partly on the strength of this tenuous link, a Canadian war artist. And then, at the beginning of World War II, he found himself trapped in Toronto; the English currency regulations did not allow him to obtain from London the money he needed to pay his passage home, and his Canadian earnings never gave him a sufficient surplus for

the fare. Between Canada and St. Louis, Missouri, he hovered till the war ended and he could return to Notting Hill and his last great fight, against blindness.

Lewis reached Canada after a disillusioning period in New York, where he found himself ignored and unable to make even a tiny living from either writing or painting. By contrast, his first days in Canada were unexpectedly encouraging. Though he found Toronto "a mournful Scottish version of America", he did some CBC talks, picked up a small contract from the Ryerson Press, and sold a few drawings. In retrospect it seems a wretched harvest for a man of Lewis's quality and standing, but great artists have often survived by such meagre pickings, and Lewis at the time was able to believe that at last he was on the upgrade. "After the winter of my discontent in the long and chilly shades of that statue of liberty, I feel as if I had come up out of a coalmine or a dungeon into the fresh air again."

Within a year he was disillusioned. "Things have come to an awful mess here," he wrote. "If I don't do something to break out of the net, I shall end my days in a Toronto flophouse." His income had fallen sharply after the novelty of his presence wore off, and often he and his wife were on the edge of starvation, living from hand to mouth in a cheap and raffish residential hotel, the original of the Hotel Blundell of *Self Condemned*. The University of Toronto almost ignored him, and most of the writers who lived in Toronto during the war years seem to have been unaware of his presence. The only literary names mentioned in his letter from the Toronto period are those of Lorne Pierce, who befriended him, and Douglas Le Pan; A. Y. Jackson was almost alone among Canadian painters in trying to make Lewis feel welcome in the country of his birth. Finally, in 1943, a tiny Catholic college, Assumption at Kingston, gave him a modestly paid but welcome teaching post; there Marshall McLuhan and Felix Giovanelli sought him out and got him lecturing and painting assignments at St. Louis.

On the whole, Canadian hospitality had been shamefully scanty. Lewis interpreted his situation as the result of Anglophobia and of the resentment of mediocrities in high academic positions towards their intellectual betters. One of the aims of this special issue of *Canadian Literature* is to give, through contributions by people who knew Lewis or have studied his works closely, and through hitherto unpublished writings by Lewis himself while in Canada, some idea of what actually happened to him here. We have no intention of claiming Lewis as more than peripherally Canadian; it seems, however, that there is a place in *Canadian Literature* for the discussion of an episode in Canada which is of great interest in the larger context of Anglo-Saxon literary history.

I suspect the neglect Lewis experienced in Canada, though we must accept the shame, was a particular aspect of his general fate. He was not one of those writers whose bestselling fame, in the age before our own, assured them a welcome anywhere. His works were, in fact, unpopular among those who read popular successes, and impenetrable to those who were disinclined to make reading an instrument of thought. There was little superficially attractive in either his novels or his critical writings, nothing in the general sense poetic, scanty space for the softer feelings to cling. Lewis was, of course, among the great satirical novelists of his period. *The Apes of God*, *The Revenge for Love*, mock with superb savagery the literary and political shames and pretences of the 1930's in England, and they have a universal insight into the bogus that carries them beyond their own age. What helped to make these books so inaccessible to the general reading public was the elusiveness of any emotion except anger; Lewis tore away the masks from the people he satirized and revealed to us hollow men, without either true thoughts or true feelings. On his own face, however, he kept the mask in place. His favourite mask was that of the Enemy; it was the title of one of the magazines he edited, but it was also a guise which he himself liked to assume — the enemy of the fake and the insincere. It is true that Lewis attacked the hollow men, the men of sham feeling, because he himself respected true feeling and grieved to find it so rare. It is also true that the masks he himself wore were there to protect his own over-sensitive feelings. But this was not very evident to the average reader, and Lewis, who lacked the facile talent to please as well as the inclination to exploit the emotions, remained a writer for the few, a writer's writer.

Another complexity which further removed Lewis from the average reader was the apparent ambiguity with which he viewed his creations. As human beings they were hollow; as creations of art, might they not be complete? Lewis in fact always saw in art the breaking down of life, its reconstruction in a static and crystalline form. The essence of Vorticism was the concept of the still, unmoving centre. This was why Lewis attacked Bergsonian and other similar philosophies of time; this is why, in *Tarr*, the hero explains to his mistress that "deadness . . . is the first condition of art," and goes on to say: "The lines and masses of the statue are its soul. No restless, quick, flame-like ego is imagined for the *inside* of it. . . . This is another condition of art: *to have no inside*, nothing you cannot see. Instead, then, of being something impelled like an independent machine by a little egoistic fire inside, it lives soullessly and deadly by its frontal lines and masses."

THIS BRINGS US to *Self Condemned*, which is and is not a Canadian novel — indeed, is and is not a novel. It is on one level autobiographical, drawing much from Lewis's experiences in Canada, seen with a highly subjective eye. It paints a portrait of Canada, but the portrait is rather like those coldly hieratic images he painted of his literary contemporaries. Most of the Canadians who read *Self Condemned* find the portrait unrecognizable, "a bad likeness".

Undoubtedly it is the multiplicity and mutability of its aspects that makes *Self Condemned* uncongenial to so many readers. Viewed from the naturalistic standpoint, it seems a strange mixture of heavy and rather amateur social documentation, authorial comment, and likely catastrophes heightened to melodrama. But what has to be borne in mind, even on this level, is that it is an exile's novel, and the reality of exiles is always subjective — in this case the obsessive, distorted life of ex-Professor Harding and his wife Hester in the hotel suite where wartime restrictions on travel and Canadian hostility conspire to maroon them in the mythical city of Momaco.

This is one aspect of *Self Condemned* which perhaps only exiles, or those who have been able to place themselves into convincing imaginary exile, can completely understand. When I first read *Self Condemned* ten years ago I had recently emerged from a situation very similar to that of Lewis in wartime Toronto. Like him, originally a Canadian by fact of birth and little else, I had returned to Canada, lived through three years of poverty, uncongenial work and slow literary recognition, and had just won a measure of liberation when *Self Condemned* appeared. My mood was still largely that of the exile, and I easily became immersed in this subjective world of another exile. Today, though my memories still enable me to understand this aspect of Lewis's book, I see it more distantly, and am aware of the distortions of actuality; I have, in other words, ceased to be an exile, and I know that, though some of Lewis's insights about Canada are startlingly correct, others are equally startlingly wide of the mark.

Such a change of attitude towards the superficial content of *Self Condemned* perhaps makes it more easy to see clearly its other aspects in which, like mirror writing, Lewis's view of art and life is symbolized. The bleak tragedy of Harding and his wife, the steady attrition of their personalities in the hotel room that, through their poverty and lack of friends, becomes their microcosmic world, seems to have a real and solid power, until one remembers what a deceptive compassion on the author's part has masked, that Harding — though he shares his

creator's view of history, his hatred of the state, his anger at the time philosophers — is really another Lewisian hollow man and so a projection of the Vorticist viewpoint that art becomes real only in the moment of suspended life. It is on this level that the novel moves into shape. The Canadian scene, its *faits divers* observed and preserved as meticulously as butterflies dead and pinned on cork, takes its place in the grand mosaic. The best known, most spectacular passage of the book is also its key. The hotel burns to a shell in the middle of the harsh Canadian winter and is afterwards unrecognizable under the stupendous castle of ice that has been constructed by the hoses of the firemen.

What René and Hester gazed into was nothing to do with what had been the Hotel Blundell. It was now an enormous cave, full of mighty icicles as much as thirty feet long, and as thick as a tree, suspended from the skeleton of a roof. Below, one looked down into an icy labyrinth; here and there vistas leading the eye on to other caverns: and tunnels ending in mirrors, it seemed. . . . It was a cave in which no polar bear could inhabit, in which the Great Auk could not lay its egg, and into which no ex-guest could enter with his ice-pick, to search for diamonds which, in his breathless exit, he had had to leave behind. It was a sinister, upside-down forest of ice, rooted in air; a piece of sub-polar absurdity which would stand there till the first thaws.

As the hotel becomes transformed, so in their negative apotheoses do both Harding and Hester. Despairing of ever leaving Canada, Hester throws herself under a lorry, and René is called to inspect her body. He finds himself

. . . looking down on a much-soiled collection of objects. They were arranged in the most paradoxical way. Like a *graffito* the essentials were picked out. He recognized the low-bottomed silhouette of a female figure, the clothes shapeless and black with blood. Slightly to one side there was a pair of legs in horrible detachment, like a pair of legs for a doll upon a factory table, before they have been stuck on to the body. At the top, was the long forward-straining, as it were yearning neck. Topmost was the blood-stained head of Hester, lying on its side. The poor hair was full of mud, which flattened it upon the skull. Her eye protruded: it was strange it should still have the strength to go peering on in the darkness.

Repeatedly the image of Hester as *graffito* returns to René; in other words, she has undergone the same dislocation as life must suffer for the work of art to come into being; in René's mind she has become the equivalent of a work of art. As for René himself, it is reserved for him, when all within is clearly dead, to approximate, in the last clause of the novel (which by now has revealed itself as a determined anti-novel), the condition of the ice-hotel:

EDITORIAL

. . . and the Faculty had no idea that it was a glacial shell of a man who had come to live among them, mainly because they were themselves unfilled with anything more than a little academic stuffing.

But the glacial shell, with no content, accords precisely with the definition of the work of art in *Tarr*. René and Hester, and the world they belong to, symbolized by the Hotel, have all been received into the timeless and static world of art, the still centre of the Vortex, the dominion of the Enemy.

WYNDHAM LEWIS AT WINDSOR

J. Stanley Murphy, C.S.B.

IN THE LATE SUMMER of 1942, while I was visiting St. Michael's College, Toronto, I walked over to Sherbourne Street, rang the bell at the Tudor Hotel, and asked for Wyndham Lewis. I was greeted with a quiet reserve, which receded at once when Lewis heard me say that Cecil J. Eustace, author and educational director for the publishers, J. M. Dent & Sons, had suggested that I should invite him to participate in the Christian Culture series of lectures and presentations which I had founded in 1934 and which were centred mainly on Assumption College, Windsor.¹ C. J. Eustace, who had met Wyndham Lewis in Dents' office in connection with the possibility of his somehow receiving royalties due on his books from Britain, had told me that he would be a most valuable lecturer. He had also inadvertently given me an insight into Lewis's whimsicality, which was liable to leave the listener puzzled for a moment. Knowing that Eustace, a convert to Catholicism, was an enthusiastic student and admirer of Jacques Maritain, Lewis asked: "What kind of a Catholic are you? Do you follow the Popes and the Councils, or do you follow Maritain?"

On my first encounter with Wyndham Lewis, our conversation was necessarily brief and serious. He asked if the works of Maritain and Etienne Gilson were prominent in our philosophy course, and obviously he felt they should be. He mentioned some of his Catholic friends in England, and said: "I am afraid that my mother was a 'bad' Catholic." He was most interested in the Christian Century Series and in Assumption College. Before I left, he agreed to come to Windsor the following January 2nd and give a lecture on Art. I suggested that I would

try to get him a lecture at Marygrove College, Detroit, on the occasion of his Christian Century series lecture, and promised to write him as soon as I returned to Windsor.

I did so, and it was on the 12th September, 1942, that he answered me from the Tudor Hotel:

Dear Father Murphy,

Except that I have been very much driven for the last week or so, I am afraid I have no valid excuse for having been so long in answering and I apologize very much. But I *can* say that I have had to hunt high and low for the enclosed photograph, which is the best I can find. It is a Press photograph taken in '39. Will it be all right?

Please take care of it. If you give it to a photographer, insist that he look after it and return it to you! As soon as you need it no longer, please register it back to me. — Apologies, again, for what must seem extra fussiness. But I require the whole of this photograph for subsequent use in a book.

As to the subject of the lecture, I was reading in *La Nouvelle Relève* the other day (a Fr. Canadian review) a defense on the part of the editor for his respectful treatment of André Gide. It occurred to me that a very interesting address could be written upon the *relation of art to religion*. I think that the vicar of the church in which Bach's music was first played would be apt to look a little askance at one of his parishioners who expressed himself in terms bordering on veneration for this terrific music — which is a mate of the frescos on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel at Rome, by Michael Angelo. The "Air for G. Strings" is like the hurrying Jehovah and the unawakened Adam, reaching out his hand for that *touch* which will bring him to life. Now I think that there is a great deal to be said upon this subject: and if that strikes you as a line of discourse which will interest your audience, shall I begin pondering that? *The Relation of Art to Religion* it could be called, or *Religion and the Artist*.

Finally, I must now write to St. Mary's Grove, and for them I should choose some other subject. It is agreed, is it not, that you give me a fee of one hundred dollars? I don't know quite what to say about that to St. Mary's Grove, but suppose I had better just ask what they would give me.

With my kindest regards, and greatly looking forward to seeing you again.

Yours sincerely,

Wyndham Lewis.

Though he managed to misplace the record of the January 1943 date for his lecture, he wrote in sufficient time to re-confirm it, and I recall meeting him at the N.Y.C. railroad station in Windsor. Soon he was made comfortable in the

best suite at Assumption College, and dined in the old refectory with the faculty; the students sat at tables beyond the arches which symbolically separated them, but not their voices, which at times became somewhat tumultuous. Just before Lewis was driven to the Vanity Theatre in Windsor's main street for his lecture, he complained of a cinder that had lodged in his eye and was exceedingly concerned. However, it took only a few minutes for Sister St. Desmond, the infirmarian, to remove the impediment, to Lewis's great joy.

His lecture, "Religion and the Artist", was given to the usual Canadian-American audience which attended the Christian Culture series, and dealt to a great extent with Rouault as the Painter of Original Sin. He read from a typed and hand-corrected manuscript, once pausing to remark: "I cannot seem to make out what I have written here: seems like islands of light and dark." He told me that he had ceased to try extemporizing in lectures some years before; had found that it made him too nervous. He mentioned one occasion when several speakers were present and that "amiable buffoon, G.B.S." so successfully played to the audience that, without a written text, it threw one off.

THOUGH ASSUMPTION COLLEGE then had less than 7% of the student-population that flourishes on the university campus today, it was the decision of the President, Very Reverend V. J. Guinan, C.S.B., and of us who were his advisers to invite Wyndham Lewis as a Special Author-Artist to lecture for a year; the Christian Culture series offered to subsidize a portion of the expenses. Lewis's enthusiasm in accepting the project is evident in the two letters to me which appear in W. K. Rose's collection, *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*. He wrote of "being enormously obliged . . . for bringing to so happy and expeditious conclusion this plan . . . cannot imagine for myself more congenial surroundings . . . really very great thanks, and I am looking forward in every way to coming among you again, to teach alongside of you and your colleagues."²

Shortly afterwards an unforeseen accident increased the blight which hung over this period of Lewis's life in Toronto. On the 4th March, 1943, he wrote to me:

My dear Father Murphy,

Thank you for your letter — as soon as the influenza bugs have been driven off and my brain is a little clearer, I will write again. This is just a note to say that 2 weeks ago last Monday the Tudor Hotel burnt down. As it was 30 below

zero at the time, my wife got a very bad chill. We went to a neighbouring hotel. I nursed her and got the infection myself. We are back in the rear part of the Tudor now (it is quasi-impossible to find an apart. in Toronto at present). Both feel momentarily pretty rotten. By next week the weather will have grown more clement, probably, and I shall be myself again. As I said, this is just a note to acknowledge your letter. More shortly.

Yours sincerely,

Wyndham Lewis.

In May 1943, Wyndham Lewis made a special one-day trip to Windsor at my suggestion "to play a part in home-finding", an almost insuperable task in those war years. We were not entirely successful. However, when the Lewises came in mid-June, before Summer School, they stayed a short time in a local hotel, and then sub-let for the summer — from a soldier Lewis met on the street — a pleasant place in the Royal Apartments, on Ellis Street, near Oullette. To John Burgess at this time he described Windsor as "a very agreeable little city, and quite charmingly arranged . . . Oullette is a handsome street, with the Detroit skyscrapers at the end of it."³

In late June Summer School began and lasted for six weeks. Out of interest and respect, I attended all of Wyndham Lewis's classes. The content of his course — Philosophy of Literature — involved the philosophic principles embodied in various works of fiction, from Tolstoy's *War and Peace* to novels by Steinbeck and Hemingway. Most of the class were teachers, many of them nuns, though George Haddad, the Canadian concert pianist, and an Irish Oblate Father were among others who attended this five-hours-a-week course. I can still hear Lewis's resonant voice so often echoing Hemingway's title, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, though always — I am sure unconsciously — he said "For Whom the Bells Toll." A phrase he sometimes used, and illustrated effectively from the works being discussed was: "A Conscience for Reality." After his first class or so, as we walked across the campus, he confided that teaching nuns was a new experience to him. He found them agreeable and likeable, but wondered how much background in contemporary fiction many of them would have. In a letter to John Burgess of the 17th July, he comments at some length on his course, "My priestly colleagues are pleasant fellows," he adds. "How good the religious disciplines are for people."⁴ On the 17th August, again to John Burgess, he writes: "The priests are very pleasant and do not mind my not being a catholic. They accept me as a well-wisher: they respect the principles of others . . . they have treated me with great kindness, as also the nuns."⁵

I have observed that sometimes Lewis would toss out a whimsical remark, perhaps intended to puzzle the listener on matters that he had not entirely settled in his own mind. On campus there was a well-known author, Father H. A. Reinhold, who had early been expelled from Germany by the Nazis and later hounded by them from Switzerland. His course in Liturgy drew many comments, foreshadowing much that has happened since Vatican II. Listening to two nuns discussing the course and emphasizing certain changes advocated by Father Reinhold, Lewis remarked: "What is Father Reinhold trying to do — throw us all back into the Greek Church?"

Lewis brought not only a vast background of experience but also fresh studies into his classes. He was a presence whom no intelligent person could ignore. He had great respect for the moral virtues, but an equal respect for the intellectual virtues. As delicately as a surgeon, he would separate the spurious in treating a book like *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. He knew Spain, and he tried to keep his own "conscience for reality" pure.

During July 1943, Marshall McLuhan and Felix Giovanelli came to Windsor from St. Louis University to see Wyndham Lewis. Their meeting was a memorable evening. The young professors were keenly intelligent admirers of their host's genius. Lewis was very happy. He discussed his courses, the projected Heywood Broun Memorial Lectures that fall, and a plethora of other items. Marshall McLuhan had long been acquainted with Lewis's painting and writing, and later, in 1944, he contributed a penetratingly brilliant essay, simply entitled "Lewis", to the issue of *St. Louis University Studies* entitled "Key Thinkers and Modern Thought."⁶ I recall one incident of that evening. Lewis, in the middle of a long explanation, left the room for a moment to Giovanelli, McLuhan and myself. When he returned, he hesitated to recapture the train of thought. We were all interested. Dr. Giovanelli beckoned, respectfully: "Please continue your paragraph!"

Later in 1943 Lewis was fortunate enough to discover a first-floor apartment, with a large western exposure window, along the Detroit River; it was next to a park, had a good view of the Ambassador Bridge and Detroit, and was about fifteen minutes' walk from Assumption.

Early that fall Bishop (then Monsignor) Fulton J. Sheen opened the Christian Culture series in Detroit. At his room at the Sheraton Cadillac, Lewis did a black pencil sketch of him. In the long conversation that followed, Monsignor Sheen told Lewis that he would be proud if he could see how well-marked his own copy of *Time and Western Man* was, that in his classes he frequently quoted

from the book, and that Lewis was the first writer he had encountered who pinpointed the extravagances of the Time-Philosophy. They got on well. Later, Lewis said to me: "He is bright and able."

The Heywood Broun Memorial lectures, twelve in number, were another outgrowth of the Christian Culture series, and in 1943 they were delivered by Wyndham Lewis under the general title: "Concept of Liberty from the Founding Fathers of the U.S.A. until Now." They provided the basis for his book, *America and Cosmic Man*.

One evening Waldemar Gurian, the distinguished European author of *Bolshevism, Theory and Practice* (1931), then a Professor of Political Science and founder of the *Review of Politics* at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, stopped overnight in Windsor on his way to London, Ontario. Miss Pauline Bondy, then at Windsor and now head of the Department of French at Vanier C.I., held a small gathering in his honour at her home near the college. Dr. Gurian, the Hon. Paul Martin and I were there; Lewis came later. Gurian, short, all intellect and unconsciously abrupt, shook hands with Lewis, and — without premeditated malice I am sure — reminisced: "I first heard of Wyndham Lewis as I talked with Carl Schmidt, author of *The Necessity of Politics*, in a Berlin cafe in the late twenties. Schmidt said: 'Democracy is dying, according to Wyndham Lewis'." Lewis remained carefully silent during the evening, taking no chances of further misinterpretation.

That Lewis feared misinterpretation (what intelligent person does not have some concern for the effects of war psychosis!) was evident. He was disturbed when his corner meat-market owner confided to him that Father Murphy had over the years brought some rather suspect people to Windsor, such as Prince Hubertus Zu Loewenstein, the anti-Nazi German exile who had been pro-Loyalist during the Spanish Civil War. There was also loose gossip about Lewis himself in his apartment house by people who had never read a line of his writings, never seen his or any other paintings, and had never before encountered a great artist or author.

Later that fall Jacques Maritain, second recipient of the Annual Christian Culture Award Gold Medal of Assumption College, revisited us to give a special lecture entitled "Moral Philosophy". Lewis was intrigued by it, and wished that many others could have heard it. During the afternoon before the lecture he did a pencil sketch of Maritain and was photographed with him; the photograph appears in Lewis's *Rude Assignment* (1950).

About the same time, Lewis asked me to pose for a colour pastel. I greatly

enjoyed the walks along the river to his apartment and the conversation during the various sittings. He often mentioned the difficulty of painting people who knew nothing of art and expected a photograph. To see him work was a joy, and I paid him the tribute of total confidence, never asking to see the result while the sessions were in progress. In 1956 this pastel was shown in the "Wyndham Lewis and Vorticism" exhibition at the Tate Gallery, and it was also reproduced at that time in the *Illustrated London News*.

Very early in 1944 I recall meeting Lewis in the street near the Prince Edward Hotel and learning that their Christmas had been anything but placid; their dog had been dangerously ill. A few days later, Lewis told me that the dog had died. The significance of the loss deepened many years later when I read this passage from a letter to Felix Giovanelli:

... The death of our hirsute gremlin had left an ugly gap . . . People never forgive you for possessing more of anything than themselves — more reputation is a sore offence; and if you put yourself in their power they can make you tolerably uncomfortable. By coming to Canada — in the middle of a world-war — I did that. And my wife has had to pay as well as myself. So this small creature, which stood for all that was benevolent in the universe, sweetened the bitter medicine for her.⁷

During the fall of 1943 and the following winter Lewis repeated his course in the Philosophy of Literature to students in the regular seminars, and originally intended to continue until the end of the spring. However, thanks to McLuhan and Giovanelli, opportunities for lecturing and painting developed at St. Louis, and when he left us in February 1944, I took over his small class and continued until the end of the term.

FROM MY MANY CONVERSATIONS with Lewis, I recall, among other opinions, the following:

He regretted that his friend Ezra Pound, such a splendid poet and critic, should have been so wild on political and racial matters. He predicted that eventually Ezra would receive "the fool's pardon" for his having broadcast for the "Boss", Mussolini. Lewis said that he could never be a Communist. He felt that, without ever taking a vow of poverty, he had chosen to remain poor rather than, out of attachment to wealth, producing lies to please. Lewis said he never forgot the impression that one Hindu made on him when he came to congratulate him for writing *Pale Face*. The Hindu said: "As far as I know, no one in my family or

ancestry has ever destroyed any kind of life." Lewis objected to the naïve classification of Morley Callaghan as the "Canadian Hemingway", and praised Callaghan for the fresh originality of his collection of stories, *Now That April's Here*. He liked Bruce Hutchison's *The Unknown Country*, and quoted from it in defending the Canadian painter, A. Y. Jackson. He was amused when occasional letters came to him, intended for D. B. Wyndham Lewis, biographer and originator of a famous newspaper column under the pseudonym "Beachcomber." He felt that D. B. was finally persuaded to insert his full name by his publisher in order to embarrass Wyndham Lewis. Sometimes a fan of D. B. would write to Wyndham Lewis, after reading one of the latter's books, and say in effect: "You are not your own dear self."

I recall spending one evening with the Lewises, all in good spirits, when Mrs. Lewis mentioned that one of her relatives had become a Catholic and had moved from England, and that she herself had almost become a Catholic. "You should not have said it that way," Lewis remarked, with a benevolent twinkle, "It's like saying that you almost caught the train."

On another occasion, at one of his Heywood Broun lectures, there was a great deal of coughing, certainly involuntary. Partly for dramatic relief, but also half-seriously, Lewis said: "I am afraid the room will soon fill with germs, and we shall all go down." My recollection is that after that the coughing got under control.

Not long after his departure from Windsor, on the 2nd May, 1944, Lewis wrote me from the Coronada Hotel in St. Louis:

Dear Father Murphy,

Constantly since my arrival here I have been on the point of writing you, but realising I had nothing definite to tell you, I refrained. Now I am able to announce *this* at least: I have secured an oil-portrait, as well as several well-paid drawings. After a brief struggle on arrival I succumbed to McL. and went to the Plaza. The expense was terrific. However, I may have to thank its dismal splendours for some of my success. What happens next I do not know. I am bound to you and have already overstayed my 'leave'. On the other hand, we shall I hope be able to shuffle things round in such a way that I can prolong my stay here and do this work (and almost certainly other work will materialize in the near future): then later, somewhat more in funds than when I departed, return to Windsor and catch up on my indebtedness for February. Some time next week it will be necessary to return to Windsor for 24 hours and we can straighten it out then. It will be much easier to explain things when I turn up. I am distressed about my little class (I got in a bit of one of my lectures at Assumption in my

lecture at Chicago, and it was very effective. The Chicago lectures developed just before I left.) But it can be explained to the class that I am *practicing* instead of *preaching*, for a while, but will return to take up the story later. These things here have to be *snatched at* or they will evaporate. The iron has to be smitten while it is hot (which is the problem; but we can solve it between us.)

Give my love to all my cassocked colleagues: I must pick up that pamphlet on the C.C.F. when I am there. I know that Father LeBel, Father Lee, and Father Garvey, will be glad to hear of my success down here . . . With the most cordial greetings,

Yours,

Wyndham Lewis.

P.S. Re. Hutchins. *Of course* I should be delighted to go to so important a centre as Chicago. As you realise, I cannot myself write to Hutchins. But if you undertook to do so, you would certainly have my permission. The University of Chicago might consider having me there on these terms. To have a practicing artist — someone working, all the time, on the spot — is more useful (and more in consonance with contemporary ideas of education) than a mere routine instruction. I could put aside 2 hours every day in my studio to receive visits of students (or some such period). Once a week I would give a formal lecture on the principles of art and visual understanding. This lecture would have to be prepared and would take a day perhaps. Nevertheless I should have a good deal of time for private work. (You are naturally at liberty to quote this passage if you like.) W.L.

I quoted the passage but was unable to get Lewis into Chicago or any other universities. The idea was twenty years in advance for most places.

It was necessary for Lewis to return to Canada once a month to renew his Visitor's Visa to the U.S.A. Around mid-March he returned for a day, bringing with him an important letter from Marshall McLuhan, and some of McLuhan's writings, which he highly endorsed; this was to lead to McLuhan's joining the faculty of Assumption College for over two years. "Lewis," McLuhan used to say, "is a one-man Gallup Poll." On the same occasion Lewis encountered the Irish poet, Padraic Colum, in the corridor near my office. They had met before in Europe, and they chatted briefly. A few days later, on the 23rd March, Lewis wrote to me from St. Louis.

My dear Father Murphy,

Many tasks have intervened since I got back here, to delay me writing to thank you for your extremely attractive proposal the other day, upon such generous terms: namely to translate the *lecturing* assignment temporarily suspended, into a *painting* assignment . . . I went away with a renewed realization of how benevolent the will was that had opened these possibilities for me of fruitful work and kindly

contacts. For I do wish to say how greatly I have appreciated, too, the friendly co-operation of our colleagues. . . . McL. is delighted to have received your invitation. . . . Remember me to all and sundry: I am sorry my visit was so hurried and that I was unable to have a talk with Fathers Garvey and Le Bel, as well as Father Lee. What a nice chap Padraic Colum is — he gave me a sad account of poor Joyce's last days though Heaven be thanked his wife is safe & provided for in Switzerland.

Yours most cordially,

Wyndham Lewis.

Returning from St. Louis on July 18, 1944, Lewis gave a three-weeks' course on "The A.B.C. of the Visual Arts". I attended most of these classes; so did Marshall McLuhan. On one occasion when a thorny misunderstanding between Lewis and a lay-professor developed, McLuhan reached over to me and whispered: "They're both on the same side." Weeks later, the lay-professor said to me: "I am sorry that I did not understand him at the time; he was perfectly right." After this Summer School course, Lewis worked for five weeks on a series of portraits of former Presidents of Assumption College. He had written earlier from St. Louis: "You will not have to give me the bum's rush in the autumn. I shall be off *somewhere* by then. We will regard this as a breathing space, and meanwhile you will have got a little gallery of pictures." From Windsor, on the 28th August, 1944, Lewis wrote to me in Corunna on the St. Clair River, where I was vacationing:

Thank you for your letter. We were sorry not to see you on the 25th, but at the end of the week we shall meet up, by which time all the pictures but one will be completed.

Meanwhile we have another thing to annoy us very much: having lost all our mail during our absence, we have now lost all our goods to a Laundry (the "Puritan" — name of evil association). . . . Well, until Saturday. Do not bathe in this weather. It seems the fall has hit us.

In the early fall Lewis gave up his Windsor apartment and the college car drove him and Mrs. Lewis to the train in Detroit, bound for St. Louis. Later he returned to Windsor and lived in a downtown hotel for several months, eventually going briefly to Ottawa, then to Montreal, to catch the first passenger ship to leave Canada for England after VJ day. Before leaving Windsor, he did a large painting of Nell Martin, the wife of the Hon. Paul Martin.

He always said that one day he would write about Canada, especially about the Toronto of his experience, but that he would be kind to those at Assumption.

Chapters XXXII and XXXIII of his novel *Self Condemned* drew to an extent on the Assumption College of the war years, with similarities and even greater dissimilarities that need not be itemized here. A letter he wrote to Roy Campbell, on whom he built a character in another novel, gives an insight into his manipulation of material in a novel: “. . . the necessity of altering and dislocating . . . the forcible fusion with the drama . . . and do not consider what my *behaviourist* puppet hints at is a reflect on anything that could cross my mind [regarding Campbell].”⁸

The Wyndham Lewis I knew: an appreciative and loyal friend: “a friend of man”, as he once called Roy Campbell. I relished his humour, admired his brilliance, respected his integrity, and will always remember his gentleness. Seven years ago, after the eminent British philosopher, Father M. D. D’Arcy, S.J., lectured here, he wrote to thank us and to say: “I was happy to have visited a spot that was kind to my dear friends, Wyndham Lewis and Roy Campbell.”

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Affiliated then to the University of Western Ontario, 120 miles away in London, Ontario, Assumption College was later to receive its own university charter, eventually becoming known as Assumption University of Windsor, and now as Assumption University, merged in the new University of Windsor.
- ² *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, ed. W. K. Rose, London, 1963, pp. 348-50 and 352-53.
- ³ *Ibid.*, pp. 357-58.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 357.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 364.
- ⁶ *St. Louis University Studies*, Vol. II, 1948.
- ⁷ *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, pp. 375-76.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

ON CANADA

Wyndham Lewis

THERE AREN'T ENOUGH PEOPLE in it, that's what's the matter with Canada." How often have I heard that complaint from Canadians of all classes — Canada's long thin body wants swelling out, until it is something more than a mere elongated northern fringe to the United States. Such is the general feeling.

Well, the moment this war is ended a tide of immigration will flow westward from Europe. Canada if it wants to can be filled up full to its scuppers — if it thinks it can handle that many people. Mere filling up is not enough, however. The requisite number of peacetime passengers to make its giant trans-continental railroad system a success, or the volume of hardy labour to open up its bush and operate its remotest mines, is not the only thing required by a great state. It needs something else, beyond mere human volume. It will want more Bantings, Lauriers, Tom Thompsons, and Longfellows.

Canada has a wonderful chance just now to do a bit of filling up of the selective and qualitative kind; the kind of replenishment a cultural eugenicist would aim at, were he commissioned, not to bulk out, but to jack-up, the national stock. *Now* is the fluid time, when a lot of rare and high-grade material is going begging. All manner of firstclass brains, displaced by the human earthquake, are roaming around, as if they were disembodied. How like ghosts they look, some of them, how like ghosts they *feel*, at times. But what is their misfortune is other people's opportunity. They *could* be given a body, tools might be placed in their hands. They would be ghosts, it would be discovered, that in the long run immeasurably repaid those who offered them hospitality.

Hospitality! There is a great human word, that once exercised a magical compulsion over men. The stranger within the gates was to be fairly and pleasantly

treated, such treatment increasing the credit of the host as well as being something due to the notion of the brotherhood of man.

That the Canadian is less hospitably inclined than others no one would believe, for — experience of such hospitality apart — why should he be? It is inhuman to be inhospitable, and there is nothing inhuman about John Canuck. Americans, as a whole, are even proverbially hospitable. But Canada is a newer country than the States. And the trouble about a “new” country is that everybody in it is almost a stranger himself — at two or three generations removed, anyhow. He is so near to the time when his father, or grandfather, first set foot where he is at present established, that the notion of a *stranger* doesn't mean as much to him as it does elsewhere. He is apt to complain on the one hand that there are not enough people in the country, and yet to look upon a new face when it turns up as an intruder. It is a queer, though understandable, inconsistency.

In this connection it is interesting to note — and it confirms the view I have just expressed as to the cause of this phenomenon — that a Canadian who came to Canada as a boy is apt to be much more xenophobic than a five-generation Canadian; the latter being as a rule very tolerant and liberal in his treatment of the newcomer. Many people I personally have met here who have proved troublesome have been people who were not Canadian-born. There is even a marked difference between those who have been here since childhood and those who are more recent arrivals. Whereas those who have been here only five or six years — they are really problems for the war-transients. Sometimes they are little monsters of exclusiveness. I am really afraid of them, and give them a wide berth!

Because of the war great numbers of people have been displaced, many uprooted. They have either been violently displaced, like the Jewish scientists and business executives expelled in the Hitlerite persecutions, or they have been self-displaced, for business, health, or other reasons. Obviously, a persecutory government takes action against its victims in order of their importance; an individual of great talent, initiative and influence is savagely dealt with, whereas an individual of no great consequence is left alone. That is why so many uncommonly gifted people are drifting about, of those violently displaced, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

IN THE CATEGORY of what I have called the “self-displaced” I, for instance, am to be counted. My case is, I dare to say, typical of that class of voluntary displacement. In the last war I was a soldier. I could not be that

in this war, and the particular calling I followed, that of artist and writer, was susceptible to an extreme degree to any great disturbance. Already by the time of the Munich crisis — when it became plain to everybody (however laggard in believing it) that the lunatic militarist who stepped into the Kaiser's shoes was bent on a second European war — my income began to shrink. War itself would shoot to pieces my modest personal economy. So I headed for America, where, I believed, I might pursue my work with some prospect of success.

Two years ago this coming fall I moved up here to Canada from the States, and am a great authority upon all matters connected with the "transient" in an American community, especially the "war-transient". All problems of adjustment I know from A to Z. I would qualify to be the "Dr. Anthony" of the Adjustee. There is nothing I do not know about these painful questions, and this accumulated wisdom I shall one day embody in a book, such as Maxim Gorki might have written — the author of "Creatures who once were men."

To begin with, "transience," — at least a temporary residence, a very prolonged visit, such as war conditions may entail — is not understood by the native of a new country. Either (as he sees it) you come there to stop — to citizenize yourself — or else only for the most fleeting visit. A real warmth of welcome never extends from Sunday to Sunday. A week is the maximum life span of that ephemeral, the visitor." It is a hectic life, but like all hectic things, it is short.

It is rather as if Miss America were a young lady who was prepared to kill you with love for two or three days; if you then made your escape well and good; otherwise her manner would suddenly grow chaste and stern and you would be expected to engage yourself for ever. To be *a year* in America and not to want to be a citizen is a situation no American ever yet has understood, nor ever will. There is something wanton about it — something morally objectionable. The French are not like that, now. You can reside in France all your life: the Frenchman perfectly understands that, it never occurs to him you want to be *a Frenchman*. You couldn't be, except in name, anyway, for Frenchmen of course are born, not made.

There are many Adjustees naturally who are not mere war-transients; who are indeed most anxious to become Permanents as soon as possible. All, in their probationary period, however, are exposed to the same experience, and at first Transients and Nontransients are grouped together.

Quite the first thing that the refugee, evacuee, war-transient, or what not, feels in war time, is gratitude to these peaceably minded people, so like himself in many respects, for taking him in. He or she often has landed from a ship which

has been blacked out for weeks, sailing through seas at night that seemed seething with submarines — each blow from a big wave sending the heart up into the throat. Stepping ashore, that heart is full of thankfulness. Then next the exotic sense will play its part. The novel scene interests and pleases. The people are *new* people: and what is new is always nice.

After that the refugee, evacuee — the transient or non-transient — becomes an Adjustee. He discovers that he (to abbreviate the genders, though this goes for *she* too) is a member of a new class: that his classification does not consist in his being a doctor, artist, economist, but in being a person-who-does-not-belong. There is no use blinking the fact that this is not a pleasant discovery. It leaves no bitterness, or should not do so. But as most of these people are in flight from rabid nationalism, it is a kind of disagreeable reminder of that upon which they believed they had turned their backs forever.

In the longer settled countries nothing of this kind would occur (though many other things would occur that were not necessarily nice). There this same individual would *belong* more at once — for he would, for purposes of classification, belong among men and women of his particular calling. His nationality would matter less than his trade or profession. But in a new country — at all events in Canada — what he *does* is overshadowed by what he *is* until such time as he shall have qualified by long residence to be regarded otherwise. Identified thus by his national status and geographical position, he is apt to feel a little like a floating island that has somehow got into the mouth of the St. Lawrence and become a mild traffic problem. He feels a thing and not a person. He feels excluded — he feels *dead*. And the people he associates with are naturally those in his own class — slightly defunct, not quite *there*, like himself. It is a grim company.

Perhaps I ought, by the way, to make it clear at this point that I have no beef myself; as an artist I found my way to other artists. Real whole-time artists do not abound in Canada. Of those Mr. Alex Jackson is the acknowledged chieftain. By that chieftain, in his picturesque Toronto headquarters, I was accorded a royal welcome. He received me, coming from a foreign milieu, like a brother. He has shown me every courtesy, and with the greatest friendliness helped me on my sometimes perilous way. Never have I had more profoundly the sensation that it *did* mean something to be a workman of that sort, one of those who have become known for making pictures: enjoying a direct fraternity with another, wherever he happens to live; as all carpenters or garment workers have. In a word, Jackson has demonstrated that for him there is only *one* art, though there are many nations. Far too many nations, some of us think, for the world is clut-

tered up with stupid frontiers — and we seem more and more to pass from one of these compartments into another at our peril. “Demain — ça sera le genre humain!” Alex Jackson, who is a great Canadian, definitely belongs to the “genre humain” of the revolutionary song.

No, this article is not a beef: the rigours of my own “transience” have been mitigated by two or three people who it is true are exceptional people, but all the same are Canadians. I should be sorry to have a beef against a country which produced such sterling timber as Alex Jackson. This article is a minor bit of friendly advice to the Canadian, which I am able to offer him not because I am more intelligent or “smart” than he is, but simply because I have been in a situation he has never been in. Consequently I know about a few things of which he can have no knowledge. And these are things that matter an awful lot, ultimately, to Canada.

A NATION, like a woman, has to make itself attractive, if it is going to *attract*. And it must attract, in order to grow and increase. To stop drably and dowdily at home and tell the rest of the world to go hang is no way to live. If a nation wants to repel, rather than attract, it only has to neglect its social equipment and throw away its manners. But no modern nation can afford, any more than a modern woman, to neglect those arts and graces that advertise it, and make people seek its company.

Now, greatly daring — but from the very friendliest motives — I am whispering a few things in Canada’s pretty ear. For what is written here will not go beyond the frontier of Canada. I am saying that Canada should give more care to making itself agreeable and gracious, in its intercourse with strangers. For this new country needs — paradoxical as that may sound — new blood. All new countries do.

Quite one of nature’s oddest laws is that a *new* country has to keep on renewing itself and getting in more and more new blood: else in a surprisingly short time it grows just as stuffy and routine-ridden as an old country. Only its laxity has not got that mellow charm that excuses the stuffiness of the older lands.

One feels that in “Upper Canada” — Anglosaxon Canada — there is a sort of pride in being repellent, rather than attractive, to the stranger within-the-gate. What the Canadian of these parts tells you is that the social organism to which he belongs is “snooty”: or, he will say, “more English than the English.” And he seems in an odd way pleased about it. This, I submit, is short-sighted. “Toronto

the Beautiful”, as Mr. Mitch Hepburn calls it, should forget about being English. It could with great advantage take a leaf out of its far more attractive French sister Montreal’s book, and get a wrinkle or two from “Little old New York.”

But the problem of being attractive has never been present to Canadians, I think, because of the great isolation in which they have lived. And the isolation of Ontario has in the nature of things been greater even than that of French Canada. Yet if Canada is ever to blossom out into a sizeable country its middle — centred in Toronto and Winnipeg — is just as important as its extremities. It would be no use at all to [be] all Gallic charm at one end, and all titanic Western beauty at the other, while remaining smug, drab and snooty in the middle. Canada is unpopulated, and I think that Canada should face up to the fact that there are reasons for this. For instance, it is cold: then it is most of it covered with bush. People have to [be] lured into it to some extent: and Canadian social attractiveness should be almost five times as great as that of California, according to all the rules. It is very great; I am not saying it isn’t. But it will have to make a further effort.

Although every Canadian will agree that Canada is underpopulated, what they would be apt to argue is that numbers is its only requirement, thank you — when you talk about all this brilliance that is going begging. It has quite enough valuable or showy citizens as it is! But a new country has to *import* its Shakespeares and Newtons, as it imports the choicer wines. As to Einstein, the present-day Newton, the United States has got hold of him, I am afraid. Then Canada should hold out for a Leibnitz.

I do not mention business talent for that is found everywhere. Indeed, Canada *exports* business talent, as can be seen in the case of Lord Beaverbrook and Sir James Dunn. It does not need to import anything of that kind. Far more political talent has been exported by Canada than has ever come into it. It provided England with a notable Prime Minister — Bonar Law. And in Medicine Canada has in Banting an international star of the first magnitude. Business talent and political talent sprout up in a new soil better than in an old one, if anything. Yet there *are* ways in which Canada could profit by a discriminating import policy — a careful grafting.

THE HOTEL

Anne Wyndham Lewis

OUR ENFORCED STAY in Canada was brought about by newly imposed war regulations which prohibited women from travelling to England and also prohibited the transfer of money to Canada. Fortunately, we found sympathetic friends in Canada, among whom were the late J. S. McLean, President of Canada Packers, who commissioned portraits, and A. Y. Jackson, the Canadian painter, whose generous friendship and help were given with unaffected simplicity.

On arriving in Toronto, we booked into "the Hotel", a replica of a small English manor house in which, without doubt, our most notable experiences in Canada were enacted. At the beginning of our stay, it was a sedate and quiet hotel, but gradually — as the war continued — the atmosphere changed into that of rambustious turmoil. In these circumstances a kind of community spirit emerged, and both guests and staff became increasingly interested in us and aware of our invidious position, until we were accepted as a rather strange but understandable addition to this slowly congealing wartime community. Conspicuous in this group of harmonious though heterogenous characters was Affie, the manageress who, with apparent foresight, never failed to visit us and to cheer us with her gossip whenever difficulties threatened to overwhelm us.

As the war increased in violence, so this group of human beings became noticeably more anarchistic, resisting the intrusion of outside events, until finally it seemed to be divorced from the warring world outside. Only once, in the earlier part of our stay, did we hear any reference to the war, and that was from Affie. Even the war casualties in my own immediate family were not discussed, and the natural feelings one had towards them seemed to be stifled instantly in this warm human cocoon. The sense of nationality decreased, and a quality of Universalism came into being.

(The only other time I ever experienced this quality of human universalism, "community-spirit", was in a hotel in Agadir, the last outpost of the French administration on the edge of the "dissident" Sahara. The hotel patio after dinner was the general meeting-place, where Legionnaires, army personnel, journalists, gun-runners, the hotel proprietor and a few guests gathered together, the conversation interrupted only by anonymous obese insects cannonading into the dim lights. Probably it was this experience which gave birth to the idea that had the whole Hotel in Toronto been magically moved, lock, stock and barrel, and dumped down there, no-one would have noticed any difference.)

The pattern came to its natural end one winter morning when our breakfast serenity was shattered by muffled shouting and the heaving tramp of feet. On investigation, we saw a fireman rushing down the passage banging on doors and shouting, "Fire! All out!" Incredulous, we returned to our breakfast, but were interrupted by a resounding knock, followed by a fireman's face poking through the open door and saying sternly, "Fire! All out!"

A general exodus was in progress. From the front of the premises, where the fire was the most fierce, firemen helped the stragglers to grope their way through the dense smoke. Many were clad only in pyjamas and dressing-gowns, poor protection against the exereame cold. Some lost all their possessions and were left penniless; their spirits were at the lowest ebb.

It was a striking scene, the contrast of frozen snow emphasizing the black billowing clouds of smoke which were penetrated intermittently by long sullen-red beams that rapidly disappeared and reappeared only to die, darting again into sight and exploding with firework zest into crackling cascades of sparks. A party atmosphere began to hang over the scene as people from neighbouring houses teamed together to revive the chilled and tired firemen with continuous cups of tea. Other people were bustling among the forlorn guests, offering them temporary shelter. At the end of the day, the fire at last extinguished, the firemen gone, the Hotel lay deserted and in darkness.

A few days later, in our temporary lodgings, we received a message from the Hotel that Affie had died from the effects of the fire; we were invited to the funeral service. So the only casualty of the fire was this possessor of remarkable foresight or sensitivity, who had always been on the spot to comfort with gay nonsense without ever once hinting that she knew of our troubles and our need for distraction. It was a subdued gathering at the funeral, and we dispersed silently at the end of the service. It was our farewell to this warm and kind group of people. As a fitting goodbye to Affie, there is this quotation from *Self Condemned*.

THE HOTEL

It was a sinister, upside-down forest of ice, rooted in the air; . . . but René saw it as a funeral vault for Affie, which would be mysterious and inviolable for long enough to suit her volatile taste. Her hooting cry could sound there in the night — the only human sound that could be heard . . . and only Affie [could] be at home in this unearthly scenery.

The Hotel became the mainspring of *Self Condemned*, serving to confirm the ideas — universalism and opposition to war and to the continuing injustices caused by the “Establishment” methods which have penetrated so many countries — that Wyndham Lewis held for so long. Fundamentally, *Self Condemned* is a “protest” book.

After the fire we departed for Windsor, Ontario, where my husband had contracted to give a series of lectures arranged by Father Stanley Murphy at Assumption College. When we were finally settled in an apartment, Father Murphy came to visit us with two companions, the late Professor Giovanelli, and Professor Marshall McLuhan. With a youthful enthusiasm, they set to work to promote lectures and portrait commissions in St. Louis, Missouri, and they were surprisingly successful, so that eventually we found ourselves in St. Louis under their enjoyable tutelage.

Yet at the end of our stay in Canada the main original purpose of our visit remained incompletely fulfilled; this had been to carry out research into the lives of Wyndham Lewis’s grandparents in Canada, and to go back to his birthplace in Nova Scotia.

THE WILD LAND

A Celebration of Globalism

C. J. Fox

WHEN WYNDHAM LEWIS came to North America in 1939, he brought a set of intellectual premises that could readily accommodate the shock of a “war transient’s” life in the New World. They also served Lewis well when he came to forge the experience into art and into an appropriately spectacular vision of the future world society.

By 1939 an advocate of globalism, he also numbered among his numerous books *The Wild Body* and *Filibusters in Barbary*. The first, published in 1927, included short stories set in the countrysides, primitive yet hotel-ridden, of Brittany and Spain. *Filibusters in Barbary*, a travel book which first appeared in 1932, described a 1931 trip through the mushroom towns and the fierce backlands of Morocco. The British edition of *Filibusters* was withdrawn from the market because of threats of libel suits, an instance of the economic and other misfortunes that haunted Lewis in the 1930’s. It was thus as a man conscious of his environment through experience and observation, as well as in terms of his global concepts, that he entered upon his life in the New World.

“In the nine months preceding the outbreak of war our debts were steadily piling up,” wrote Lewis to his friend Naomi Mitchison on July 8, 1942. “. . . It was under these circumstances that I collected what I could, and made a bee line for New York.”¹ By November 1940, the United States visitors’ permits originally issued to Lewis and his wife had expired, and they made their way to Toronto. There, “in an apartment hotel — 14 bucks a week”, they stayed until the middle of 1943. By July of that year Lewis was teaching in Windsor, Ontario, and for the rest of the time until his return to Britain in 1945, that city and St. Louis, Missouri, were his main places of residence.

The upheavals of wartime had dumped into the Toronto hotel a vast variety of human fauna, many of them peculiar to Canada. To the author of *The Wild Body* and *Filibusters* hotels had already the appeal of microcosms, and the Toronto establishment was soon the object of fascinated scrutiny to his satirical eye. Its convulsive affairs, and those of the community beyond it, were recorded with professional gusto in his notebooks, which are now part of the extensive collection of Lewis manuscript material at Cornell University. In a recent account of the collection, W. K. Rose has described these notebooks as "full of newspaper clippings and notations of language, popular culture and plain factual detail." There are, among other observations, written notes and drawings of the hotel furnace room, and "hundreds of snatches of conversation are quoted, often with explanatory notes. . . . He records radio commercials . . . and popular songs."²

In scrutinizing the community beyond the hotel's precincts, Lewis focussed on the ostensibly more refined section of society. Seen through his eyes, in terms of salon and academy, that society appeared little more than a grotesque aping of its Mayfair original. Once more, this time as author of *The Apes of God*, he felt that he was recording familiar phenomena. Together, the wild New World hotel, and the absurdly derivative high society beyond its bounds provided the material out of which Lewis built a setting for the "black sacrifice" of his novel, *Self Condemned*.

His ancestry, as well as his literary orientation, braced Lewis for his lengthy stay in the New World. Born in 1882 on the family yacht off Amherst, Nova Scotia, Lewis had for father a lively and literate veteran of the American Civil War, and though, after childhood, he seems to have seen little of Charles E. Lewis, he evidently acquired from him some of his sense of literary style, as well as a great deal of knowledge about what he called "the hubbub of battles." The Lewis family, abounding in lawyers and merchants, had spread from its main base, upstate New York, into Canada, to which its ties were strengthened by marriage. Lewis's paternal grandmother, Romain by name, was French-Canadian. A Romain uncle maintained a business in Montreal. A Toronto building, erected in 1852 by great-uncle Charles Romain, "gives me a certain sentimental footing," wrote Lewis from that city in 1940.³

His French-Canadian connections retained a considerable interest for Lewis. On arriving at Quebec City from Britain in 1939, one of his first acts was to search eagerly through the telephone directory for signs of the Romans. Later, when in Toronto, he went to other parts of Ontario in search of clues to the establishment which the Lewises had formerly maintained in that province.

At the same time, he remained highly conscious of his American connections. "It should also be remembered that at 6 . . . I frisked and frolicked with other little American boys on the New England coast — *not* with little Britons on the English coast," Lewis wrote a young American admirer, Felix Giovanelli, in 1948. "The American beginnings are irrelevant, except that I could not help imbibing from my very American father much Stimmung, a certain sentiment, and a lot about the Civil War. And my mother was more American than Irish, and her memories are mine. I have masses of my uncle's letters, who was an American coal magnate. It adds up to nothing very solid, but must be reckoned in."⁴

It seems safe to "reckon in" Lewis's New World roots when seeking to explain his fascination with the historical destiny and the sometimes wild ways of North American society. By March 1943, he was writing of piling up "notes about the ideologic foundations of the U.S.A."⁵ These were the makings of *America and Cosmic Man* (1948) and its argument that America was the cradle of a radically new kind of universalism. The notebooks, dealing with the savage side of North American life, which provided raw material for the backdrop to *Self Condemned*, had been in the making since 1941. Thus, even during the war, Lewis was eagerly taking cognizance of those characteristics of life on the American continent which most impressed him, the cosmic and the crude. Eventually he was to suggest a link between them.

CANADA, TO HIS MIND, was in a cruder stage of development than the nation to the south. In an outline for a never-executed novel, called tentatively *Hill 100*, he wrote in 1942: "If it is true . . . that 'America is a country that has passed from Tartary to decadence without having known civilization,' then it is true of Canada that it is *not even decadent* yet."

The outline for *Hill 100*, now in the Cornell collection, also mentions a historical incident to which Lewis attached considerable symbolical importance and which further illustrates his concern with the savage side of the North American character. The same incident is recounted in *America and Cosmic Man*, where Lewis writes of how La Salle, descending the Mississippi, left several men behind to build a boat. "When he came back, he found the boat only half finished and his compatriots had vanished. Upon the timbers [were] scrawled these words: 'Nous sommes tous sauvages'."⁶ Lewis quotes a young Harvard instructor who warned him "that all foreigners should bear in mind that message."

"This is much too romantic," Lewis says of the instructor's interpretation. "The savagery melted away before the impact of British civilization. But the invaders could not melt so great a wilderness without themselves losing to it much of their personality. Not the human 'savageness', however, of the romantic imagination, but the alien waste of nature, is still there underneath: the 'wild land', as they formerly called it, very imperfectly covered up."⁷

Elsewhere, Lewis praised Canadian painters like A. Y. Jackson for their stark portrayals of Canada's "wild land". But as practicing novelist he evidently assumed the persistence in wartime Toronto as well of an abundant human wildness. This is reflected in the brutal atmosphere of the Hotel Blundell in *Self Condemned* and in the crude bush-Mayfair that is upper-class Momaco. One is reminded of his earlier remarks in *Men Without Art* (1934). "A breathless business hustle," he wrote, left no room for the development of a European type of urbanity in the cities of the New World. "Undeniably, the 'American scene' is of the utmost barrenness, physically and socially. It is planted in the midst of a relative wilderness, beneath a surprisingly hard and penetrating light. . . . The actual physical landscape has something of a Swiss frigidity and emptiness."⁸

The man who wrote *The Apes of God* could speedily take the satirical measure of a Canadian upper-class salon, and enjoy himself hugely in the process. But his imagination revelled also in the more patently savage offerings of the Wild Land. Lewis's early pictorial work had been preoccupied with the ritualized contortions of primitive creatures, which he described as "big obsessed sun-drunk insects." The same general breed of "great comic effigies" turn up at Brotcotnaz, Bestre and other characters in *The Wild Body*, swarming all over "the barbaric environment", as Lewis termed Brittany years later. With these characters, disporting themselves in microcosmic hotels, and with such comic apparitions as the hotelkeeping Signor Borzo, bounding and howling across the Klondikean wilderness of Morocco, the hotel creatures of *Self Condemned* form a direct line. Lewis's imagination feasted on the wilderness of Canada with a relish born of a longstanding occupational taste for such material.

Yet that imagination responded with equal enthusiasm to the fact that the trans-Atlantic Wild Land was "a human laboratory for the manufacture of a Cosmic Man." This new human type, Lewis wrote, took the form of "a perfectly eclectic, non-national, internationally-minded creature . . . with no more geographical or cultural roots with a chameleon."⁹ Here again Lewis was on familiar ground. As visual artist and writer, he had often abandoned the here-and-now for themes cast in a world-shrinking, timeless dimension. His early drawings fea-

ture titanic figures which use the earthly scene as a bleak backdrop or platform for their cosmic contortions. In an early, non-satirical picture, called *Sunset Among The Michelangelos* (Victoria and Albert Museum), we are confronted with four naked human beings, muscular forms looking as if they had been sculpted roughly from granite. They straddle a massive rock formation against a sky of blazing red. They could be the first, or the last, men. Each seems the pictorial rendering of the “Norse giant” Lewis speaks of in his novel, *The Red Priest* (1956), a creature who sullenly contemplates a sphere alien to him, civilization.

The furtive quartet in *Sunset*, seemingly caught by surprise in their wild element at the edge of the world, appear to regard the earth in the manner of passengers forced to endure a rudely accoutred space ship. The same intelligence which articulated this primeval man-earth relationship in the picture was able, forty years later in *Self Condemned*, to visualize man “riding an immense ball.” This ball was “dashing around in a cold, black emptiness” and “was warmed by a much larger, extremely hot ball.”¹⁰

The settings for such metaphysical fantasies as *The Enemy of the Stars* and *The Childermass* have the same elemental quality as those of the early pictures. The sense of place is abstracted away. The place is, simply, “somewhere in the cosmos”. In *The Enemy of the Stars*, a play first published in 1914, the scene of the central character’s “execution” is framed by earth, sky and posterity. There is almost a contemptuous disregard for the niceties of locale dear to the parochial hearts of most earthmen.

Lewis’s sensibility, then, seemed profoundly attuned to the idea of earth as something other than a conglomeration of cosy locales institutionalized into nation-states. To this deep-rooted globalism he also gave — comparatively early in his career — explicit ideological expression. In *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926) he suggests that already the world is one community, made so by the new techniques of government and communication. In a 1929 essay, “A World Art and Tradition”, he wrote that “the Earth has become *one* place, instead of a romantic tribal patchwork of places.” The experimental art of the time constituted “a primitive form of a world-art” which he feared could “stop altogether long before the political omnibus, lumbering furibundly forward, catches it up.” And he adds: “What has fact on its side is still this strange synthesis of cultures and times which we named Vorticism in England and which is the first projection of a world-art. . . .”¹¹

Among the pictures Lewis produced in the 1930’s and 1940’s — in Britain and Canada — were semi-abstracts and fantasies of themes ranging from creation to

war. These sometimes featured forms that can be described only as interplanetary. Yet for the first eight years of the 1930's, Lewis the political commentator appeared to be forsaking globalism, or at least reacting against what was then its chief institutional manifestation, the League of Nations. By 1939, however, he had reverted to his original position, that nationalism was obsolete, that a world state was the logical next step for an increasingly homogenous humanity. "The machine age has made nonsense of nationalism," he wrote in a collection of essays published several months before his departure for North America.¹²

What he saw and felt around him on this last and longest of his trans-Atlantic visits — others had been made in the 1920's and 1930's — confirmed him in these views and provoked enthusiastic announcements of an "earth culture, or the eclectic culture of the transition" (the title he gave an article he wrote for a British publication, *The Pavilion*). America's destiny was "not to be just another 'grande nation': but to be the great big promiscuous grave into which tumble, and there disintegrate, all that was formerly race, class or nationhood."¹³ Canada was "an integral part . . . of the North American culture." But most countries, added Lewis, were merely regional units rather than self-sufficient cultural entities. Canada's natural splendours impressed him greatly. However, he warned in an unpublished wartime essay (now in the Cornell collection) not until the "smug, drab and snooty" character of central Canadian communities had been altered would the nation obtain what it most needed — a strengthening of its "natural stock" through immigration.

Self Condemned was written largely in the early 1950's, in spite of the author's blindness and other physical ills. Specific notes from the Canadian years were called for by Lewis during composition, were read to him, and were inserted into the story as he dictated it. While some of the fictionalized Canadian characters and circumstances are identifiable with still-surviving features of the real-life scene, the book in its totality cannot be readily construed as a commentary on Canadian life as such.

The work's prime significance lies in the sepulchral destiny of its hero, René Harding. We are left with little doubt that the fate of this man, who had "stood up to the Gods", would have been every bit as horrific if he had chosen to stay in Britain rather than plunge into a Canadian exile. The book's remarks about Canadian life are certainly not likely to endear the author to frantic celebrants of Confederation's Centennial. Yet Lewis himself says in *Self Condemned*: "Any criticism of Canadians, meaning English-Canadians, is in general irrelevant. . . . If you criticise them you criticise the average population of Belfast, of Bradford

and Leeds, and of Glasgow. If you deplore the materialism and the humble cultural level, you are merely criticising anglo-saxon civilization.”¹⁴

Nevertheless, without the stimulus to his satirical powers of wartime in the Wild Land, Lewis might not have retained the zest required for a creative effort so great as that which, in the face of appalling physical difficulties, he put into *Self Condemned*. He is said to have regarded the North American years, in retrospect at least, as a rousing experience. His published letters, as well as remarks made to London visitors during the post-war years, suggest a strong desire to return to the New World and experience again what he called “the electric intoxication of the air breathed by prisoners set free.”¹⁵

Through this image of prisoners set free, Lewis was to suggest a link between the North American’s grandiose destiny as Cosmic Man and the often crude nature of that new man’s social life. The savagery, in fact, was a celebration of the freedom inherent in the historical status of this novel type. Incarcerated in the Old World, the European was a creature beset by restraints. “The animal which is house-trained, chained up, domesticated in Europe, on emigration to the New World celebrates its freedom,” Lewis wrote to a young Canadian in 1949.¹⁶

The same letter cited examples of these celebrations — the wife-beatings, the drunkenness and the brawls making up the wild life of his fellow-guests at the Canadian hotels where he stayed, and recounted with few fictional trimmings in the hotel scenes of *Self Condemned*. In listing these frontier-like eruptions he was not indicting them. On the contrary, he urged their exploitation by Canadian writers. “Every hotel we were in,” wrote Lewis in bemused recollection of his Canadian adventure, “. . . rocked all night with hysterical whoopee at least once a week. . . . In the States, things were much quieter.”

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ *Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, ed. W. K. Rose, London, 1963, pp. 327-30.
- ² *Wyndham Lewis at Cornell*, Cornell University Press, 1961.
- ³ *Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, p. 283.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 463-64.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 353.
- ⁶ Wyndham Lewis, *America and Cosmic Man*, London, 1948, p. 152.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 153.
- ⁸ Wyndham Lewis, *Men Without Art*, London, 1934, pp. 150-51.
- ⁹ *America and Cosmic Man*, p. 182.

THE WILD LAND

- ¹⁰ Wyndham Lewis, *Self Condemned*, Gateway paperback edition, Chicago, 1965, p. 211.
- ¹¹ *Drawing and Design*, 5, No. 32, pp. 30 and 56.
- ¹² *Wyndham Lewis the Artist*, London, 1939, p. 16.
- ¹³ *America and Cosmic Man*, p. 155.
- ¹⁴ *Self Condemned*, pp. 155-56.
- ¹⁵ *America and Cosmic Man*, p. 169.
- ¹⁶ *Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, pp. 511-12.

HILL 100

Outline for an Unwritten Novel

Wyndham Lewis

STORY WOULD OPEN in early days of French colonization of Canada. *Hill 100* would be situated in goldmining area of Northern Ontario (border of Quebec, or inside latter province). Story would end upon same hill several centuries hence. Hill would then be marked Hill 100 upon Ordnance maps of U.S. Army. In war proceeding at that time, American Army would be holding Hill 100 (or Hill 1000?). There would be an attack by hostile planes, and hill would be blown up, leaving crater as large as base of hill. Inside crater, inside pit blasted out, would be remains of auriferous rock formations.

CHAPTER I would reveal Fr.-Canadian, Castou, sitting with Indian at base of hill, covered with bush, gazing into stream. Night is falling. It is July — it is getting chilly. Castou shakes himself. He regards cold stream with dislike. He dislikes Canada — abominates its wilderness — loathes its Indians. However, he has made his bed, he must lie in it. He is a trapper. He is very far from the hamlet in Calvados from which he came some years before. There is no turning back — much as he regrets the gentle slopes of the Norman Hills, the quays of Rouen, where he had worked as a longshoreman, and so become acquainted with the immigrant ships.

He stands up. The Indian stands up. They communicate with each other in a mixture of French and Dogrib. They walk back slowly to the Dogrib village.

“Fait f’oid,” grunts Dogrib.

“T’as raison, Mitouti,” Castou answers (“Mitouti” means “Wolf’s Ear”. Mi-

touti has very pointed ears, which seem always pricked, as if listening for hostile noises. "Quel sale *kapac*, nom de nom!"

Mitouti shrugs. He doesn't think much of it either. The Dogribs would prefer to live farther south, but the Iroquois wouldn't let them, so they have to stop where they are. They have tried once or twice: but their braves are quite second class — and get no better, since as a tribe they are distinctly undernourished whereas the Iroquois get much more to eat. They always let them down, lose a lot dead and scalped. So here they stop, in their grim and dirty little village.

Castou and Mitouti enter the village, which is very filthy. Castou sticks his chest out and blows a little through his red Norse moustache. He is dressed à l'Indien. The Indians are squatting in the mouths of their ill-smelling tents — at least the braves are (if these diminutive and rather cowardly males can be so described). Mitouti is their Chief. They watch him pass with a proper impassibility, but with as near to sullenness as a piece of wood can get. For he has beaten up most of them once or twice, being much stronger and braver than any of them. Mitouti is not very brave, but he has a very bad temper, and a streak of Iroquois blood.

They go to Mitouti's wigwam. Mimatauket, his wife, is cooking a rabbit, and his daughter, the lovely Kakapo, is throwing on the wood. For a Dogrib, Kakapo is not bad, although unspeakably dirty. She is seventeen, and two thick inkblack plaits of hair hang over her shoulders like shining black sausages, decorated with red and green threads of dyed goatwool. She stands up as they approach and hurries inside the tent, from the door of which she ogles Castou.

The French trapper swaggers up to Kakapo, and thrusts his arm around her untidy waist.

"Ah ah ma belle! Embrasse donc ton petit Castou!" he exclaims, thrusting out his moustachioed lips.

A raucous titter comes from the copper-blue lips of Kakapo. These mouth-rubbing habits of the Paleface amuse Kakapo. They rub lips. The big red moustache of the trapper blankets Kakapo's mouth: her chin rests in his beard. Mitouti takes his pipe out of the tent, and squatting down, lights up. Mimatauket twirls the rabbit with a dark forefinger.

Such, more or less, would be the first scene. The second scene (the 2nd chapter?) would describe Castou, the trapper, at work. He would be sitting in a canoe in a small lake, just before dawn. The caribou would come down to the water's edge. Castou would shoot it. The Indians would take care of the dead caribou and Castou would then go the round of his traps.

THE NEXT SCENE (chapter 3?) would show Castou back in one of the French settlements, married to Kakapo — who would have grown to look rather like Mimatauket. They would, it would be found, have three sons and a daughter — Pierre, Jules, Denis, and Antoinette. The latter would be very swarthy and pretty: the three sons still on the Indian side — though Pierre would have a copper-red moustache and a bit of a beard. All of course would be Catholics; Kakapo less dirty and very devout.

These three scenes would represent the establishment and beginnings of the present day Fr.-Canadian family of Castou. (Castou would in reality bear the name of Gaston Laverrière: but, as always, describe himself as “Castou”, and as his patronymic would be too difficult for him to attempt any way to communicate, as Castou he would be known, and his family would become that of Castou. His daughter thus would be Mademoiselle Antoinette Castou, not Antoinette Laverrière.

THE NEXT SCENE (chapter 4?) would show a “Tory” family, horrified by the cold of the Maritimes, and especially at the unbelievable inclemency of in Nova Scotia, to which they had indignantly retired, after their fellow citizens in Philadelphia had parted company with the British Crown and declared themselves “independent” — it would show this greatly-tried and shivering family setting out to find a warmer place, farther inland.

They press on, by road and river, in a most unpioneerlike determination to find a soft spot, or at least one comfortably warm, until they reach what then was called Upper Canada. That would be circa 1815, and the region would be that lying west of Kingston, Ontario. Port Grace, they would call it; because, being on the St. Lawrence, at the mouth of a muddy little river, it could be called a port, and “Grace” meant that they were duly grateful to the Lord for having delivered them from the unmentionable rigours of what the French so unsuitably named Arcady (being tougher, obviously, than the Anglosaxons from the land of Penn): and for having so graciously guided them to a relatively warm spot — at least as un-cold as anything could be in these frozen regions, which was all that was left of America by those disgusting radicals, who set their face against Royalty and Quality, and, in insolent rebellion, had, with that odious Washington at their head, set themselves up as a State.

The next scene (chapter 5?) would show a certain Joseph Biggs, operating a rather prosperous store in Port Grace — reputed to be about the richest man in town, and [a] keen politician. This is about 1870. Joseph Biggs looks across the St. Lawrence at the Yankees, and is pretty glad to be a Canadian, when he thinks of some of the ungodly things that go on in the land of the Almighty Dollar. Joseph Biggs is a pillar of the Methodist Church, and the Church is a pillar of his business. He had a son, Joseph Jnr., who is ten years old. Next we should move to the heart of the Gay Nineties: Joseph Biggs Jnr. has married a charming girl of “French extraction” — Huguenot, of course — named Antoinette Castou. The Castous turned up in Port Grace way back in the Eighteen Twenties, moving in from Montreal, I guess. (Lots of Huguenots in Ontario, with rather French names, came originally from Montreal.) These Castous had a corn-chandler’s and [were] pretty smart people.

The father of Antoinette was a lawyer, doing a big business in Kingston and Toronto. He was a pretty smart man. This was 1895, and Joseph Biggs Jnr. and Antoinette had a boy of ten, who was called Richard Russlyn Biggs. And Dick Biggs became a very smart man indeed. By 1910 he was, of course, 25 years old. He had demonstrated his smartness already in several notable instances. Dick Biggs was in Toronto (or “Toronter” as it is called by Hoi Polloi). More than one pretty smart man in the provincial capital had gone bugeyed as he had watched Dick Biggs at work, and predicted he would go far. He was ostensibly interested in agricultural machinery, being an agent for companies in the States (who attempted to pass their tractors and peashelling machines through the tariff wall, behind which Canadians live as isolated as the Tibetans, or more so; or did until the coming of the Moving Picture and Radio. They were cut off by the Atlantic Ocean from Great Britain — to whom they were supposed to belong, politically, and because of whom they had come to this sunny retreat to escape from the defilement of the disloyal Yankees; they were cut off from Asia by the Pacific; they were cut off from the United States by their Tariff Wall: and as to the north, there was the North Pole — so no one could disturb their seclusion from *that* direction. Yes, the Canadian was certainly the most isolated people on earth, except for the Eskimo.)

But Dick Biggs was not going to spend all his life as a salesman and agent for farm-implements; although that opening up of the Buffalo lands and the amazing operations of Sifton when the West was provided with a huge labouring population overnight had made agricultural machinery a boom-line. No, one day Dick Biggs began prospecting — not himself of course, he was too smart for

that, but paying other people to, buying up claims, financing and organizing small companies. By 1940 Dick Biggs is one of the hundred mining millionaires of the great gold and nickel city of Toronto. He was one of the biggest gold-magnates in the world; since Canada is the second largest gold-producing country, and he was the greatest of all the gold-kings of Canada.

Now Mr. and Mrs. Dick Biggs had a solitary child, a son, at present 24 years old, named Alistair. Alistair had been in the Bahamas, and there he had met an American girl, called Claire Heming, whom he is about to marry. She has come to the Biggs home at Mimico to meet her future father and mother-in-law. Claire had only enough money to get her to the Bahamas and back to New York, and she was pretty surprised when she landed a gold mine.

Alistair does not look as if he was in fact a gold mine. He was a small, pallid, rather frightened little creature. Yes, this mountain — this mountain of gold — had brought forth, at last, a mouse.

As Claire goes to bed the first night in the Biggs place — in a vast and very gloomy Tudor apartment, but the luxury so great that the bed almost whispered a sigh for you as you sank into it, and the servants almost arrived by thought-transference before you had touched the button to summon them — when Claire contrasted the shrinking little animal she had just left in the passage outside, and all this weighty wood, and glittering gold and aluminum and ponderous drapes, she could not believe that they really had *all that* to do with each other. But had she been able at that moment to transfer herself to the mines at Timmins she would have found it even more difficult to see how so portentous an organism could possess so *minute* a parasite.

AT SOME POINT — for the above sketch of the background build-up does not come necessarily in that order — there will be about 100 pages dealing with the miner's life at Timmins (or wherever it is the mines are to be situated, and whatever the mines are called). Then there will be 100 pages dealing with the social structure of the city of Toronto, which is in fact a vast mining camp. It is, at least, a great city of over one million inhabitants, swollen to this great size because of the presence in Ontario of the great gold and nickel mines, and of the presence of all the mining magnates and their families in or near it, and of all the banks and commercial institutions in the service mainly of the great mines. Thus when the mines are booming, the Ontario stock-exchange is a bull

market, it blooms and flourishes, and Montreal declines. It is vice-versa, too, of course.

Now the general plan of the book is to show first the two European races, the French and the Anglosaxon, in their early colonizing stage. We start with the French trapper, who, like the majority of the early French settlers, married an Indian woman. There are not many French-Canadian families engaged in agriculture along the St. Lawrence who are not partly Indian. Quite half the French Canadians in such a city as Montreal — and *all* the French Canadians in Quebec — are perfectly visibly possessed of Indian blood. Well, it will be our purpose to show this conditioning of the French-Canadian stock in operation. There will be patriarchal scenes (perhaps the one described by Pierrette of the arresting of the grandchildren, to the number of 100 at Easter, kneeling outside the front door, being blessed by the *grandpère* before they enter). Scenes indicating the early catholic (jesuit) construction for a powerful isolated theocratic state. Then the very different character of the Anglosaxon settlement will be described or indicated.

Having described this primitive world, and shown the roots of the present inhabitants, the present day world of the gold mining town is shown — the bush town — and shown how it is very little less primitive. The life of the gold mine — the Polish Ukrainian workmen living in shacks with 50 bunks apiece etc. etc. etc. Further the perpetual friction between the French and Ang. Saxon will be shown (for instance the Fr. Canadian landlord of the house and his treatment of the Electrician boss, as told to me). But, beneath the skin of canned foods, radio, the primitive state of this society will be brought out. One can quote the story of Champlain, and the six Frenchmen who disappeared;

“NOUS SOMMES TOUS SAUVAGES”

written upon the hull of the stranded ship, that he had left them to build on the Mississippi.

Next will come a picture of the political structure of the mushroom city of Toronto. It will be shown how that, too, is in fact extremely primitive, “ill-cooked”, undeveloped. The fearful Indian-like squalor of the poor sections — the 19 million dollars spent on relief in 1940. Against this the tasteless, uncultivated luxury of the mining and other magnates. The infinite remoteness of all this from anything that can be called *civilized*.

If it is true (as Brockington quoted from a French critic) that “America is a

country that has passed from barbarity to decadence without even having known civilization”, then it is true of Canada that it is *not even decadent* yet.

* * *

“Ici, monsieur, c’est une barbarie!” said he to the maître d’hotel in the Mac-Alpin in New York, during Prohibition. But what could be said to a Frenchman about a Canadian city?

However here, within this locked-up barbarous little state, in its great gold-town . . .

CANADA AND WYNDHAM LEWIS THE ARTIST

Sheila Watson

NOTICE OF WYNDHAM LEWIS'S first and only official connection with Canadian art is preserved in the Canadian War Services Records:

2nd Lieut. P. W. Lewis, Royal Garrison Artillery, attached to Canadian Corps Headquarters for duty with Canadian War Records, 31st December, 1917.
Ceases to be attached to Canadian War Records, Canadian Corps, on proceeding to England, 26th January, 1918.

Because of this brief union the National Gallery, Ottawa, is richer by *A Canadian Gunpit*, a canvas approximately ten by eleven feet intended for a proposed Ottawa Memorial to be designed by E. R. Rickards, the architect who did Central Hall at Westminster. A sketch for the painting is on permanent loan to the Beaverbrook Gallery in Fredericton.

"England's artists were being 'saved'," Lewis wrote later in *Blasting and Bombardiering*, "by Canada of all countries, and by Lord Beaverbrook of all people. I mean of course that we do not associate the land of the 'Mounties' and Montcalm with the fine arts, and Lord Beaverbrook I imagined fully occupied making and unmaking Governments and Cabinets." At his own request Lewis was seconded from the Royal Garrison Artillery while he was on leave in London. He returned finally not to the Salient around the ruins of Ypres and to experiences like those documented in the fifty-four pictures exhibited in the Goupil Gallery in 1919, but this time to Vimy Ridge as a "painter-soldier, attached to the Corps-headquarter Staff of the Canadian Army." He could be useful, he had suggested to P. K. Konody, the art critic charged with the selection of artists, because he knew all about howitzers.

In a report submitted to the Canadian Government Beaverbrook mentions Lewis's assignment and refers to his place of birth:

The latest recruit is the celebrated modern artist Hon. Major Augustus John, whose ambition is to paint a gigantic decoration thirty feet in length symbolizing the experiences of modern war. Among other artists who are working for the fund are C. R. W. Nevinson, also employed by the Imperial Government, and 2nd. Lieut. P. Wyndham Lewis, a native of Nova Scotia and an artillery officer, who is painting a picture of a Canadian gun-pit.¹

Augustus John exceeded his ambition by ten feet according to the *New York Sun*, June 3, 1919, which reported that his panel, forty by twelve feet, would fill one wall of "an imposing artistic memorial of the part Canada played in the Great War." In fact John only finished the cartoon. He arrived at the Canadian Corps Headquarters several days after Lewis, who had been sent back after much delay to his battery at Poperinghe to report to his O.C. "to be personally seconded by him." It was a private sortie with Augustus John that Lewis particularly recalled when he recorded his experience with the Canadian unit. And it was to John that he wrote from Ottawa in 1945 just before he sailed back to England after his four and a half year stay in Canada during the second war, "The peculiar state of mind of these people cannot be conveyed in a letter."²

At the time of his transfer in 1917 Lewis had been particularly impressed by the informality of the Canadian Quarters at Vimy. The officers, he said, "had no ambition to be imitation toffs as the English had." They held commissioned rank "but it was on such a rigid understanding that they should not throw their weight about, they enjoyed it under such awful democratic safeguards, that the only advantage that it took with it was that they had the equivalent of much more *money* than their subordinates, not much more *rank*. Also they had a Sam Browne belt and the others hadn't."³

Lewis, however, was not a participant in the routine life of the Mess or of the adjacent battery. He was an "onlooker" in an area of questionable local peace which contrasted sharply with the rolling wastes of mud at Passchendaele, the "hell-blast" at Nieuport, the bursts of shell-fire with their whizzing "spawn of 'splinters'," the duck-boards and observation posts. Although he was detached from action, a palette on his thumb, he was soon reminded that responsibility was as inescapable as it had been when he had led a group of his men to an O.Pip of "most evil report." At this time, realizing that they were being hunted from the air by "creatures of another dimension," he had jumped into a shell-hole to save himself. What happened next was a simple parable.

The N.C.O. who was on my heels came in at my back. . . . No fellow human has ever impinged with so resolute a pressure on my own flesh. . . . 'The bastards are bracketing!' muttered the N.C.O. upon my chest. . . . My sensation was resignation to an ordeal rather than expectation of extinction. The bitter taste of stupidity was in my mouth . . .⁴

When he wrote *Monstre Gai* and *Malign Fiesta* after the second war Lewis described how that luxurious extension of mobility and privacy, the automobile, was placed at the *naif* Pullman's limited convenience by both the Bailiff and Sammael. Every morning in the new quarters, Lewis recalled in *Blasting and Bombardiering*, a staff car reported for duty:

I ran down to my battery in the car — to my new Canadian battery. It was a '6 inch How' battery. I had nothing to do with it, of course, except to paint it. It stood by itself in the great open spaces of Vimy Ridge. There was nothing near it.

The battery seldom fired. Everything was different in this part of the Line — so different to start with I could scarcely believe my eyes, or ears.

. . . Away in the distance, over the ruins of Lens, a shell would fall occasionally. That was all; like a big door banging far away in the distance. After my recent experience this peace was almost uncanny. . . .

I made the acquaintance of the officers and men of the battery. I was my own master of course. Next day I went down again with my sketchbook, took up my position and began to make a few drawings of the guns. It was a fine winter's day, there was no battery or anything at all in sight. Just a rolling expanse of old battlefields, gradually softening into an effect like a rather untidy looking common.

I took my pencil and was just about to make a mark on the paper, when immediately overhead a great angry shrapnel burst occurred, spraying the ground all round and, in this idyllic scene, causing such an uproar that all the birds of the neighbourhood began dashing about — the officers came flying up from the Mess dugout, shouting in amazement, 'What's that?' and as to the gunners, pottering among the guns, they just vanished right and left as if they'd been shot. . . . It was just as if the Germans had got wind of my activities, and had said, 'Ha! We will put a little shellfire into this picture!'

I felt somehow guilty for this outrage.

He was thinking, no doubt, about the pre-war visual revolution, of dogmatic abstraction, and of the dangers inherent in the expressionist doctrine which he had already explored as he created the figure of Otto Kreisler in his novel *Tarr*. When he recalled the event in 1937 he was thinking of a new war in the making, of a new explosion of expressionist violence, of the fact that someone was already putting a torch to the workshop.

Early in his account of the conditions under which *A Canadian Gunpit* was

conceived Lewis recalled a picture which had been reproduced in the first issue of *Blast*.

My picture called 'The Plan of War' painted six months before the Great War 'broke out' as we say, depresses me. A prophet is a most unoriginal person: all he is doing is imitating something that is not there, but soon will be. With me war and art have been mixed up from the start. I wish I could get away from war. . . . Writing about it may be the best way to shake the accursed thing off, by putting it in its place as an unseemly joke.⁵

He had, he said, been very *sans façon* about art and perhaps a little callous about war. In art as in war he had been a *condottiere*. He had flung himself into trigonometry and ballistics as "lightheartedly as Leonardo did when he designed siege-sledges for the Florentine General Staff."⁶ He had enrolled others now enlisted in the service of the Canadian War Records — David Bomberg, Frank Dobson, Frederick Etchells, C. R. W. Nevinson, William Roberts, Edward Wadsworth⁷ — under the banner of Vorticism, or, at least, displayed their work in his two issues of *Blast*. Their "records" like Lewis's *A Canadian Gunpit* and Augustus John's charcoal sketch for a mural — Wadsworth's *Dazzle Ships*, Bomberg's *Sappers at Work*, and Roberts' *The First Gas Attack at Ypres* among others — were, after a series of exhibitions in 1919, to disappear into the storage rooms of the National Gallery.

Some of the pictures were shown with work done for the Imperial Government at the Burlington Galleries in Picadilly, where they were reported to be "viewed by great throngs" — including Clive Bell, who concluded with some satisfaction that all the painters were belated Pre-Raphaelites, and that "the brothers Spencer, the brothers Nash, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Bomberg, and Mr. Lamb were probably not born to be painters." Their pictures, he said, departed from "moral conviction" not from "visual sensation." They were not "expressing something that had moved them as artists but rather what they thought about something which had horrified them as men."⁸

When the pictures were shown at the Anderson Galleries in New York, June 10 to July 31, 1919, the "post-war" period, which Lewis saw culminating in England with the General Strike of 1926, had already begun to settle in. The New York *Herald*, June 11, reported:

The Duke of Devonshire, Governor General of Canada, who with members of the Cabinet was to have occupied the centre of the stage [at the opening of the exhibition] was detained in Ottawa by the labour troubles which are now occupying the serious attention of the Dominion Government. Arthur Knowlton, President

of the Canadian Club of New York, was in the chair. He briefly introduced Colonel R. F. Parkinson, D.S.O., the Royal Ottawa Regiment, of the *Ottawa Journal*, who is director of the Canadian War Records Office.

Lewis's canvas, together with the canvases of Wadsworth and Roberts, drew the general attention of the press. *A Canadian Gunpit* was reproduced in the *New York Times Magazine* of June 8. It was noted that "Wyndham Lewis is the leader of an Independent Group of which Roberts was a member in pre-war days. His picture of a Canadian gun pit also marks a return to something akin to realism, though by no means a complete surrender." The *New York Tribune*, June 10, observed, "The 'Gas Attack' painted by Gunner William Roberts and the 'Canadian Gunpit' painted by that celebrated Vorticist, Wyndham Lewis, have undeniable vitality, but one cannot say that either is the least beautiful." *The World*, New York, June 8, reported, "Wyndham Lewis, whose somewhat cubist 'Gunpit' is shown was for three years a Lieutenant in the Field Artillery." Between 1919 and 1920 the pictures were exhibited in both Toronto and Montreal. A history of the collection was later written by Captain Percy F. Godenrath. The title was *Lest We Forget*.

LEWIS MADE HIS OWN COMMENT on all this activity in the Foreword to the catalogue for the exhibition *Guns* at the Goupil Gallery:

The War has, so far, been reflected in art with the greatest profusion. But the same can be said for life at any time and we are not much the wiser. Whatever we may think about that it is certain that the philosophy of the War, all the serious interpretation of it, has yet to be done. That could not, for a hundred reasons, be accomplished during the War. This in no way means the disparagement of the good work relating to the War, in painting, that has been done so far. But all the War journalism, in painting and writing, will cease with the punctuality and *netteté* of a pistol shot when the curtain goes down. It will then be the turn of those with experience in the subject, the inclination, the mood, to make the true record. Truth has no place in action.

Lewis turned his own attention first toward the possibility of collaboration between the artist and the engineer, next to the appearance of the Tyros and Apes who began to people the landscape. Finally, after the General Strike, he turned again to the range of possible imagery between "Ucello's aloof pageant of armours, clothes . . . the trappings and wardrobe of War" and the furious satire of



Mary McLean, 1940

oil, 29 x 20

Reproduced by courtesy of Mrs. Douglas Stewart

Goya's "Desastros de la Guerra." Behind him he had not only the experience of 1914-1918 but also the Timon drawings, the Vorticist abstractions, and the images of embattled machines which can be found in the Captain Guy Baker Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The great canvases, *The Surrender of Barcelona* (Tate Gallery), *The Armada* (Vancouver Art Gallery), *The Stations of the Dead* (Aberdeen Municipal Gallery) were completed in 1936-1937 at the time of the publication of *Blasting and Bombardiering*, *Count Your Dead They Are Alive or A New War in the Making*, and *The Revenge for Love*, a novel which stirred up as much controversy about the nature of reality as the portrait of Eliot painted at the same time was to do.

In Canada during the second war Lewis continued to explore and to expand this theme. *Lebensraum: The Battlefield*, watercolour and ink, 12¾" by 18¾", the property of the Art Gallery of Ontario is, as far as I know, the only example in a public Canadian collection. *Lebensraum No. 2: Empty Tunic*, watercolour and ink, 9½" by 13¾", *Three Martyrs*, watercolour and ink, 14½" by 18¼", *Dragon's Teeth*, watercolour and ink, 10" by 14¼", all in the Douglas collection, Toronto, are dated 1941 and 1942. Another watercolour and ink drawing, 9¾" by 15", *Three Gladiators*, the property of Norman Endicott, also belongs to the same group. In two of the pictures classical architectural detail appears in the context of warrior figures. "Nationalism," Lewis had written in the early months of 1939, "perhaps because to-day it is self-conscious, is invariably antiquarian." In the other two pictures "Creation Myth" images on which Lewis was working at the same time are conceived in an atmosphere of foreboding. A drawing of 1943, *Mother and Infant with Male*, as it was called in an exhibition at York University, Toronto, pastel and pencil, 14¾" by 11", the property of Marshall McLuhan, indicates the vitality with which Lewis continued to record "that never failing paradox, the real."

Images with which Lewis had been preoccupied between the two wars — and earlier — appear in the work of this period. Among these are *Witch on Cowback*, watercolour and crayon, 11½" by 15½", in the Duncan collection, *Witches Surprised at Dawn*, watercolour and crayon, 17¾" by 11¾" in the J. S. McLean collection, Toronto, and *Cow*, exhibited at York University as *Bull's Head*, crayon, 12" by 10", the property of Norman Endicott. All are variations on the theme of *The Childermass*, a skilfully constructed phantasmagoria, in which the relationship between the artist and his model — between Pullman and Satters-thwaite — between the executive will and the not-self — is recapitulated by a mass cast — the Bailiff and the appellants — the crowd-master and the crowd

which now includes the artist and his model however disaffected they may seem to be.

As an epigraph for *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926) Lewis had taken some lines from Chapman in which the figure of horse and rider is transformed into an emblem, "A doctrinal and witty hieroglyphic/ Of a blessed kingdom." As a postscript he had added a fragment from Parmenides, "I wish to communicate this view of the world to you exactly as it manifests itself: and so no human opinion will ever be able to get the better of you."

About the same time a mounted figure had appeared on the cover of the first issue of Lewis's review *The Enemy*. A variant version was made for the prospectus. In 1931 Lewis was depressed by the apathy of England. In *Hitler* he had registered the disturbing waves set up by the "powerful machine of the German consciousness." The sedentary habits of six years of work had begun to weary him. He left England for North Africa. There, meditating between Agadir and the Anti-Atlas on the camel pasturing with its leather lips between the stones on the salty ground of the steppe, he had occasion to think again of the "witty hieroglyphic." The camel on which the life of the group depended, he observed, had never become domesticated like the horse. He "roared with indignation at constraints on his liberty when he was locked up and fed on grain and dates in his brief stop in an oasis."⁹

In 1934 Lewis wrote his controversial essay on "folk prose," "The Dumb Ox: A Study of Ernest Hemingway." This time the image he invoked was not that of the horse or of the camel but of "cattle outside the slaughter-house, serenely chewing the cud . . . of *those to whom things are done* in contrast to those who have executive will and intelligence." "The expression of the dumb-ox," he admitted, "would have a penetrating beauty of its own, if it were uttered with genius — with bovine genius . . . just as much as would the folk-song of the baboon or of the 'Praying Mantis' "¹⁰ — that is, if genius were allowed to express itself at all. Lewis's *Cow* of 1941 is such an expression articulated in a language of form in which it finds a simple and adequate correlative. Only a scale of western values separates it from another picture, this time in the Duncan collection, *Head of a Woman*, crayon and watercolour, 12½" by 18", also dated 1941. Three pictures of the following year, also in the Duncan collection, *Figure Knitting*, *Cat-nap*, and *War News* are subtle and compassionate variations on the same theme.

Witch on Cowback presents a terrified cow, ridden inland into a glaring light by a partly hollow figure which appears to be manipulated by a smaller figure on

its back. The witch's head is the "loud-speaker" head which Charles Handley-Read says first appeared in designs for *Beyond This Limit* (1935), a collaboration between Lewis and Naomi Mitchison." The figure of the "loud-speaker" can be found in Lewis's work, however, as early as *The Childermass* where it is associated with the executive will as it is in *The Apes of God*, where in one of Lewis's illustrations the "loud-speaker" head is combined with antennae.

While he was living at the Tudor Hotel during 1941 and 1942 Lewis also completed a number of works in a series called "Creation Myth." An ink and gouache, 12½" by 13½", dated 1927, a section of dark sea with fish and rising submarine forms called *Creation Myth No. 1*, is now in the Tate collection. Another, also called *Creation Myth No. 1*, was exhibited by Hugh Kenner at Santa Barbara in 1957. There are in the Duncan collection at least four pictures, dated 1941 and 1942, that belong to this group, all are in mixed media and all of dimensions similar to those already indicated: *Creation Myth No. 17*, *Creation Myth: Maternal Figure*, *Gestation*, and *Still Life in the Belly of the Bird*.

Two pictures reproduced in Charles Handley-Read's *The Art of Wyndham Lewis*, *Four Figure Composition* (1938) and *What the Sea is Like at Night* (1949) link two other pictures painted in Toronto to the "Creation Myth" series: *Allegresse Aquatique*, ink and watercolour, 12½" by 17½", in the collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, and *Jehova the Thunderer* in the Duncan collection. Other pictures in the Duncan collection, *The Island*, oil on canvas, 31" by 22 1/8", *Marine Fiesta*, watercolour and ink, and *Two Women on a Beach*, watercolour and crayon on the same blue paper as that used for *Creation Myth: Maternal Figure*, belong to the same world of fluid forms.

Eric Newton, speaking of the surrealist aspect of Lewis's work, observed in 1951 that perhaps Lewis had not created quite enough specimens of what he and Charles Handley-Read called "imaginative composition" as distinct from his paintings of the 1914-1918 war and from his paintings and drawings from life "to furnish a classifiable world with its own fauna and flora." Mr. Newton was alluding specifically to the world of the "ball-headed creatures that inhabit the 'Mud Clinic,'"¹² a painting now the property of the Fredericton Gallery. Even if this questionable presupposition with its consequent classification were granted, it should be remembered that the "ball-headed creatures" appear in some of the pictures painted in 1941 and in 1942 which have not been seen except in two exhibitions in Toronto — one at Victoria College, University of Toronto, from February 6 to February 28, 1950, one at York University, Toronto, November

27 to December 30, 1964 — and in an exhibition at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, August-September, 1957.

In two of the Toronto watercolour and ink pictures — *Lebensraum: The Battlefield* and *Allegresse Aquatique* — these figures may be seen in landscapes which include details of Lewis's immediate environment. In the first they lie like a blood-sacrifice with their rifles and helmets at the base of a distant group of small skyscrapers. In the second they sport and make love in a wide stream below a red barn. Both are related to the *Inferno*, reproduced in *Wyndham Lewis the Artist* and in the Tate Gallery Catalogue for the exhibition of 1956. This picture was first shown at the Leicester Galleries in an exhibition of Lewis's work in December 1937, when, according to the catalogue, the paint was "still wet."

Lewis himself had something to say about doctrinaire Surrealism in 1929. In an essay entitled "The Diabolical Principle," *The Enemy* No. 3, he spoke of a "dogmatic subjectivism which would manipulate objective truth, of necessity, in favour of some version of the private world of the isolated mind" by omitting from its consideration the fact that all reality is a merging, in one degree or another, of the external and the internal, that all reality, to some extent, is one reality saturated with the imagination." "Even more is it the case," he said, "with the reality of art, or myth. . . . All art worth the name is already super-real."¹³

Another group of works painted in Canada which have not been seen except in Toronto and at the Santa Barbara exhibition is the "Crucifixion Series." *Crucifixion Series I* and *Crucifixion Series III* are in the Duncan collection. *Crucifixion Series II Pieta* is in the McLean collection. Another unnumbered example is the property of John Reid of Toronto. The images in these pictures differ from the primitive cruciform figure in an ink, watercolour, and crayon painting dated 1912, and from the sketch of the crucifixion which appears in the *Portrait of Naomi Mitchison, 1938*. The images suggest that Lewis had continued to entertain a belief which he had expressed in *Time and Western Man* when he rejected among other images the image of Bradley's monotonous Absolute. In form and mood these pictures belong with the "Creation Myth" series.

Anyone concerned with Lewis's attraction to aspects of neo-Thomism would be interested in the typewritten text of a lecture on Rouault which Lewis gave for the Arts Club in Chicago, February 1944. In this lecture he recalled by quotation the Conclusion of *Time and Western Man*. Although Lewis saw in the "uncompromising images" of Rouault not only a "religious impulse at the maximum of its creative power" but also one particularly attractive to those caught in the void left by the erosion of the notion of Progress, he was still reluctant to

admit the exclusive claim of a tragic vision. At the end of the discussion of "God as Reality" in *Time and Western Man* he had observed that it was in the interest of a democratic God who had shared his creative power with men that "we should find our salvation in being simply what we are."

THE LETTERS of the Canadian period record that Lewis made some portrait drawings and painted a number of portraits while he was living in Toronto. In his letters he mentions specifically a drawing of Lorne Pierce¹⁴ and a drawing of Douglas LePan which he sent to Felix Giovanelli who was trying to make arrangements for Lewis to lecture in St. Louis.¹⁵ The employees of J. S. McLean commissioned Lewis to paint a portrait of McLean which is now at Canada Packers in Toronto. Lewis also painted Mary, J. S. McLean's daughter. A portrait of Mrs. R. J. Sainsbury, the gift of R. J. Sainsbury, was lent to the York University exhibition by the National Gallery of Canada.

Lewis's *Portrait of an Englishwoman*, reproduced in *Blast* 1914, a witty abstract construction with the diagonal, dynamic, spatial play of forms which were being developed at the same time by the Russian Suprematist Kasmir Malevich, had been qualified in the same number by the assertion that to paint a recognizable human being "should be the rarest privilege, bestowed as a sort of Freedom of Art." By the time he wrote *The Caliph's Design* in 1919 Lewis noted ironically that "it had been possible within the trivial space of ten years, entirely to eliminate from the face of the earth the naked, clothed or other lady — every vestige and tatter even of a human being from the horizon of the purest, the latest art." As an examination of Lewis's painting will show he continued to take advantage of the privilege which his technical mastery of abstraction had conferred upon him.

Lewis could hardly have expected to support himself either in the United States or Canada by portrait painting at the end of 1939. In the final pages of *Wyndham Lewis the Artist*, a collection of critical essays on the visual arts, which included some sharp prefatory comment on the role of the amateur, the eclectic, and the entrepreneur, Lewis spoke of the rejection of his 1938 portrait of T. S. Eliot by the Royal Academy. The rejection indicated, Lewis remarked, "how our particular plutocracy expresses its patronizing contempt for the things of the mind, when those things take a visual form." The submission of the portrait had been a test case for him.

The *Portrait of Edith Sitwell* (begun in 1923 and completed in 1935) now in the Tate Gallery, the gift of Major Beddington Behrens, Lewis finally sold to

the Leicester Galleries for £50. The 1938 *Portrait of Ezra Pound* was purchased for £100 by the Tate Gallery out of the Knapping Fund in 1939, but Sir John Rothenstein recalls that he himself failed to persuade the Trustees of the Tate to buy the portrait of Eliot for £250.¹⁶ It was finally sold to the Durban Municipal Gallery. The first part of the payment made it possible for Lewis to leave London. In October of 1939 Lewis was writing to T. J. Honeyman from Buffalo to thank him for sending part of the payment. "I am sorry," he said, "that I had to bother you so much."¹⁷

The National Gallery of Canada, to whose acting director Lewis was to apply for work with the War Records, had consented in 1939 to give temporary safe-keeping to some of the British pictures from the New York World's Fair. In October John Rothenstein was in Ottawa, a guest of the Tweedsmuirs at Government House, arranging for the temporary exhibition for which Lord Tweedsmuir had consented to perform the opening ceremony. *The Surrender of Barcelona* had been in the English Pavilion. Perhaps Lewis thought that Canada was still interested in saving British artists as well.

It was, however, the interest of particular people that made it possible for Lewis to work. On July 15, 1941, he wrote to Sturge Moore, whom he had known since his boyhood, "I have been miraculously fed and sheltered (I have what Americans call an 'angel'.)"¹⁸ In 1941 he also wrote to Archibald MacLeish, "I have succeeded in making a living of sorts here — mostly by portrait painting — it is very gruesome work struggling with people about the shape of their nose and the size of their feet; and Canada being a small and backward country does not make it easier."¹⁹

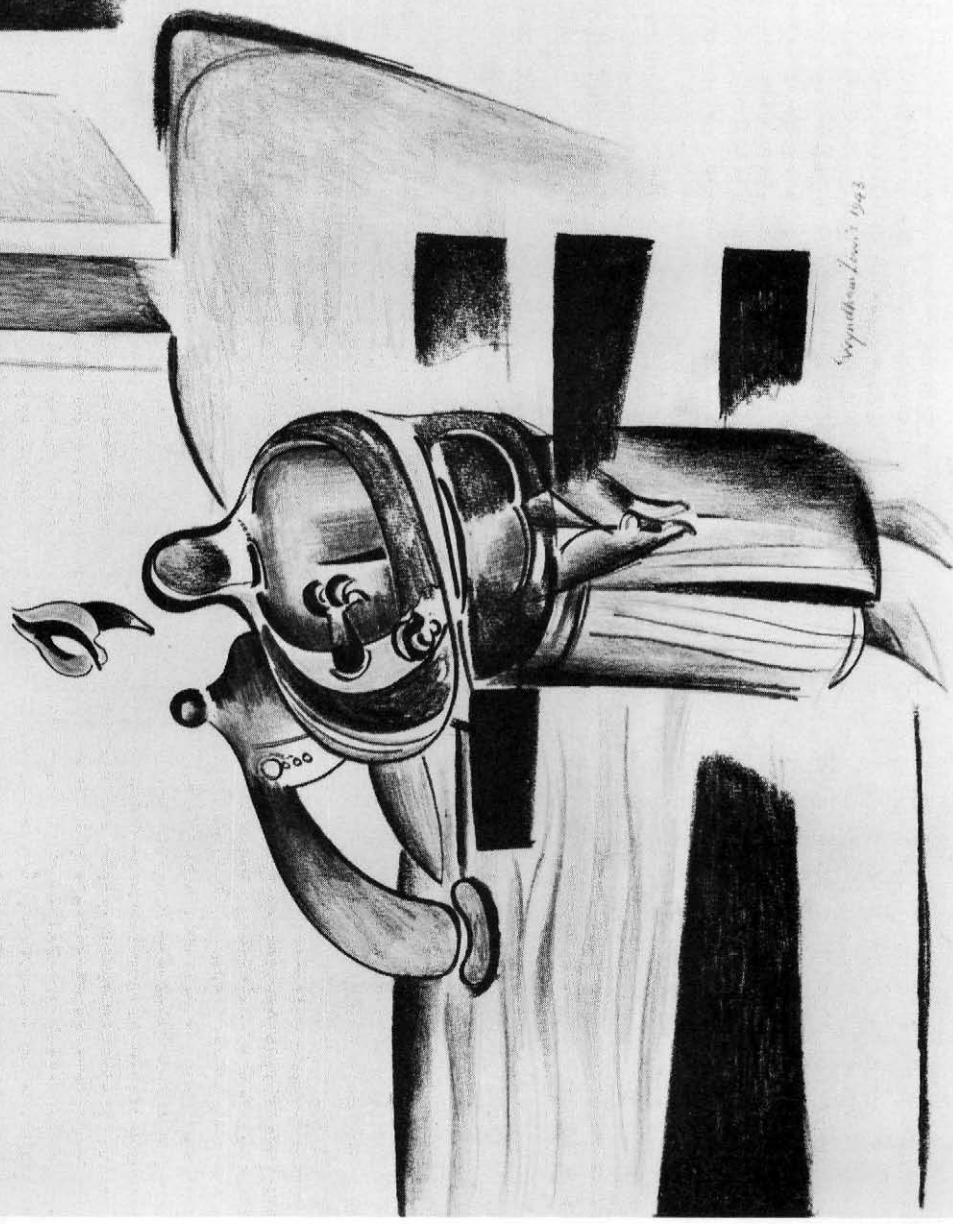
Nevertheless Lewis was depressed by the psychological chill of wartime Toronto, by the combination of money and methodism, by his failure to find himself, until he went to Windsor, in any meaningful context. "I am reduced to writing articles," he wrote, "to fill the time and my pocket — on 'Will there be a Canadian Renaissance?' . . . So I make quite a spectacular explosion of intellectual energy. The only intelligent people here like the painter, Jackson, regard a marriage with the States as their best bet and I think the same."²⁰ Lewis admired Jackson for his integrity as a painter and as soon as he returned to England paid particular tribute to him in the first of a series of articles for *The Listener*, August 29, 1946, in which he showed his broad capacity to understand work which had its base in a "creative necessity" that was not closely related to his own.

Lewis apparently met A. Y. Jackson in 1939 at a dinner in the York Club given by J. S. McLean and arranged by Terrence MacDermot, then Headmaster

of Upper Canada College, and Douglas Duncan. John Reid recalled that the dinner took place on November 30, St. Andrew's Day, because Charles Comfort, who had been invited with Jackson and Carl Schaefer, was wearing a plaid tie. Reid recalled, too, that Lewis was late for dinner because it was on this day that he had been taken on a tour of Hart House by the Warden. Lewis, then, must have returned to Toronto from Buffalo for a few days before he went to New York to see about *The Vulgar Streak*, a novel finally published in wartime format by Robert Hale in London. The visit to Hart House provided Lewis with an amusing chapter in *America I Presume*, a book which he wrote during his unhappy year in New York.

AFTER HE RETURNED to Canada in November 1940, Lewis found accommodation in the Tudor Hotel not far from the old post office on Bay Street and close to Duncan's small gallery on Charles Street. As his letters indicate he went almost immediately to Ottawa to make enquiries about work for the War Records. Eric Brown, who had been Director of the National Gallery since the time of the Beaverbrook scheme and who had secured the services of a number of resident artists for the first War Records, had died in April 1939. H. O. McCurry was acting director. Lewis apparently received promises but nothing seemed to come of them. This time paradoxically he was to be commissioned not by the Canadian Government but by the British War Artists Advisory Committee to paint what is usually referred to as the "Anaconda picture."

The difficulties which beset the painter *de métier*, already indicated by the dimensions of the paintings of 1941-1942, the skilful and integrated use of blue drug-store paper, and the use of most easily accessible materials except in commissioned portraits, became acute at the time Lewis began his work for the British Ministry. To Eric Kennington, who had also worked for the Beaverbrook fund in 1914-1918 and was of help to Lewis at this time, Lewis wrote in March 1943, "Since I have been given the choice, I paint a picture in oils. I believe I can put my hands on the money to buy a canvas: and I can get free transport to the factory." After a hiatus in the letter which is explained by the comment "Six weeks ago the hotel burnt down all but the annexe", Lewis mentions the problem again. "I bought the last box of white conte in the 'Art Metropole' here the other day. I am turning over in my mind methods of making paint, when the last brush and the last tubes of Burnt Sienna and Venetian Red are sold and I and a few others here are back where Cimabue was — lassoing hogs and cutting their



Mother and Infant with Male, 1943

PASTEL AND PENCIL, 14 ³/₄ x 11

Reproduced by courtesy of Marshall McLuhan

hair off for brushes. There is a lot of hoarding going on in artists materials I believe.”²¹

After the fire at the Tudor Hotel, Douglas Duncan recalls, Lewis moved across the street to the Selby. He was not to be there long. Before he had been commissioned by the British War Artists Advisory Committee he had been attempting to find some civilian employment in which he could be of use and freed from the necessity of painting portraits, since, as he told Kennington, “he could not even masquerade as a soldier.” Although he brushed it aside he was also beginning to have trouble with his sight. By curious coincidence the opportunity came only when he was beginning work on the Anaconda picture — the “line of furnaces serviced by an infernal personnel (mainly Central European and Russian)” and the monster with a solitary claw which drew jars of molten glass from the furnaces.²² In March he was invited by Father J. Stanley Murphy to lecture at Assumption College in Windsor. This was undoubtedly one of his happiest experiences in Canada, but it created complications for him as an artist.

In August Lewis wrote to Felix Giovanelli from the Royal Apartments in Windsor, “I have to work a little more on my painting for the British Government, and then get down to the reading necessary for my October lectures and collect material for my book.” (*America and Cosmic Man*). Two days later he wrote again, “My picture is giving trouble and threatens to interfere with the reading I had planned in preparation for the Heywood Broun Lectures. But I have an excellent small studio thank goodness.” On November 11, he told Giovanelli, “The Ministry of Information have thrust a new problem on me; they suggest that I should secure a zinc cylinder here in Windsor, roll up the painting I did for them, so that it may be transported in a bomber to England. I don’t feel that this is going to do my picture very much good, especially as the paint is rather thick in places.”²³

“Writing and picture-making are not activities, I have found, which mix very well, unless one becomes the servant of the other, as was the case with Blake, or with Rossetti,” Lewis wrote in *Rude Assignment*.²⁴ Although the move to Windsor appears to have brought to an end the activity of 1941-1942 Lewis’s picture making did not cease. “It is my plan to paint one of the priests here,” he wrote to John Burgess from Windsor. “He is a whole hogging Thomist; and I shall call it ‘The Thomist’.”²⁵ Father Murphy sat for him. He painted a portrait of Mrs. Paul Martin. He made a fine pastel drawing of Pauline Bondy and began a portrait in oil which was unfinished when he left Windsor. It was returned to Canada by Mrs. Lewis after Lewis’s death, as a pencil sketch of Marshall Mc-

Luhan was and an oil portrait of Margaret Giovanelli. In *Rude Assignment* Lewis mentions a pastel of "Mrs. O'Brien of Montreal" dated 1945. It should be remembered also that *Mother and Infant with Male* is dated 1943.

From St. Louis came offers of help from Marshall McLuhan and Felix Giovanelli. "Please tell McLuhan," Lewis wrote to Giovanelli, "(though I am writing to him about this) that I propose to do 'Thirty Personalities of America' . . . But that is in the future and I want some portable specimens of my handiwork. . . ." To Giovanelli, who had sent him twenty-five dollars as an advance on a portrait of his wife, Lewis replied, "Let me thank you first . . . when I come to St. Louis in February I shall enjoy portraying her — though I don't like to think of your paying for it."²⁶ Brought to St. Louis by the two men in 1944, Lewis painted a portrait of Dr. Joseph Erlanger, who that year had been awarded the Nobel Prize.

After the rejection of the 1938 portrait Eliot had written to Lewis, ". . . it seems to me a very good portrait, and one by which I am quite willing that posterity should know me, if it takes any interest in me at all. And though I may not be the best judge of it as portraiture, I am sure that it is a very fine painting."²⁷ Earlier he had praised Lewis for his impersonality, the impersonality of the artist who can out of the particularity of experience express a general truth or create a myth. From the portrait of Mary McLean Stewart, oil, 29" x 20", painted in December 1940, when Lewis first settled down in Toronto under the "blanket of war" to the pastel portrait of Pauline Bondy completed in Windsor in 1943, the images of the creation myth which had begun to appear in the portraits of 1937-1938, the *Portrait of Eliot*, the *Portrait of Mrs. Honeyman*, *The Red Portrait*, *Froanna The Artist's Wife*, and the *Portrait of Stephen Spender* are caught and focussed in objects of everyday use. In the portrait of Mary McLean they can be seen in the patterns and shape of the chair and in the lines of her simple dress. In the pastel sketch of Pauline Bondy they appear on the jacket of the suit she is wearing, in the tree-like shapes in her brooch, and in the floating lines of the hat which suggest that she carries a new world on her head.

VORTICISM, LEWIS RECALLED in an essay in *The Architectural Review*, November 1934, was a movement initiated by a group of painters but it was aimed essentially at architectural reform. The Vorticists' work, like Mondrian's, was often an exercise in architectural theory, the picture a "spell", a positional abstraction designed to attract an architectural shell. In *Rude Assign-*

ment Lewis recalled that the way in which the experiences of the 1914-1918 war, of the "miles of hideous desert known as 'the Line'" altered his vision.

Had you at that time asked me to paint a milkmaid in a landscape of buttercups and daisies I should probably have knocked you down. But when Mars with his mailed finger showed me a shell-crater and a skeleton, with a couple of shivered tree-stumps behind it, I was still in my abstract element. And before I knew quite what I was doing I was drawing with loving care a signaller corporal to plant upon the lip of the shell-crater.

This was not a part of the enterprise which "turned an Academy rosebud into a khaki brave" or "in the outer fashion a cubed cockney into a cubed Tommy."²⁸ It was a movement away not only from the sentimentality which caricatured the great medieval virtue of compassion, but also from the vulgarization of disgust and from a scientific scepticism which cloaked itself in impersonality. Such scepticism could be confronted in no way except by a recognition of the essential absurdity of men who identified themselves with a machine. The specific at this point was laughter, not of the Bergsonian kind, but something primitive, hard, and unchangeable, "the sudden handshake of mystic violence and the anarchist" or "the bark of delight of a gregarious animal at the proximity of its kind."²⁹ The Chinese artist who thought of "human life as one piece" did not place man with a capital M at the centre of his pictorial universe. Since he allowed a fish, bird, tiger, fly, frog to enter it on an equal footing with the human biped, he never arrived at the apotheosis of the banal which brought about the decay of all form and elegance and fostered a defeatism in which the traditional guardians — religious and political — of the humanitarian values could contemplate the thought of bigger and better bombs, laden with poison for the destruction of "alien" cities.

In an essay on Picasso in the *Kenyon Review*, Spring 1940, Lewis had announced that his own solution was a return to nature, not, however, a return to the world of the camera or to the world of idealized archetypes, both the result of the isolation of the eye from the other senses. What Lewis had to say about Picasso's "witty, distorted reflections" and about his "power to caricature all that is brought to him" could have done nothing but alienate the "modernists" who in Canada, for instance, were to be startled in 1948 by the work of Riopelle and Borduas, or to find in the work of Pollock and Rothko and in the birth of abstract expressionism in New York a wholly unheralded development. Lewis was isolated in Canada partly by the condition of the civilian during war but also by a time lag. It is interesting that he found companionship not among the artists but among the neo-Thomists and the students of contemporary literature.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Canadian War Records Office Report Submitted by the Officer in Charge to The Honourable Sir Edward Kemp, K.C.M.G., M.P., Overseas Minister of Militia & Defence. March 30 (1918) by Beaverbrook, Lt. Col., Officer i/c Canadian War Records, p. 7.
- ² *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, ed. W. K. Rose (London, 1963), 383.
- ³ *Blasting and Bombardiering* (London, 1937), 195.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 174.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.
- ⁷ Canadian War Records Office Report Submitted by Lord Beaverbrook to the Honourable Sir Edward Kemp, K.C.M.G., M.P., Minister of Overseas Military Forces of Canada. Aug. 31, 1919. Appendix 2, p. 9.
- ⁸ Clive Bell, "Wilcoxism!" *Athenaeum*, No. 4688 (March 5, 1920), 311-312.
- ⁹ Wyndham Lewis, *Fillibusters in Barbary* (London, 1932), 174.
- ¹⁰ Wyndham Lewis, *Men Without Art* (London, 1934), 40.
- ¹¹ Charles Handley-Read, *The Art of Wyndham Lewis* (London, 1951), 57.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 27.
- ¹³ Wyndham Lewis, *The Diabolical Principle and the Dithyrambic Spectator* (London, 1931), 66-67.
- ¹⁴ *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, 304.
- ¹⁵ Unpublished letter, August 13, 1943.
- ¹⁶ John Rothenstein, *Brave Day, Hideous Night* (London, 1966), 207.
- ¹⁷ *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, 265.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 292.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 302.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 317.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 352.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 353.
- ²³ Unpublished letters, August 9, August 15, November 11, 1943.
- ²⁴ p. 130.
- ²⁵ *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, 370.
- ²⁶ Unpublished letter, November 11, 1943.
- ²⁷ *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, 251.
- ²⁸ Foreword, *Guns* (London: William Marchant, The Goupil Gallery), n.p.
- ²⁹ Wyndham Lewis, *The Wild Body* (London), 237.

A RECOLLECTION OF WYNDHAM LEWIS

Lorne Pierce

The following recollection is part of a letter which the late Lorne Pierce wrote on the 29th April, 1960 to W. K. Rose, then editing Lewis's letters. It is published with the permission of Professor Rose and of H. Pearson Gundy, Lorne Pierce's literary executor.

LEWIS FIRST MET me in 1941. He had come to Toronto with his wife, and was very restless, critical of Toronto, and, I seem to recall, the world, if not indeed the cosmos! He was uprooted, and wanted the friends he had known, and the opponents even, of the Old World. Canada, immersed in the tension and confusion of the War, its cultural life in a sense "organized for victory", had little time for the amenities. There were few small groups in which he felt at home, and, badgered constantly over funds, and the business of sitting it out in Canada until Peace, he was not at peace in his turbulent soul. His quarters were not to his liking, the rooms, and their care; likewise the food. He had a low opinion of authors and artists everywhere. They were all hollow men, recreant, two unforgiveable sins!

He came to my office (I was then Editor-in-Chief of The Ryerson Press, the "mother publishing house of Canada", est. 1829) unannounced. He wanted to do my portrait, a crayon sketch. I was very busy, and had no time to pose. Besides, I told him that, having sat for three oils, and a bust (the best is now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, I think), I had been done to death. However, he said that he was most anxious to do this portrait. He was without work, or prospects, and I could help him by consenting to sit. It would mean contacts, and such he must have to survive until war's end. I agreed, providing that he sketched

while I worked in my office, and he was pleased. He worked away on a large sheet of paper, thumb-tacked to a board, but suddenly rose, and in disgust rolled the sheet into a ball, strode to the wpb, and threw it in. He tore out of my office without a word, banged the door and was gone. Some days later he returned, and without knocking entered, sat in an arm chair near me, and began work again. He repeated this a day or so later, and then showed me the result, a striking study, vigorous, probing, his commentary on the sitter and not a flattering "likeness". I liked it, of course, and asked him why he went to so much trouble over an unknown. He replied that he was interested in my face and head, that it represented a challenge to him, and that it reminded him of De Valera, whom he had painted. He crowned that by saying that I reminded him of De Valera *and* Mephistopheles! He said this laughing, and I was bound to laugh with him. My daughter has this, for months later he returned and presented it to me signed and dated. He said that he had used it many times with prospective clients, and that it had brought him success. I do not know who his sitters were.

We met off and on until he returned to England. We were interested in importing for Canada his British publications, but the hazards of war shipping and other complications made this unsuccessful. I liked an outline he did of a small thing on the British Commonwealth, and urged him to develop it into a small book. This became "Anglosaxony: A League that Works." Our ideas were almost identical on this matter. I had begun as early as 1929 to develop the theme of Canadian nationalism based upon an entente cordiale at home between French and English, and a closer entente between the component parts of the Commonwealth. Lewis was all for this, and in the end he handed me his Ms, which we published.

Lewis was already concerned about his vision, and had moments of great depression. But, in most respects, the world was sadly out of joint. I liked him very much. He was a veritable volcano of energy, for ever sending up showers of ideas, hunches, impressions, imprecations, and the odd benevolent blessing.

EXILE'S LETTERS

W. K. Rose

What is the use of talking, and there
is no end of talking,
There is no end of things in the heart.
— *Pound, after Rihaku*

READING LEWIS'S CANADIAN CORRESPONDENCE, one thinks — or is it only hindsight — what a plot for a Lewis novel! Of the hundreds of letters he wrote between November 1940, and August 1945, only a representative portion found room in *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*; many more survive in the Lewis Collection at Cornell and in private hands. Taken together and read in sequence, the whole group provides all the ingredients of a successful long fiction: extraordinary human interest, a main action nicely rounded in time and space, several suspenseful and revealing “sub-plots,” patches of humour and sentiment, and plenty of food for thought. This epistolary proto-novel seems to need only some focussing and an underlying idea.

For most readers some human interest will doubtless be present before they begin. We go to Lewis's Canadian correspondence because we are already captivated or repelled by or at any rate curious about the writer, that celebrated and wonderfully gifted bad boy of modern English art and letters. We have read his books, seen his pictures, perhaps become acquainted with his fascinating personality and career through his earlier letters, or the gossip of contemporaries. What will The Enemy make of Toronto, we ask, or Toronto of him?

The tale that unfolds is human comedy bleak, not to say black, beyond our expectation. Trapped in his “sanctimonious icebox,” Lewis flails about like a caged elephant. But the animal metaphor is misleading; it is an all-too-human, far from winning, yet admirably individual character that emerges from these pages. The writer is ridden by several concerns: the wish to be recognized as the notable

he was in England, the need to justify his earlier pro-Axis sympathies and his departure from Britain in 1939, the desire for some kind of companionship or ambience to replace his London life, the hope for a more stable existence in England after the war; above all, an almost hysterical pre-occupation with keeping his head above water.

These interests determine not only the contents of most of the letters but often the correspondents. For example, writing to a friend or acquaintance, Lewis will usually, *en passant*, touch him for a small loan or gift (all the same to him), but very many times he is clearly writing for the purpose of touching. Again, the particular concern and the face put upon it quite naturally depend on the particular correspondent. With English people — old friends like Naomi Mitchison and Sir Nicholas Waterhouse, influential acquaintances such as H. G. Wells and Henry Moore — Lewis is forever justifying his removal from England on economic grounds, explaining his flirtation with Hitler as pacifism, and announcing his new Rooseveltian liberalism and his eagerness to return to bomb-ridden London. The same people often hear as well of Canadian unfriendliness and parochialism and of their correspondent's decision to get into the establishment once he's back on home ground — "How about 'Keeper of the People's Pictures'? We've got a 'Keeper of the King's'. I think it absurd that because I didn't have a cotton-mill I can't 'Keep' something." To important Canadians, on the other hand, the expatriate expounds on the future of Canadian culture and on Anglo-Canadian relations. If the "melancholy monied methodist" is not perhaps sufficiently aware of his supplicant's eminence, Lewis does not hesitate to place himself in the most exalted company; he is also ready to abase himself before someone he considers his inferior in all but wealth.

This seesaw effect sets the tone of the Canadian letters. It, more I think than the financial desperation or the constant bellyaching, accounts for the uneasiness one feels reading the correspondence. It is hard to respect a man who's jumped his rent in London, refuses to pay up but insists that things left in the flat not be touched, *and* at the same time claims, to a prospective benefactor, that his living expenses in Canada are really *travel* expenses because he has to pay his London rent. To an English enquiry regarding his birth, the half-American Lewis insists on being a pure product of Albion, while he declares himself a fellow New Worldling to someone in power over here. The miraculous fact he seems never to leak is that he was actually, if fortuitously, born in Canada.

The shenanigans and self-seeking will not upset a reader familiar with the lives of other asocial artists. What disturbs here is, rather, one's sense of identification

with this beleaguered man: which of us, when the going was rough, has not cut his corner, put out his hand, told his saving lie? There is also the discomfort of having got too close to family secrets. After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Finally, there is the irresistible fact of Lewis and his wife far from home, stuck in an unsympathetic locale, frightfully hard-up.

Lewis's unceasing efforts to keep the wolf from the door furnish the correspondence with its sub-plot. There is the story of his attempt to become a resident artist in an American university, and coming excruciatingly close to jobs at Olivet College and Reed. There is the story of the Ministry of Information commission, with a cast of notables including Sir Kenneth Clark, Henry Moore, and Malcolm MacDonald. This episode did, one way and another, put sizeable sums in Lewis's pocket. But like the others it ends ignominiously: the commissioned painting was never delivered. Then there is the Vancouver caper, about which more later. And there are, as always with this great comic artist, the funny bits. Lewis offering himself to Alfred Barr at the Museum of Modern Art for \$40 a week steps right out of *Snooty Baronet*. With a picture in the Durban Municipal Art Gallery, he toys with the idea of prospecting for sitters in South Africa, then turns around and offers himself for a curatorship in South America!

THE LETTERS are instinct with both humour and sentiment, qualities that do much to create sympathy for their author. Exiled from a world capital, Lewis amuses his more urbane correspondents with jokes about the "this bush-metropolis of the Orange Lodges" in which he resides. His plight seen with the Lewisian detachment of *The Wild Body* becomes grotesquely comic: "in this place it is as if someone were sitting on your chest — having taken care to gag you first — and were croaking out Moody and Sankey from dawn to day-shut." The humourlessness of "these solemn yokels" is laughable. "'Well,' she said, 'they described you as Mr. W. L. the celebrated English *wit*. . . .' It took me some time to understand that she regarded the term *wit* as offensive and damaging." He is continually surprised at finding himself, whose spiritual home was the *rive gauche*, among such hicks. They don't mention the war. "The subject is not taboo. It just does not interest." So, when a tank "moved down the street and as it was abreast a group of people, myself among them . . . let fly at a range of fifteen feet with a quite sizeable little cannon it had hidden in its flank . . . no one took the slightest notice. That was what was so queer. I got the feeling that some-

thing unreal was happening: and it was the people who gave it me." He dubbed his days in Toronto, after the hotel in which the Lewises lived, his "Tudor period," and at the end of his exile summed up Canada in a letter to Allen Tate:

They have retained their censors office here so I am debarred from telling you what I think of this place: but if you turn to the Book of Genesis you will see that towards the end of the week God became awful tired. It was in the last few minutes (He was not feeling at all good) that He produced a country beginning with C. It might have been Canaan; or perhaps it was place over which a King reigns who is however only a commoner. A pretty tough one that!

A reader of Lewis's fiction, poetry, autobiographies, and letters quickly recognizes his ironic stance, his grinning Tyro's mask, as a natural product of his temperament. It is only in occasional letters and in the later novels that *The Enemy* gives vent to the warm-blooded, tender side of his nature. We come upon it in the Canadian letters in nostalgic evocations of palmier days in London. To his old friend Sturge Moore, he writes:

How calm those days were before the epoch of wars and social revolution, when you used to sit on one side of your work table and I on the other, and we would talk — with trees and creepers of the placid Hampstead domesticity beyond the windows, and you used to grunt with a philosophic despondence I greatly enjoyed.

The quality of tender intimacy in a few notes to his wife, in the Cornell collection, is particularly affecting. Away from her for a few days, he sends his regards to her beloved dog: "Tell him that if I hear he has misbehaved himself during my absence I shall put him in the *barph* and there administer a severe flogging: after which solitary confinement of course, and no bones for 24 hours." In 1944 Lewis reports the death of this "hirsute gremlin" in a letter to a friend. He feels, he says, in a way responsible for the pain inflicted by the loss of "this small creature, which stood for all that was benevolent in the universe." "Like the spirit of a simpler and saner time, this fragment confided his destiny to her, and went through all the black days beside us." Now his wife grieves, and he is "just another human being — by no means a well of primitive *joie-de-vivre*: so not much comfort!"

The letters from Canada are more personal than those of any other period of Lewis's life. They are also on the whole more discursive. *Hors de combat* for really the first time in his career, he has the leisure to comment at length on topics of interest; deprived of congenial companions, he needs the medium of correspondence for small-talk and rumination. Just as so often in his novels we jump from the purely personal or emotional passage to the philosophic discussion, so in these

letters are the cries of woe and pleas for help interspersed with lively commentary on public events, discussion of his own works, and speculation on the "post-war." Since Wyndham Lewis the Artist thinks always concretely, illustratively, his epistolary comment is apt to be as vivid as that in the essays and novels. On the subject of India's participation in the war, he says in 1942:

As to India defending *itself*: an Indian friend of mine informed me that his ancestors had not taken life for three thousand years. I asked him how he knew that. He replied at once: "I know it because if they had I should not belong to the Caste I do." — Not a promising subject for universal Hindu conscription!

In an unpublished letter to Malcolm MacDonald, Lewis opposes MacDonald's "theory that the bush will attract and absorb the red blooded people" with his own view "that the red-bloods will go pink and scorn the ancestral wilds."

In Timmins the other day a tailor was heavily fined for making a zoot-suit: and although it is true that the Finnish miners still kill each other in murderous affrays up there, the boredom that provokes this violence is being progressively liquidated, I understand, in the dazzling dance-halls of the bush cities. "Artic hysteria" is being sublimated in hot music. — I mean that I think that "the frontier" that is in [A. Y.] Jackson's blood is chronologic and not geographic, and it is far-off in the past, in a limbo of snowshoes and redskins. It will hardly come back via the air. . . .

THE TIME HAS COME to stop playing games. The Lewis novel I have been coyly adumbrating did of course get written and eventually appear, in 1954, as *Self Condemned*. He had projected it early during his stay in Toronto and it must have been in the back, or on the side, of his mind when he wrote the letters I have been discussing. In an article, evidently unpublished, of 1941 or 1942, he says: "I could qualify to be the 'Dr. Anthony' of the Adjustee. There is nothing I do not know about these painful questions, and this accumulated wisdom I shall one day embody in a book, such as Maxim Gorki might have written — the author of 'Creatures who once were men'."

In avoiding mention of *Self Condemned* my aim has been to cause those who know the novel to make their own free associations between it and the letters, between the fiction and the facts. A study of the two in tandem does not, I think,

tell us anything new about the relationship between life and art or, specifically, about the relationship between Lewis's life and his art. Like most serious novelists, Lewis was essentially an autobiographical writer: the fantastic Bailiff's court in *The Childermass* is just as truly a theatre of its creator's mind as is the scene of "Lord Asmund's Lenten Party" (*The Apes of God*) a thinly disguised Renishaw. The fact that *Self Condemned* is probably the most closely autobiographical of the novels makes it only a more crucial example of an old pattern of transformation. Still, it is rare with any novelist and unparalleled in Lewis that so much first-hand raw material is available to the scholar. Having tried to suggest some of the intrinsic qualities of this raw material as well as its relevance to *Self Condemned*, I shall now focus directly on the novel in order to spell out some connections between it and the letters. My purpose is not to explain the novel via the *ur-novel* but rather to demonstrate more clearly the rewards of such a tandem consideration. The parallels are so extensive that only a rigorous sampling is possible here.

First, let us consider the underlying idea, absent in the letters but essential to the fiction. Lewis found it in the feelings that prompted all the self-justifying passages in the letters and the frequent complaints about not getting his due. His hero, Professor René Harding, is a martyr to his beliefs; his failure is a failure to compromise them. This intransigence brings about his exile in Canada and subsequent deterioration. Finally, he is too burned out to be able to face returning to England and the pariah's poverty.

"I do not need you to tell me ten times a day that it is not worth while to work here, to work in Momaco. *Of course* it is not. . . . But I also know that I will never again become a nameless piece of human wreckage. *But* my shoes shall be shone: my pocket-book shall be packed with newly-printed notes. . . ."

Here René might well be paraphrasing a passage from an unpublished letter of 1943 to Sir Nicholas Waterhouse:

But I have really come to a decision. *I will not* — categorically — any longer live from hand to mouth trying to do good paintings, trying to write good books. . . . I am tired of seeing people lounging about in comfortable bureaucratic jobs while I work my guts out about money.

Lewis always signed his letters to Sir Nicholas, "Professor."

Unlike René, Wyndham did return; he even attained a kind of official sinecure

in his small Civil List pension and regular reviewing for *The Listener*.¹ The point is that in Canada he felt deeply threatened by his political error of the 30's, and by having left England as the war was beginning. If René Harding's suffering and fate seem, like those of so many tragic heroes, in excess of the given cause (*i.e.*, his moral stand), do we not find in the letters the source of the feeling that nearly topples the novel but gives it such an impact?

Lewis's choice of the academic profession for his hero has lighter overtones, though the realities were grim enough. The signature to Sir Nicholas's letters may itself have inspired René's occupation, but certainly Lewis's long quest for a university position in Canada or the United States figured, as did his finally securing a place at Assumption College. Nor can we disregard the fact that the novel required that its hero be in some relation to the public so that his stand might reverberate. To make him an artist of any kind would have rendered next to impossible any authorial detachment on Lewis's part. And politicians were even less familiar to the writer than professors. Still, one cannot contemplate without some amusement this decision by Lewis, whose own formal education ended dismally at Rugby and whose academic contacts thereafter were tenuous. To a prospective academic employer, he wrote in 1943: "As to the nature of that work. It will I suppose consist of daily lectures, of an informal type. That is what teaching amounts to, isn't it?"

Lewis wisely avoids the academic scene as much as he can in *Self Condemned*. René has already left his post in England when the novel begins, and his appointment at Momaco never really materializes on-stage. Even so, the occasional glimpses of university life do not convince as the rest of the novel does: "It was an important dinner: the President of McGill and other academic notables were to be there." Compared with the high and true comedy of Malamud's *A New Life*, Lewis's academia reads like a parody of C. P. Snow.

René as professor rings most true during his recuperative stay at The College of the Sacred Heart, for here Lewis is clearly very close to his own experience. Readers of *The Letters* will know that he was invited by Father Murphy, Registrar of Assumption College, to lecture in the college's annual Christian Culture of his assignments was to deliver the second annual Heywood Broun Memorial Series, that he did so early in 1943, and then was invited to join the faculty. One Lecture in the fall of 1943. This series was, according to a brochure, "to be given by a world-famous authority in the realm of ideas who is working for 'a new Christendom'." The title of Lewis's lectures, the "Concept of Liberty From the 'Founding Fathers of the U.S.A. Till Now'" [*sic*], and his letters attest to the

seriousness of his preparation, as does *America and Cosmic Man*, published in 1948 as a result. Assumption is in Windsor, across the river from Detroit, whereas Sacred Heart is across the river from Buffalo, an earlier scene of Lewis's trials; but the identity is unmistakable from the beginning.

The letter within, in the crabbed peasant fist of Father Moody, was cordial in the extreme. The personality of the rubicund priest, who had visited him a year or so earlier, and offered him a course of lectures, if he had time to give them at Sacred Heart College, was visible in every awkward scratch of the pen and crude friendly word. (*Self Condemned*, p. 377)

Lewis's letters to Father Murphy and to others at the time of his affiliation with Assumption accord very well with the bright and lively picture we get in the novel. ("René's impression of these first days was that he was sinking down into the equivalent of a wonderful feather bed.") Here, after the horrors of Toronto, was a pleasant place to live and a most congenial, even indulgent, group of hosts. Lewis began his academic year with a summer course in the Philosophic Roots of Modern Art and Literature — "A distinct honour to have him," reads Father Murphy's bulletin. Although the agreement was that he should go on teaching till the following June, it is already apparent in letters of August, when Marshall McLuhan and Felix Giovanelli were working to lure him to St. Louis, that this professor felt free to come and go as he pleased. He did indeed depart at the end of January (1944), not returning till the following July! "I am distressed about my little class," Lewis wrote to Father Murphy that March. "But it can be explained . . . that I am *practicing*, instead of preaching, for a while, but will return to take up the story later." The long-suffering fathers not only had him back the following summer but commissioned a group of portraits. Their generosity evidently caused Lewis to have some qualms about earning money in St. Louis while still on Assumption's rolls. As René was on *paid* sick leave from Momaco, we are unnecessarily told, he returned the fees he received for his lectures at Sacred Heart.

The University of Momaco is itself, as this analogy suggests, part Assumption. The parallelism is most apparent in the turn in René's fortunes that is signaled by his appointment to Momaco in May of 1944. Just as the fire in the Blundell earlier the same year punctuates the Hardings' drift downward, so was the real fire in the real Tudor Hotel in February 1943 followed by Lewis's appointment to Assumption and its attendant joys.

But Momaco also means, in university as in everything else, *Toronto*. During his years in that city Lewis felt snubbed by its university. When, having achieved academic status at Assumption, he was invited by a professor to speak to a phil-

osophy club at the unfriendly institution, he wrote to a benefactor: "As I was in Toronto for nearly 3 years and the University studiously ignored my existence, I should answer him differently if he were not a friend of yours." Aware as he was of his lack of qualification — "Harvard is out of the question for me," he wrote to Theodore Spencer, ". . . if you know some old colleague or pupil who is now President of a Girls College (an inferior Vassar) or of some obscure Western or Southern university, write him and tell him about me." — and having been so frustrated in his quest for academic work, Lewis must have smiled a good deal over the professional success of his autobiographical hero. René tells Hester that "there is an excellent chance that I should be asked down to some large American University; Yale, Chicago, something like that." And the offer comes, thanks to the "unusual rapidity" with which "the existence of so distinguished a man upon the North American continent was recognized." To the knowing reader the irony of these opening words of the novel's last paragraph is as cutting as the scorn of the closing ones is explicable: "and the Faculty had no idea that it was a glacial shell of a man who had come to live among them, mainly because they were themselves unfilled with anything more than a little academic stuffing."

A DIFFERENT SORT OF EXAMPLE of the curious ways of life and art lies in what I have called the Vancouver caper. For here is a subplot of sizeable dimensions in the letters that undoubtedly contributed to the atmosphere of lunacy and frustration in *Self Condemned* but that appears directly in the novel as only a passing instance of Affie's curiosity:

The 'crossing water' business at the present seance, and the insistence on the amount of water being inconsiderable, was easily traceable to a dozen or more letters which had recently come from someone in Vancouver, who urged René to come out there. He backed up this request with glittering promises, assuring René that the local University would immediately offer him a Chair. Where Victoria Island came in was that the correspondent invited them to stay with him at his 'properties', while arrangements were being made with the University authorities. This man's father was said to be on the Board of the University and a very influential man. This correspondent had poured registered letters in at the rate of two a week. . . .

Such are the entire fictional remains of probably the most extensive and certainly the most intensive exchange of letters of Lewis's Canadian years. It begins

towards the middle of 1942 with a proposal by David Kahma, a young British Columbian, that Lewis become the first star of an arts centre he hopes to establish in Vancouver, and it runs its dramatic course till the end of the year. Kahma, innocent and enthusiastic but well-steeped in Lewis's writings and with a flair for secrecy equal to his master's, appears out of the West like some *deus ex machina* or dream of Tantalus. His plans are grandiose, his funds seem limitless; there is a mysterious go-between named, as if eponymously, Miss West; there are off-the-scene "advisers" looming like the dark powers of *The Apes of God*.

Desperate as he was, Lewis could not dismiss the proposal out-of-hand. But his worldly sense told him to proceed cautiously. He seems not to have been much surprised when within a few weeks, the whole vast scheme had dwindled to an invitation from Kahma and his bride (née Miss West) to the Lewises to spend a few months as their guests in the modest house they were about to move into. It is some measure of Lewis's feeling of entrapment in Toronto that by the end of August he was ready to accept for the price of return rail fare for him and his wife. At this point the correspondence has crescendoed to daily missives and the reader in the Cornell collection finds himself caught up in the excitement. A cooling off period follows the non-appearance of the fare. Yet hardly a month later, Lewis is once more about to board the train. Then, as week follows chequeless week, the mirage slowly and finally disappears.

The story, a fine ironic mixture of comedy and pathos, makes a nice paradigm for *Self Condemned*. It also offers as a by-product a rather appealing fancy: if Lewis had gone to Vancouver he might well have run into England's other notable literary hostage to Canadian fortunes. The similarity between Malcolm Lowry's letter from Dollarton, B.C.,² and Lewis's epistles from Toronto is striking, and the temptation to compare them is very strong. But this would require a further chapter in the study of exiles' letters.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Lewis considered bringing René back to London, as a synopsis in the Cornell collection reveals. Hester was to commit suicide there instead of in Momaco, but René's spiritless condition would have been pretty much the same. The synopsis indicates a good deal of attention to the miserable post-war condition of London, as in *Rotting Hill* (1951). It may be that Lewis decided to sacrifice the nice symmetry of the alternative ending in order not to deal twice with this material.

² See *Selected Letters of Malcolm Lowry* (Philadelphia, 1965).

NO MEETING POINTS

Miriam Waddington

AUSTIN C. CLARKE, *The Meeting Point*. Macmillan. \$5.95.

MAYBE I'M THE WRONG PERSON to review this book. I'm white, I'm Jewish, I live in Toronto, and I sometimes go to the Riverboat and other coffee houses on Yorkville. The only facts in my favour are that I don't live in Forest Hill Village (or Rosedale either) and I don't have a maid.

All the same I approached Austin Clarke's third novel, *The Meeting Point*, with the hope of finding in it a Toronto more real, if not more attractive, than the one I know, and aspects of Jewish, or white life, in a new context. Instead, I find a story confused in its artistic and social intentions, filled with fictional inconsistencies, and conceived in a hatred which seldom rises above its sad and bitter circumstances.

There is nothing new or shocking about hatred in modern fiction; but in this book it's not only unreasonable, it's uninteresting, and you get the feeling that the writer is taking out on the reader what his characters ought to be taking out on one another. In spite of these flaws, *The Meeting Point* deserves a serious reading because Clarke is attempting to deal with the two biggest problems of our time — race relations and poverty. Judging by this novel, his talent and his

conception are not equal to his subject — at least not at the level which such themes demand. For his novel is far too short to deal with all the problems it raises, and yet it is far too long and repetitive for what it actually does deal with.

Briefly, *The Meeting Point* is the story of Bernice Leach, a fat, forty-year-old Bajan woman who comes to Toronto in almost the only way a West Indian woman can come — to work as a domestic. She takes a job with a Jewish lawyer and his family — the Burrmanns — in Forest Hill village. Her sister, Estelle, young, glossy and beautiful, comes from Barbados to visit her. Propinquity does the rest. Sam Burrmann and Estelle explode into spectacular sexual fireworks while the reader holds his breath and waits for the fireworks to die down. By the end of the story, when the rich man has had his pleasure and the poor girl has paid for it, everyone is even more trapped and desperate than before. No one has changed or learned anything. No one in the story ever loves any one else, even for a minute. Bernice doesn't love her child Terence, whom she left at home with her mother, or her former sweetheart, Lonnie. Her friend, Dottie, another domestic, doesn't love her hus-

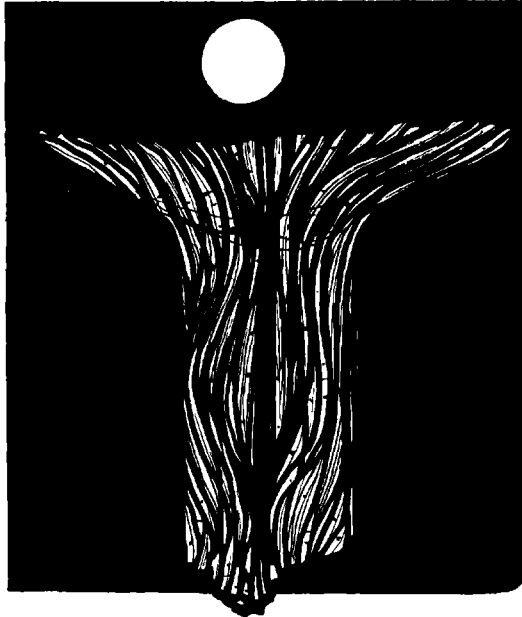
band Boysie. Sam Burrmann doesn't love his wife, his children, or his mistress Estelle. He doesn't even seem to love his work. Mrs. Burrmann, who has a lot to cope with, tries to think her way into loving everybody, but her ideas about love and her insistent good deeds, are no substitute for real feeling. To love her cat Putzi is as much as she can manage emotionally. And the author doesn't love any of his characters either — not the least bit — except once in a while he loves the West Indians through the marvellous language he gives them.

Language, in fact, is the most interesting incongruity in the novel. Clarke has two languages: a stiff and lifeless Toronto English which he uses for narration, and a wonderful West Indian English, as full of dance, vitality, colour and endless malleability as any language ought to be. The West Indian language is reserved for the speech and soliloquies of the Negro characters, except for Estelle who is really a white girl dressed up in Negro body. Clarke's Bajan English is a rich, full, poetic language, as those who have read his *Amongst Thistles and Thorns* already know. His other English is restrained, romantic in the bad sense, and lacking in humour. It hasn't yet freed itself from the grip of Trinity College where Mr. Clarke was a student; it is too self-conscious and correct. Yet the correctness is not like Conrad's, deep underneath the language; it is a kind of hard crust, a frozen surface. This dichotomy of language betrays the lack of synthesis which flaws the novel in other ways too.

The novel is flawed, most of all, by Clarke's desire for shortcuts and this leads to confusion. His heroine Bernice, is a good example. She is coloured, over-

weight, past her first youth, and works as a domestic. That's four strikes against her. And not only does she work for white people, but for *Jewish* white people. One of the Burrmann children says to another: "You're not even white, wise guy . . . you're just a lousy little Jew like all of us." Why compound the problems of black-white with those of Jew-Gentile? How can so many threads be kept from tangling? The reader soon finds himself wondering if Sam Burrmann is such a bastard because he is white or because he is Jewish.

It's the same with Bernice's job. Of all the menial jobs she might have had, Clarke makes her work as a live-in domestic. This kind of work situation has built-in humiliations because the personal part of the job can never be separated from the impersonal working part. A live-in maid inevitably becomes a servant, whereas a domestic who lives elsewhere can retire to her own private life, however poor or bizarre it may be. But the relation of master and servant for seven days a week cannot help but be humiliating for both. It distorts the employer-employee relationship as well as the personal one, because it mingles them; domestic functions like caring for children, and cooking can't be bought like ordinary services in any case. They have to be performed out of love, or the recipients soon know the difference. So, by placing the central character, Bernice, in an ambiguous work situation, Clarke deprives her of all social context, and deprives her of a chance to develop. We miss the outer world. A factory or an office to develop workers in it; they are companions, be they friends or enemies. But a family has no one in it except itself, and this is too private, narrow, and



**APOLLO
TREE**

sunbearer
to me worshipper
of sunbearing or
greengrower
to me lover of
greengrowing or
apollo tree
to me singer of
wands tree-rings and the
burgeoning laurel

in montreal you in
a carrell of cars you in a
haste of bells you
transforming laurel
in a fire in
a wind of snow

Miriam Waddington

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presents this work as one of a new series written by Canadian poets

special. It is no wonder that Bernice's character remains static throughout the story; she has no real world within which to define herself or against which to rebel. She remains, to the end, a fragmented personality, emotionally shallow, volcanic and childish in all her relationships. She lies, steals from her employers and is "resourceful in her destructiveness", for she hates all white people, and her most frequent feeling towards them is one of revenge.

As for the white people, they are completely unbelievable. Never have I met such an un-Jewish bunch of scrubbed Jews between the covers of any book, let alone in real life. The Burrmanns and their friends are idle, vain, neurotic and empty. They are as neat and tidy and as dead as if they had all just come out of some IBM machine. Their speech is a stilted caricature of all speech. Here is Sam Burrmann telling his wife why their sexual life is unsatisfactory: "I must tell you, Rachel, I must tell you, from the bottom of my heart, that it pains me even more than it can ever pain you, that you can't even seem to carry a child in your womb without goddamn losing it, or doing some damn crazy thing to it. Every man needs a son. I need a son. And that seems to be the simple reason why this is not working out. It is as simple as that."

Sam Burrmann is particularly unbelievable. In looks he's like a Jew straight out of Hemingway, but in history he's from before Krafft-Ebbing. A good-looking fellow, he grew up in Toronto's slums and played with Negroes. When he was about fourteen he allowed a Negro companion in an escapade to take the blame and go to the reformatory. He was left with a long-lasting but dormant

guilt. Somehow Negro girls got mixed up with his blocked sexual development so the result was a Jew with a guilt-love-hate feeling about Negroes. Add to this an academic flair which took him to the University of Toronto's Anglican college (he must have been one of the very few Jews who ever went to Trinity), and a loveless marriage to a virtuous Jewish girl who was rich but sexually inhibited. Then bring in Bernice's sister Estelle, awaken all Sam's sleeping dogs, and you precipitate the crisis of the novel.

As a counterpoise to the love affair between Sam and Estelle, there is another love affair between Bernice's Negro friend Henry — an unemployed railway porter of fifty — and Agatha, a Jewish graduate student in her twenties. Again, the psychology of this relationship is unbelievable. The purpose of these two love affairs is to show that the Negro's desire for the white sexual partner is not love, but hate. "They love you. And you hate *them*." Henry tells his friend, and goes on to describe his lovemaking with Agatha: "... one night it was hell in this bed. I'm thinking of all those black people lynched and killed, all those black cats murdered and slain, all those black chicks raped and dehumanized, ... and man, I'm driving and driving. Hell broke loose baby. I'm thinking of going down to the Civil Service Commission on St. Clair, and the Man there telling me, No jobs, buddy ... Down at Eatons during the Christmas rush period, and the Man there telling me, there ain't no jobs. I'm thinking of the Man. The Man. The Man. No jobs ... And I'm driving like I'm crazy ... You think that chick was hip to what I was thinking of the Man? Goddamn, baby, *she* was thinking *I was loving her*. But man, I was *re-paying!* I

was repaying *her* for what her brothers do to *my* sister . . .”

And that is the despair at the heart of Clarke's book; the Negro has no job. He can forgive white people for the snow and the frost; even for the northern Christianity which doesn't suit his tropic nature; but no job means no place in society, and there is no such thing as abstract human-ness. A man can be a man only through other men, never in isolation. Love is more social than sexual, and Clarke is asking why do so many white people (to him the malevolent Jews) waste or corrupt their social roles? And why do they deprive black people of theirs? But by caricaturing the society he is trying to describe, he fails to under-

stand it. He makes the social issues seem false and unreal; often, merely personal. His contempt for Agatha and his hatred of the Burrmanns make the reader distrust him.

I came away from this book with a heavy feeling. There are no meeting points in Austin Clarke's novel, and he holds out no hope for any. Clarke's two Englishes don't meet, none of the lovers come together in any way that matters; there is no letup in the warfare between white and black. Bernice doesn't achieve freedom. She merely becomes a better-paid servant who is left to think at the end: "Jesus God! this is a savage world . . ." And the author says nothing to contradict her.

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UNCREEPING FLESH

Frances Frazer

LYN COOK, *The Secret of Willow Castle*. Macmillan. \$4.25.

ZILLAH and COLIN MACDONALD, *Prisoner in Louisbourg*. Macmillan. \$3.95.

J. S. ERSKINE, *The Rightful King*. Longmans. \$3.75.

JAMES HOUSTON, *Eagle Mask: A West Coast Indian Tale*. Longmans. \$3.50.

FARLEY MOWAT, *The Curse of the Viking Grave*. McClelland & Stewart. \$4.50.

"HE TURNED, took careful aim and fired, and ten more redskins bit the dust." This caption in an ancient volume of *Chums* underlies and purports to describe a dramatic drawing of an intrepid young man in a canoe blasting away at a flotilla of painted, gesticulating savages whose hot breath is almost upon him. The river is a churning mass of white water, and drownings are clearly imminent. Both lethal marksmanship and dust-biting seem entirely out of the question.

The picture and caption indicate the nature of many stories that kept yesterday's—well, last week's—children rooted to their chairs. They were shameless fabrications full of fractured facts, mangled history, and purple prose and dominated by one plot. The youthful protagonist, in conjunction with dauntless, pipe-smoking Uncle David or brave, beautiful Aunt Barbara, tangled with and routed fanatical Indians after the idol's eye, fanatical tribes defending Eldorado, fanatical German schoolmistresses spying for the Fatherland, or savages on the warpath for the sheer fun and gore of it. These tales fed national prejudices with popular lies and supplied imaginations with a rich diet of romantic ones. Their characterization was often minimal and their prose styles were seldom impressive. But they did have drama.

Most modern stories for children are more admirable on several counts. They tend to be much more respectful of historical, anthropological, and psychological realities. Their characters are more likely, more complex, and usually more consistent. And the general level of the writing is higher. But somehow amid all this conscientiousness, really scarifying scenes and genuinely moving ones are rare.

Given the increasing multitudes of writers for the young and their burgeoning output, it is obviously impossible to support generalizations or define a trend on the basis of a handful of books. However, an arbitrary selection of five, chiefly historical, works from the current crop, may perhaps be taken as at least indicative.

Lyn Cook's *The Secret of Willow Castle* is a carefully researched portrait of Napanee, Ontario, in the 1830's and a slightly bathetic story of young Henrietta Macpherson, daughter of the uncrowned king of Napanee and devoted half-cousin to young John A. Macdonald. Despite some lip service to romantic adventure, particularly in such chapter titles as "A Secret Place and a Castle-Mirror" and "The Note in the Lightning Tree", the author's interests are evidently historical and moral. While Henrietta's

undercover friendship with an Irish waif languishes in the wings, we are shown swatches of local colour: political feelings of the day, popular pastimes, the quaint minutiae of day-to-day domesticity and business in 1834. The little girls' relationship is treated as a moral force upon Henrietta, bringing out her capacities for love, loyalty, and self-sacrifice. Unfortunately, her metamorphosis from wilful child into warm, responsible young lady is too sudden and too arbitrarily motivated to be effectively credible. Moreover, it occurs early in the book, and after it a fragile plot leans upon "secrets" that don't amount to much. Although children can clothe mundane objects and situations with the glamour of make-believe, their excitement is hard to make convincing and contagious. Louisa May Alcott could bring it off; Lyn Cook can't quite. And in this insufficiently fictional garden, young John A., depicted as a sombrelly good-natured paragon, is an insufficiently real toad. On the credit side it should be added that, apart from Henrietta, some psychological strokes are telling, and the only real secret, Irish Sarah's identity, is used for some effective cliff-hanging.

By contrast, Zillah and Colin Macdonald's *Prisoner in Louisbourg* has so much plot that it runs over the sides. Why did double-faced Captain O'Hara pour pitch into rotten logs to make treacherous masts and then go out and capture the ship carrying them? I know why the Macdonalds had him pour the pitch: it allowed the young hero and the readers to leap to an appalling confusion. But his own intentions escape me.

This book about the New Englanders' capture of the French fortress of Louisbourg in 1745 comes closer than any

other of my five to the old *Chums* thrillers. Undoctored history is obligingly melodramatic and the authors have added generous dollops of melodrama in the foreground story of a Bostonian youth, Eben de Gervais. Eben is an engaging hero-narrator, despite some seeming disingenuousness in his professions of devotion to a brother whose petulance he stresses. And volatile little Antoinette is a beguiling heroine. But the villain is a problem. I understand those stealthy Indians and sinister schoolmistresses, but I'm blest if I understand Captain O'Hara, a hero to his own side, a terror on the high seas, and yet a credulous, anxious fellow on land, eavesdropping on youngsters, scared by their games, and so unconfident that he actually dons full masquerade regalia for an apparently foolproof underground murder. One suspects that the authors have not conceived him thoroughly or indulged in much dramatic immediacy because they were less interested in romance than in the major events of the Louisbourg campaign and their thesis that it was a dress rehearsal for the Boston Tea Party and Bunker Hill. The bizarre, muddled little plot in the foreground seldom achieves full dramatic life—despite the many time-honoured devices it contains.

The Rightful King by J. S. Erskine is in some ways the most satisfying of the historical novels in this set. It does not condescend to its readers lexically, historically, or philosophically, and the cruelty of the historical events that entangle the bright young squire-hero is not sentimentally softened. Nick is a privileged servant of the Yorkist Broughton family and therefore involved perforce in the Yorkist plot to dethrone Henry VII and crown the supposed heir

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of the deceased Duke of Clarence. The actual plot and most of its supporters died on the blood-soaked field of Stoke, whereupon the claimant to the throne proved to be Lambert Simnel, a scullion. There are some fascinating fictional additions to history here: Lady Broughton, conceived of as more beautiful in her own eyes than to anyone else because none but her mirror receives her brilliant, narcissistic smile; old Mark who benevolently "damns the souls" of the creatures he tends with saintly compassion. And there are some provocative sentences: "His simplicity kept him thin as it kept him spiritually young, facing life in middle age with the rigidity of a young scholar and the uneasy eyes of a child." Yet in this book too the leap toward life and immediate urgency falls short, chiefly perhaps because affairs of state are kept so firmly to the fore, but also because the author's gloom and indignation at a medieval world he pictures as sick with feudalism cast a pall over the story. Repeatedly Erskine focuses on unjust customs, the demoralizing desperation of little men, and the consequent scarcity of generosity and honour. If one seldom trembles for Nick, it is not because he is not likeable or venturesome but because nothing that could befall him would be much worse than the everyday plights of his fellows.

James Houston's *Eagle Mask* is not really fictional, although in dealing with the heyday of British Columbia's coastal Indians it pursues a tenuous story-line. The coming-of-age of a representative young prince provides some continuity for simple vignettes of the Indians' life. Characters and events are typical. The book's claim to particularity and life is in its author's illustrations, which combine

ritualistic formality with vitality. For instance, a picture of a whaling boat soaring broken over a gigantic whale's tail is a symmetrical pattern of formalized waves and arched falling bodies, yet conveys the immensity and terror of the event. Pictorially the work is exciting; verbally it is principally informative.

Farley Mowat's *The Curse of the Viking Grave* also concerns North America's original inhabitants. The period is modern, but the setting is the far north where ancient ways of life linger on. This sequel to *Lost in the Barrens* concerns a new crisis in the lives of three boys who comprise a kind of miniature United Nations: one white, one Indian, and one Eskimo halfbreed. In the course of a perilous trek to Hudson Bay, these three and an Indian girl encounter Indian and Eskimo tribes and assorted battles with the elements. Primitive history and legends are worked into a highly educational tale that has its gripping moments. But once again "typical" is the word. The boys stand for their peoples' viewpoints as often as they emerge as individuals. The hospitable Eskimos and stoic, suffering Indians are stereotyped weapons in Mowat's war against white indifference and red tape. And the book's language tends to contract the generalization disease and sink into colloquial looseness and cliché.

Young readers of these variously rewarding books may well find them enjoyable as well as profitable. But I doubt if they will read them under the blankets by flashlight after curfew. For despite considerable virtues, all five somehow lack the qualities that make you laugh, cry, wait, and above all, make your flesh creep. And aren't these the addictive qualities that make readers?

OTHER VANCOUVERITES

A. W. Purdy

SEYMOUR MAYNE, *From the Portals of the Mouseholes*. Very Stone House. \$1.50.

BILL BISSETT, *Fires in the Temple*. Very Stone House. \$3.00.

PAT LANE, *Letters from the Savage Mind*. Very Stone House. \$2.00.

JIM BROWN, *The Circus of the Boy's Eye*. Very Stone House. \$1.50.

IN 1943 A. J. M. SMITH published *The Book of Canadian Poetry*, which contained most of the best-known Canadian poets of that time. In 1947 John Sutherland, as a kind of rebuttal, published *Other Canadians*, which included some writers omitted by Smith, and attacking the latter's critical terms of reference in a pungent foreword.

The 1966 parallel to the Smith book is *New Wave Canada*, the Contact Press selection of new poets, edited by Raymond Souster and which he contends in his foreword contains "the most exciting, germinative poetry written by young Canadians in the last hundred years of this country's literary history." But in 1966 as in 1943 some poets were left out of the new anthology. And I would hazard a guess that the new publishing venture, Very Stone House of Vancouver, is a direct result of the four writers reviewed here being omitted from *New Wave Canada*.

Seymour Mayne (originally from Montreal) is, to my mind, a young professional. I'm sure he will be writing poetry all his life. In *From the Portals of the Mouseholes* (his third book) the language is loose and easy, and stems from both the Williams-Pound-Olson-Creeley progressions and the submerged lyricism of metric traditionalists — not to mention Irving Layton. Mayne's poems in-

clude some undoubted poses and posturings, but in others, when perhaps he forgets himself, his cleverness is fused with the subject matter. Despite the seeming openness of Mayne's love poems, I don't think he really wants the reader to know what he is like personally, and he presents no clear and consistent image of himself (not that I think he is obligated to).

Someone will build on us,
Your children, mine, if I have any.
Leave scratches on furniture
Kick the walls of your suite
Scar the bathroom mirrors
leave a mark leave it
That I was here

("The Time")

The above version of Seymour Mayne is not performing, despite the injunction for breakage. And the excerpt is only one reason why I think his poems are a map of loneliness.

Bill Bissett's poems are something of a puzzle to me, and perhaps to himself as well. He writes a great deal, intends many poems to have the effect of songs, performs wild typographic experiments on the page, uses his own brand of phonetic spelling, and occasionally indulges in the "Oh ain't it wonderful" type of exclamatory holiness. In short, Bissett has a rather marvellous inconsistency of style, which I think is rare and good in a young poet.

However, these various intriguing qualities have not jelled into coherence and power. Bissett rambles (probably without knowing where he is going or caring), and has very little self discipline. I think that even the wildest rhetorical experiments need a measure of control, require that the writer possess a cool brain which observes dispassionately all the body's most passionate excesses. And since I seem to be pontificating, let me add one more quality a good writer should have: the ability to see his own mistakes and turn them into positive virtues.

Pat Lane's poems in *Letters from the Savage Mind* are again a reversion to the commonplace: except that here the "commonplace" is streaked and veined with insights. Language: straightforward and communicating directly (except in the title poem, which is diffuse). Subject matter: everyday life of a Vancouver workman.

The above comments may not appear to add up to much, yet the poems do. As in certain other writers, Lane's sum is more impressive than the parts, though the worker is much less in evidence than the other two-thirds of his life. Excerpts are difficult to come by from a man who writes even-quality and fairly lengthy poems, but here is a recurring scene in any city:

a long blue arm
asking me
where I'm going
and
no answers

hard looks
questions

no identification
nothing
'Just walking —
taking in the scene!'

without excuse
a wrong answer

WARNING

get inside
out of darkness

("Christmas 65")

The Circus in the Boy's Eye has some fine erotic drawings (Bissett again), but the poems are easily good enough to stand by themselves. If Mayne is the professional, Lane the everyday chronicler, Bissett the wild experimenter, then Jim Brown is the rather shy and introspective prototype of the non-public poet: probably influenced by Leonard Cohen, the public opposite of himself.

Brown's language is tough and modern, but this is deceptive. The poems are by turns sensuous, gentle, warm, and musing. Here's the last part of "Waitin for th Bus":

waitin for th bus
me in my university disguise
sayin as if I (and
the world is my oyster)
owned the fuckin country
,sayin that this modern art
on the fences is just as good
as art ever was
and explainin how poetry
is doin this and doin that
and old Tom sayin
its shit

waitin for th bus
and old Tom
laughin
cause I'm so serious
about nothin

The poems of these four poets are very different from the schoolbook literary ritual drummed into our heads by tone-deaf teachers when some of us were children. All four young, groping and earnest — only Seymour Mayne has much sense of humour.

Of the four I'm most interested in Jim Brown's development. There seems to me

little doubt that Seymour Mayne will continue to write and improve — his ego demands it. About Pat Lane, however good his poems are now, to continue in that everyday-poem-diary vein is a dead end. And Bill Bissett, just possibly, has the most potential — if he begins to pay attention to someone (not necessarily

me) besides his own admirers, who are not likely to be very critical.

But these are young poets, well worth reading now; and in the future one of them may write something that will freeze you right inside your clothes. Any one of the four. And I think *New Wave Canada* made a mistake in omitting them.

GEORGE JOHNSTON

George Whalley

GEORGE JOHNSTON, *Home Free*. Oxford University Press. \$4.25.

The Cruising Auk has sailed through five printings since it appeared in 1959. Not surprising. Paul Klee had a thing about cats, and George Johnston in that book had a thing about aunts; and although the *Auk* poems had been written over a period of ten years or more, the book had the strange consistency of a dream landscape in which figures appear and move with the ambiguous and impassive logic of a Chagall painting. If (for Chagall) pigs are apple-green and the sky mauve, a poet may assume a horizontal posture as wonderfully long and flat as the horizon and his eyes turned to the sky; and lovers, by the same device, will rise in the transfiguration of wedding garments at an angle of forty-five degrees to the music of a violin played by a cow, their faces blank with ecstasy, while about them are disposed jewel textures of radical pigments and the intrinsication of petals. For George Johnston, in a similar logic, there were the presences of Mrs. McGonigle (with a shadowy accompaniment of boarders) and her daughter Sadie; and Aunt Beleek

(unmentionable but reappearing nonetheless), old great-aunt Hairy (a name only, though other females are noted as hairy), and Mrs. Belaney; and Mr Murple (not without dog), and Edward; and others. These move in a twilight pavane; laughter is to be heard, sardonic but affectionate; and the undertow is dark as sin and as vivid as the fruits of sin. If from time to time there were technical and verbal echoes of Eliot and Yeats, the dominant tone (unborrowed) was Betjeman, occasionally Housman — a solemn and slightly mocking despair: for all men are grass, their mortality is tinged with folly, and their occasional glory is that they will obdurately pursue illusion in order to outmanoeuvre mutability and so come to the momentary havens of delight and disillusion.

In *The Cruising Auk* a universe of desire and muted wonder is fleshed out with swift but dreamy strokes. No narrative can be inferred to bind Edward to Sadie, or to his death by drowning; we could not prophesy the amorous fate of Sadie, or of Elaine's disruptive femininity

(in or out of a bikini); we have no way of formulating the philosophy of Mr. Murple or his dog. A girl, singing to herself from a boat, makes crooked music on the waters, a little Pentecostal, certainly out of tune; she has betrayed and forgotten her many lovers, is untouched and unchanged by the "nights of splendour" she has brought them. Edward's hat, "moving on the water's face", makes towards the sea, and the boats pass up and down the river and through the bridge

Fishing, fishing where the water's deep
For Edward and his trouble, sound asleep.

Mr Murple, hitherto earthbound, is suddenly Orpheus — and we are not surprised.

The grasshopper does not so free
The silly summer time dispense
As Mr. Murple in a tree
Playing upon wind instruments.

He fills the air with ornaments
Trilling and running gracefully
Oblivious of audience
And in his improvising free.

The snake, the frog, the bumblebee
And other forest residents
Hark to his music solemnly
Soothed to a charming diffidence.

So disposed in psychic space the figures imply a dream, a world, a garden entered under a guest's privilege —

This home, this network, this great roof
of pity.

The unifying principle is the activity of an ironic intelligence, a clear glance, an embracing compassion. My memory of the book is of something allusively single. Turning back to the text, some of the poems one by one may seem occasional, or "light", and a few don't put their feet exactly right. Yet out of materials

whimsically diverse and light-heartedly random, materials of a strange and vulnerable fragility, a substantial world has been constructed. There is no escaping the moral fervour; yet the poet, responsive and watchful, always withdrawn, does not hector with earnest counsels or utter superior judgments through the mask of satire. We respond instantly, beguiled by the simplicity of a candid host who — a little eccentric and absent-minded — refrains even from afflicting us with geniality.

Home Free is a different matter and I don't see how it could have been otherwise. The world of *The Cruising Auk* is not only single but complete: to have designed extensions, gazebos, and outworks would have placed too great a burden upon a structure so delicately poised. If *Home Free* is less consistent than the first book, it gives clear signs of exploring deliberately a new manner and a wider ambience. About half the poems in this book are written in clear-cut stanzaic forms that give edge to irony. A new metric provides colloquial fluency and pace in other poems; and both manners cross-fertilize each other, the flexibility sometimes relaxing the stanzaic sharpness, the echoes of definite metre and rhyme giving unobtrusive rigour to fluency. Two poems are of much greater length than anything in *The Cruising Auk*, and in these George Johnston addresses himself — as he had not done before — to public themes of present concern. The short stanzaic poems are at once more relaxed and more dense in texture, and only occasionally — usually when couplets are used — do they take refuge in the emotional and verbal approximateness that the tradition of light verse permits. (Avowedly satiric pieces

—“Bicultural” and “The Royal Commission” — lose points through some rather permissive marksmanship.) Generally the shorter poems are more personal than before, and less playful. And almost all the figures from the dream-
scape have departed. Mr Murple and Mrs McGonigle appear only once, together; they have become emblems, like the Mrs Porter to whom the sounds of horns and motors bring Sweeney in the spring. Edward in three poems returns in his old self — bemused, sinning, self-destroying; but when he is linked to Sadie in marriage he moves out of the world of myth and their son is to be seen under the harsh unallusive light of journalistic biography.

Of the two long poems, I much prefer “Under the Tree”. “Love in High Places” can be seen as an extension in space and

time of “Music on the Water” (*The Cruising Auk* p. 36). A freely evolved parody of a conceivable ballad-stanza gives Audenish sharpness to the fall of words and encourages reflective comment; it offers plenty of scope, for irony, sorrowful lyricism, satiric sharpness, narrative, moody comment. But the story and moral place too heavy demands on the poetic resources, as though an epigram were asked to carry the weight of a novel. For the poem covers two generations and there is some doubt whether it intends an incisive vision of a little group of persons or the framework for a more generalized social and satiric comment. As the poem grows it seems to lose its initial direction and fineness of sensitivity and, though the emphasis shifts more to inclusive comment and reflection, the deep compassion that shapes and colours

*In warm green shallow water
Beside the grey and broken docks,
The thin boys drop their fish hooks,
And passionate to its slaughter*

*Leaps a sunfish quick and golden.
The cruel boys knew he would come
(Such his love for the killing sun)
To a bare hook to be taken.*

*The air is bright as lemons
As he lies on the weathered boards.
The single fleck of red hoards
The light, the eye, like an omen*

*Direct and mysterious, drowns.
In the water's tropic, the sun
Fills emptiness with moving green.
On grey blooms and dies a gay gown.*

bright as lemons?

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are clean and tough.
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just about everything George Johnston's pen touches slips away into a mood of weary disgust. Stan is son enough of his father that he "Reminded Sadie of Edward and the dead years —" and "Made her choke"; but his stature is much smaller, his allusiveness reduced. Through his own neuter passivity and the incubus machinations of his mother, he springs fullblown into the stock figure of the blind self-seeking man — rudderless, subservient, cowardly, deceitful, abortive. Edward could at least see his own habit of betrayal —

And he will also remember
 In his gut
 Times when his year should have been yea
 And it was yea but:
 Perhaps his best friend hunted in the
 street
 And his door shut.

For

There are occasions that a sentimental man
 Will not forget
 But will look back upon with twinges of
 emotion
 And some regret,
 When his behaviour has been as he thinks
 impulsive
 And warm and wet.

Stan seems incapable of anything as positive as sentimentality. His central position in the poem would be easier to understand and accept if he were firmly related to the poignant opening section. Sadie, exhausted by the emptiness of her life with Edward, tries to kill herself; and the episode and its lyrical aftermath is drawn with harrowing precision. Then by abrupt transition, Edward has vanished and Sadie assumes the pitiless and parasitic role of the possessive mother, her womanhood obliterated by her terrible ambition to manage and organize her son into a worldly but hollow success — a success which he neither deserves

nor savours and which by definition she has made herself incapable of making her own fulfilment. To say that George Johnston has not successfully solved the formal and dramatic problems that the theme poses is perhaps to say that he is not capable of the savage contempt and passionate disgust that would shape such a theme to self-declarative form. The strength at the beginning is clear, where compassion rules; later, when brutality is demanded, structure and precision falter.

"Love in High Places" is the last poem but one in the book; "Under the Tree" is the first. If "Love in High Places" is a modern parable with a moral too near the surface, "Under the Tree" — on capital punishment — is a meditation of such sustained ardour that it never lapses into propaganda. The poem is in six movements, each with its own tone and form. The opening states that our implication in a guilt for which we are not technically responsible binds us together in a disgraceful fellowship we have not deliberately chosen.

Hanging makes us one
 I am a hangman, you a hanging judge
 Meet under the hanging tree
 For the hard work that is waiting to be
 done
 And the hanging tree broods over you and
 me. . . .

Then the tree itself — as wood, skilfully hewed out, beautiful — and the limestone of the prison: and the judge —

a limestone judge
 With chambered ancient levels in his mind,
 Veiny and fossil creatures in his soul. . . .

He is kind as we would want to be kind
 Knows more than we know,
 And he has consented to be our judge
 After a stern life as befits our justice,
 A sentimental life as befits our justice
 A steady voice of a life whose tones speak

The steady words of our law to the hanging tree.

(But I could wish that the judge were not also a parody of the successful unrooted man whose life, arrested years ago, is no more than an expedient compromise.) A lyrical movement follows for the child's world of wonder where "so long as childhood lasts" there is safety — as, in default of innocence, there is not for us — in the way that "every watched road has a secret way out." Then the hanging is considered from the fundamentalist position as "a prayerful thing", but a recollection of the furtive and senseless squalor of the murder undermines facile rationalization. In an interior scene the murderer's aunt and young friends, unable to commend either the crime or the sentence, are powerless to mitigate the punishment even if they knew how — there is no time. The sixth movement picks from the opening lines of the poem the key-word *waiting*: everything waits, numbed and aimless, for the final constellation of objects and people that will comprise the event of execution, the execution of the event; they are waiting, time suspended, for the last and conclusive item in the pattern, the condemned man. The poem closes in a prayer that the earth in its huge compassion will take to itself even our guilt; and the verse broadens to a noble and afflicting cadence.

God's good kind Earth, God's many-
bosomed Earth,
God's suffering ugly cunning beautiful
Wounded creature of Earth,
The pit whence we were dug,
The garden in which we grope
For love;
Kind Earth, our gorgeousness of blood,
Our fleeting pain of birdsong,
Our poised in air, our footsore, delicate,
Our lifted up in grief, our loosed in death,

Carrion;
Darktongued Earth, tell our deeds to the
dark.

The overt theme is hanging; but the poem meditates upon the even larger reality of our complicity in society and in law that protects society, and the impotence of the individual in that necessary implication; for neither the plea of impotence, nor even the prospect of social or political action, will ever resolve our personal responsibility.

The shorter poems can to some extent be seen in thematic groups though they are not so definitely arranged. Poems about places and creatures have a rich and elegiac sweetness, a little Georgian perhaps, affectionate and intent without affectation — "Fields", "Honey", "The Siberian Olive Tree", "Windy Streets", "The Huntress", "Spring Moon", "The Lily Pond", and sharpest of all "Sloe Whisky". These are all acutely perceived, happily turned, imagist at times in their concentration, invigorated by unexpected turns of grave wit. ("Beside the Sea", however, seems not to establish its angle of vision crisply enough or its way of going; and if the cat-poem "Lopey" moves too exuberantly from the peculiar individual to the *genus* cat, it reminds us what a stern master Hilaire Belloc is in fitting nervous octosyllabic couplets to the world of animals and children.) Three poems on love are among the best — "Veterans" (on the "seventy times seven kinds of loving"), "Musk", and "Us Together" — the last two of an enchanting half-playful delicacy. Certain poems of a meditative kind are more personal than anything in *The Cruising Auk* — "The Bargain Sale", "The Creature's Claim", "No Way Out", "The Old Man": these are important in establishing

a presence that elsewhere seems deliberately withheld. "Pied à Terre" reminds me of "Love of the City" — one of the most distinctive poems in *The Cruising Auk* — and provides a counter-image to Stan's "place among the Pre-Cambrian rocks" in "Love in High Places".

The book closes (starting at p. 43) with a series of poems that bring Edward and Sadie back, at least in name, from their earlier poetic existence; but three diverse poems, two of them bitter, intervene — "Daisy", "A Night-Piece to Mrs Treed", and "Ballad of Jarvis Street" — to destroy any impression of an Edward cycle. "Bliss", a comment on Edward and "Edward's slut", is an unforgiving poem, though incisive. The title poem "Home Free" restores Edward to that mystery of damnation he had reserved for himself in *The Cruising Auk* —

Someone has given Edward a pass to
Paradise:
Take it, they said, and go; you'll never
earn the price.
Walk right up to the dragon, keep an eye
for the tree,
Show your pass to the angel and he'll admit
you free.

Edward sweats for a fortnight, the salt is in
his shoes.
Who knows about angels until he hears the
news?
Who knows about gardens until he smells
the pit?
Edward is holding a pass, and he's afraid
of it.

"Multitude", in praise of Sadie and her polyerotic verminous kindness, joins with "Bliss" to prepare the ground for "Love

in High Places": there is no fantasy here and pity has been stretched beyond breaking point by embodiments of aimless and deliquescent mortality. But the last poem in the book, "Bed-Time", recovers the characteristic manner in which restraint is the mark of seriousness and the lightness of touch encompasses in a gesture of ironic regret and simple pity the gift of life, the fact of death.

Edna the dog is dead and so is Min;
Mr Smith's diet worked and now he's thin;
Walter had left the park for his loving
wife:

Better warm than happy defines his life.

Toads are asleep and so are bugs and
snakes;

Millions of things are asleep in the icy
lakes;

Edward's asleep where brown stalks fuss
and wave

And a squirrel has planted oaks beside his
grave.

This is probably a transitional book, but it is in no sense tentative: in modes not attempted before by George Johnston, the achievement is substantial, skilful, and emotionally exact. The extended technical resources broaden and establish more solidly his own tunes and his own vision — distinctive, quaint, witty, serious, recognizable, unashamedly idiosyncratic. I shall turn to his two books of poems with pleasure and admiration, delighting in all that most amazes me for its subtle and effortless precision, its unobtrusive technical skill, the absence of rhetoric, the grave unpretentious wisdom, the compassionate gaiety.

EVERYTHING LIVES

DOROTHY LIVESAY, *The Unquiet Bed*. Ryerson Press. \$3.95.

"EVERYTHING THAT LIVES is holy," said William Blake, and many poets of our time, in an effort to present and praise the mystery of the living moment, have told us to abandon the formulae of literary contrivance, and use the language of the streets and the rhythms of ordinary speech. They have told us, too, to avoid the speculative and the overly descriptive, feeling that the clever adjective and the subtle meditation contribute more to the presentation of self-praise than to the presentation of an intense reverence for everything that lives. This leads, frequently, to a sentimental fallacy, and to the view that poems are not made by poets and found in books, but are made by others and found speaking out from the rhythms and objects of our surroundings. Thus Dorothy Livesay, in the first poem of her new and impressive collection, writes:

The real poems are being written in out-
ports
on backwoods farms
in passageways where pantries still exist
or where geraniums
nail light to the window
while out of the window boy in the flying
field
is pulled to heaven on the keel of a kite. . . .

Later in the same poem she tells us that

The living speech is shouted out
by men and women leaving railway lines
to trundle home. . . .

Such an approach might lead a less sensitive and disciplined poet to totally abandon fantasy and imaginative richness, and become merely a neo-objectivist recorder of the passing scene, or a crude retailer of simplicities. Miss Livesay, however, knows that the task is to catch the miracle of the fleeting moment, not by merely labelling it, but by transforming it into an ideal vision in which the transitory nature of the perception is perfectly balanced against the timeless and universal nature of its implications.

. . . . the essence is
to catch the bird in season

hold, hold a snowdrop
capped and cool
in the cold snow —
then let it go.

The balance is achieved in these poems, not only by a disciplined economy which excludes easy rhetoric and pretention, but also by a superb sense of music. In the fragment above the cadence, the varying speed, the pauses, the echoing consonants and vowel sounds, all combine to give the structure a musical authority which supports, and one might almost say "proves" the authority of the statement made.

Perhaps there is no subject more popular with those poets who are intent upon revealing the common miracles of our reality than that of sexual love; Miss Livesay's *Notations of Love*, and her other poems touching upon this theme, are astonishing in their directness, dignity, and sensitivity. Moreover, instead of presenting us with erotic intensity as the heart of the matter, she reveals that the erotic is part of a total transformation of human awareness and the individual's sense of identity.

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Each time you come
to touch caress
me I'm born again
deaf dumb
each time I whirl
part of some mystery
I did not make or earn
that seizes me
each time
I drown in your identity
I am not I
but root
shell
fire
each time you come
I tear through the womb's room
give birth
and yet alone
deep in the dark
earth
I am the one wrestling
the element re-born.

This section from *The Touching* reveals the way in which Miss Livesay has succeeded in fusing her romantic archetypal imagery with a simple and spare diction; thus the poems structure is itself a statement of the process the poem describes: from our common experience, our simple passions, arise the formidable dark and radiant gods which possess and heal us.

Though many of these poems are written in the first person and therefore risk the accusation of self-dramatizing egotism, none of them are narcissistic, and all present a personality nakedly aware of its own failures and hesitations. Moreover, even when these failures, these inadequacies, are presented, there is always enough wryness to prevent self-pity. Thus, in the last section of *Ballad of Me* there is a touch of the absurd as well as of the plaintive, and the musical structure as strength as well as plangency.

Returning further now
to childhood's *Woodlot*
I go incognito

in sandals, slacks
old sweater
and my dyed
hair

I go disarrayed
my fantasies
twist in my arms
ruffle my hair

I go wary
fearing to scare
the crow

No one remembers Dorothy
was ever here.

Dorothy Livesay has been "here" for some time. Her first book of poems appeared in 1929, and since that time she has always been one of the least noisy and most preceptive of our poets. This new collection includes a magnificent poem arising from her recent visit to Africa, and several of the most subtle and disturbing lyrics to have appeared anywhere in recent years, and makes it clear that in Dorothy Livesay we have a poet of real stature whose work can stand up beside that of any other poet in the English speaking world. Occasionally, perhaps, her subtlety results in thinness, and sometimes the disciplined brevities of her method frustrate the poem's movement towards rhetorical power. These are, however, minor flaws and hardly worth mentioning. I must however mention the very pleasing typography of the book and the fascinating illustrations by Roy Kiyooka who has exactly caught the combination of symbolic power and formal elegance which is characteristic of Miss Livesay's work. This is in all respects a splendid book. Buy it.

ROBIN SKELTON

ENOUGH UNDERSTANDING

CLARA THOMAS, *Love and Work Enough: The Life of Anna Jameson*. University of Toronto Press. \$6.50.

ANNA BROWNELL JAMESON (1794-1860) is now best known here for her 1838 publication *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada*, recently reissued in the New Canadian Library. In this work, as in others, her personal biases can be seen; she characterizes Toronto as having the worst faults of the artificial English social system and none of its advantages (a view with which non-Torontonians in Canada perennially agree). That she was ultimately optimistic about Canada was hardly enough to calm down the riled citizens of that city. Anna Jameson's

rhetoric, however, together with her acute and individual perceptions and her consistent goals — "To persuade, to convert and to lead" — create an interesting and readable document. Yet what we are most conscious of, and what Mrs. Thomas makes quite clear, is how much *Winter Studies* reveals the stance, the personality, of its writer.

Indeed, Mrs. Thomas's introduction to the NCL reprint contains some of the material that she now excellently incorporates into her longer and fuller biographical study of Mrs. Jameson, *Love and Work Enough*. By relying in large part on diaries, letters, and reviews, she admirably recreates the life and times of that complex woman, examines her books, her friendships, and her travels, explores some of her possible motivations, and considers some of the attitudes to

The President's Medals

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Dr. D. C. Williams, the President of the University of Western Ontario, announces the opening of the competition for the President's Medals for 1968. These medals are awarded annually for the best single poem, best short story, best scholarly article, and best general article submitted for the competition. A cash award will accompany each medal.

To be eligible, work must be written by a Canadian citizen or a person resident in Canada, and must have appeared in a Canadian publication in the calendar year preceding the year of the award. The closing date for entries is March 15, 1968.

Competitors should submit three copies of each entry, at least one of which must be a tearsheet from the issue of the publication in which the entry appeared. Each copy should be clearly marked with the name and address of the person submitting the entry, and with the name of the category in which it is submitted. No entries will be returned. Entries should be sent to the Chairman of the Awards Committee, Professor R. G. N. Bates, Department of English, University College, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.

Judges reserve the right not to make an award if the calibre of the entries does not warrant it.

which her personality gave rise. *Love and Work Enough* is a good biography, and a good biography is one which generally results if its writer has love or hate enough for the subject. This book is the exception, for there is certainly no hate expressed here, and rather than love, it is a kind of objective sympathy which moves through Mrs. Thomas's prose.

It would be easy (though undoubtedly dangerous) to caricature Anna Jameson. She was a woman whose personal æsthetic judgments insistently linked great art with moral virtue in the artists. She was a feminist whose marriage was completely incompatible and ended in legal separation, in her husband's acute inebriety, and in her being disinherited in his will. She was a dominating — even domineering — woman who, as Harriet Martineau noted, would be "mortified" rather than hurt by severed friendships. She even lived and travelled with Robert and Elizabeth Browning on their honeymoon. Clara Thomas conceals none of this, but wisely she avoids ridicule and takes a more humane view. Though Anna Jameson seems now almost militantly proud, she also had a profound sense of duty, of reputation, and of responsibility towards her parents. These qualities led her into many friendships (as it happens, primarily with women), but her apparently thin skin complicated her life, and the stance she assumed in public came to take over her private view of herself as well. Wisely, again, Clara Thomas has refrained from making a Freudian case history out of her subject. She shows us, instead, a prolific writer, a respected art critic, an almost compulsive traveller; we meet a woman who (in her own day) had ele-

gant taste and fine perception and moved in influential literary circles. Unhappily for herself, Mrs. Jameson was also a woman with a "long-proven capacity for self-dramatization and self-pity". To these attributes we must add her adventurousness and her capacity for self-congratulation, not least observable in her "Summer Rambles" in Canada. When on one occasion she shot the St. Mary's rapids, with an Indian steersman, in a ten-foot canoe, she tells us that two glasses of champagne could not have made her more tipsy or more complacent.

Moments of self-revelation like this seem frequent in Anna Jameson's work, yet Clara Thomas has done more than simply collect and annotate them. In a clearly-printed, well-documented, smoothly-written and above all *interesting* book, she has attempted to comprehend another's personality, and then she has done her readers an invaluable service by helping them to comprehend it too.

WILLIAM H. NEW

HEROIC BIOGRAPHY

J. G. MACGREGOR, *Peter Fidler: Canada's Forgotten Surveyor*. McClelland & Stewart Ltd. \$10.00.

OF THE MANY JOURNALS written by explorers, traders and captives during the pristine days of Canada's development, few are able to maintain the tension necessary to captivate the common reader. Hearne, Thompson, Harmon, Jewitt and a handful of others with the unique ability to mould observation into creation would qualify. What happens, then, when an editor is fascinated by a journal writer whose stature seems heroic but whose journals lack the creative spark? The re-

sult may be a work such as J. G. MacGregor's biography, *Peter Fidler: Canada's Forgotten Surveyor*.

J. B. Tyrell, who edited David Thompson's *Narrative* in 1916, was one of the first historians to recognize merit in early Canadian journals. He also realized that these journals could and should speak for themselves, and thus Thompson's narrative is introduced and annotated by an unintruding editor. J. G. MacGregor is not an editor, but a biographer, and a biographer with a task: to raise his hero to the stature of Thompson and in so doing become Fidler's self-appointed apologist.

Fidler, in his biographer's eyes, has been forgotten. Obviously he deserved a better fate, for he was an outstanding Hudson's Bay Company surveyor who was the first to map many of the major rivers of central Canada, was an indefatigable trader who harassed — and was harassed by — the Montreal fur traders, and who played a quiet but important rôle in the founding of the Red River colony. But he lacked the flamboyant nature of highland explorers like Mackenzie and the brooding introspection of Thompson. He was an educated man — certainly more so than either Mackenzie or Thompson — and, as MacGregor often

notes, a scholar. The qualities of persistence, bravery and scholarship, however, do not inevitably produce fame, no matter how rare those qualities might have been in the Canada of the early 1800's. By writing a popular biography and thus carving a pedestal to his own specifications, MacGregor has attempted to rescue his hero from obscurity.

This, then, is the answer to Tyrell's Thompson — a biography designed to inject into Fidler a dimension which he lacked in his own lifetime, popularity. But in the attempt to popularize Fidler, this biographer has destroyed all semblance of scholarship. For example, not only does MacGregor fail to footnote the quotations he uses from Fidler's numerous journals, but quotations from other journals and historical commentators suffer the same fate.

Perhaps the best sections of the biography are those in which MacGregor drops his rôle as apologist and writes Northwest history. His affection for the Indian is a constant and admirable factor in the book, and as Fidler follows and lives with the Indians, MacGregor takes the opportunity to describe the plight of the nomadic Indian tribes caught between the white man's push

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westward and the aggressive and highly organized Prairie tribes. If his rhetoric at such times verges on pathos it, perhaps, comes of the need to be popular. The finest part of the book describes the attempts by the Hudson's Bay Company to establish Selkirk's colony. Through all this Fidler is silent in his journals, but MacGregor has found ample evidence that Fidler was very much involved in his usual self-effacing way. That Fidler persuaded the Métis leader, Cuthbert Grant, to surrender himself after the Seven Oaks massacre appears to be conjectural, in as much as the author does not document his statements, but the picture he creates of the then aged fur trader and the young half-breed is warm and human and one wants to believe.

Finally, that is the impression that *Peter Fidler: Canada's Forgotten Surveyor* leaves one with: the desire to believe. One wants to believe that that Fidler was as great a surveyor and journal writer as Thompson, and to believe with MacGregor that given the opportunity Fidler would not have vacillated in the Rockies as did Thompson, but would have pushed on down the Columbia in order to establish a trading post on the coast before the Americans. But Fidler, in this biography, is never allowed to speak for himself.

Paradoxically, it seems doubtful that this biography will achieve the popularity for which it is designed; and it could not, in this form, be of great value to the historian. Popular biography, by its inherent limitations, cannot illuminate historically, and so Fidler remains "eclipsed by the long shadow of David Thompson" and lacking an editor like Tyrell, Fidler and his journals remain in darkness.

MAURICE HODGSON

CANADIAN MATURITY

ALAN GOWANS, *Building Canada: An Architectural History of Canadian Life*. Oxford University Press. \$15.95.

IT DOESN'T SEEM POSSIBLE that a history of Canadian architecture could evoke adjectives like "controversial", "provocative", or "stimulating", or any of the common words we like to attach to a book that makes attractive reading. Even the author, Alan Gowans, in his introduction to *Building Canada*, starts by quoting an article in *Canadian Art* of more than a decade ago which comments that: "Very few of our buildings . . . can by any stretch of the imagination be considered good architecture, or even architecture at all". Is there anything left to say? By his mature, candid and courageous approach to the subject, Gowans proves that there is.

Building Canada: An Architectural History of Canadian Life is the author's re-write of his book, *Looking at Architecture in Canada*, published only eight years before. The difference between the tepid, non-committal sound of the earlier title and the pointed and broader significance of the later one well represents the contrast between the two versions. The literature on Canadian architecture has been small, and much of what has appeared so far has been suffocatingly redolent of ladies' perfume and body powder, ululating with references to "nice lines" and "fine proportions" and tacit intimations of the ultimate superiority of British colonial life among the upper classes and up-in-the-air noses of Upper Canada. Alan Gowans quite defi-

nately seeks and reaches another, more convincing, level.

Aside from the pithy commentary which can almost be read completely apart from the summary of architectural development, *Building Canada* remains the only really useful, albeit incomplete, encyclopedia of Canadian architectural history. And since each aspect of emerging form is succinctly explained in terms of its stylistic history, the uninitiated learn something about the general pageant of architectural history, at least since the 17th century. However, in spite of its refreshingly straight-forward approach to the factual material, the book could have made very tedious reading, to be sure, of interest only to the occasional lecturer who might add the lace curtains and foundation planting to make it all palatable as an afternoon talk to the local women's club. But the author will not leave well enough alone. He really does find the subject interesting when allowed to look at it with the ruthlessly penetrating eye of the serious social critic. Once accustomed to the notion that a thorough treatment of a Canadian subject may not be all honey and self-flattery, the reader, too, discovers a new profundity to the material at hand.

Gowans is not afraid to call "grotesque" what others have called "good taste". He is quite unambiguous about associating Canadian architectural pretensions with equally pretentious social notions and delusions regarding Canadian culture. He sees the architecture of today as perhaps the most mature of the Canadian arts precisely because it has rejected irrational fears of corrupting influences from beyond the confines of the country's political borders. The greatest maturity will come when Canadian archi-

tecture ceases entirely to be "Canadian." What does Gowans say of Canadian art, Canadian literature — Canadian life? The answer is well implied in his bitter reminder: "Irredentist nationalism is indeed a cancer."

It is too bad that the make-up of the book — that is, the separation of the text in one section and the illustrations in another — succeeds in creating two essentially different stories. Except for a handful of post-1958 examples, most of the photographs come from the earlier, less interesting edition, and are largely dull. In too many cases they are so badly printed that they are practically useless as illustrations. Nor do the captions reflect any of the sparkle which the author generates in reference to the same buildings in the new text. Just in terms of quality of production, if one confronts *Building Canada*, printed in Canada, with *Images of American Living*, another recent work by the same author, printed in the United States, it becomes apparent that Canadian publishing, among other Canadian cultural institutions, probably needs to receive part of the collective kick which Mr. Gowans lets fly in his book.

ABRAHAM ROGATNICK

FEDERALISM TODAY

R. L. WATTS, *New Federations: Experiments in the Commonwealth*. Oxford University Press. \$11.75.

MAJOR DISTORTIONS and shortcomings may appear to be unavoidable defects in as ambitious an undertaking as a comparative analysis of the federal political structures of such widely varied countries as India, Pakistan, Malaya, Nigeria, Rhodesia and Nyasaland, and the West

Indies. Professor Watts admits that despite the common experience of British rule and the common problem of economic under-development, the essential differences (historical, cultural, religious, racial, geographical) are so striking that comparison is exceedingly difficult. The federal experiments themselves seem fragile and temporary: they disintegrated in central Africa and the West Indies; one was drastically revised in Pakistan; another is now suspended in Nigeria. The "federal concept" itself, even if broadly defined, will not encompass the full range of political devices and forms tried in these countries since 1945. Despite these difficulties the author refuses to write a narrowly legalistic study of constitutions, but probes the intricate relationships between societies and their political institutions. He also resists the temptation to find or create similarities where none exist, and avoids the claim that representative federations are political panaceas, for underdeveloped countries. For example, although sympathetic to the Nigerian experiment, he does not obscure the threat socio-economic change, tribal rivalries and regional governments pose to unity, law and order. Therefore, the turmoil which developed in Nigeria

after the book went to press is not unexpected. He anticipates too the recent shifts in the focus of power from central to state political organizations in India.

One-party, arbitrary, unitary government is not an acceptable alternative, states Professor Watts, to representative federalism. Yet even India and Malaya, the more stable experiments he has examined, are not shown to have passed his test of success: to strike an "appropriate balance . . . between adequate central power to provide security and economic development, and sufficient regional autonomy to protect vital local aspirations and interests in order to avoid resentment and discontent."

The ability of particular federal forms to combat poverty and reduce local tensions can be better viewed through regional and historical perspectives confined say to Southeast Asia or Africa. Useful comparative studies can be made of the former "white Dominions." It seems less relevant to find points of comparison among the states of the amorphous Commonwealth. However, Professor Watts' insight, diligence and cautions have prevented him from succumbing to the artifices and unrealities often found in such analyses. ROBERT KUBICEK

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INESCAPABLE BONDS

IN HIS REVIEW of Margaret Laurence's novel *A Jest of God* (*Canadian Literature* 31), Robert Harlow states that there is a failure of technique in Mrs. Laurence's portrayal of the frustrations experienced by her schoolteacher heroine. In his view, this failure lies in the absence of "objectivity, distance, irony"; in other words, Mrs. Laurence's handling of the first-person mode of narration does not allow for the kind of authorial detachment which would enable the reader to view this highly personal account in the wider perspective of irony. The implication of such criticism is not only that the author was unable to control her creation, but also that the book lacks imaginative depth and has little significance beyond its surface narrative. Such a view, it seems to me, underestimates the full impact of the novel as well as Mrs. Laurence's skill in handling a difficult narrative method.

In any novel presented through the consciousness of a single character the reader is inevitably — and intentionally — given a partial vision of events; in *A Jest of God* our view of the world in which Rachel moves is filtered through the lens of her tortured and complex-ridden sensibility. But this does not mean that there is no way that we can arrive at a clear evaluation of Rachel and her miseries. She is possessed of a degree of self-awareness that allows her to perceive the exaggerations of her self-inflicted

mental agonies: "I honestly do not know why I feel the daft sting of imagined embarrassments. The ones that occur are more than plenty, God knows. I must not let myself think like this." To suggest that there is a lack of objectivity is to ignore the corrective distance presented within the character's own view of herself, the moral perspective that is provided by Rachel's dual consciousness. We listen to Rachel's laments at her failures and frustrations, to the painful analysis of her incapacity expressed in self-pitying tones. But there is a second voice which can step back from the mental action and mock the self-pity and the self-dramatization; there is an internal conflict between that part of Rachel which does wail pitifully, and that part of her which is harshly self-critical: "I dramatize myself. I always did. No-one would ever know it from the outside, where I'm too quiet." This is not merely another instance of Rachel taking potshots at herself; for much of the novel's strength is derived from this internal conflict, and the effect is to create an ironic distance between the Rachel who is tortured by her own frustrations and the Rachel who preserves a degree of objectivity in assessing her own weakness. She is both ironist and victim.

The reader feels both sides of this conflict, and perceives another level of irony springing from the inefficacy of Rachel's self-criticism, from her inability to act decisively even when she is most aware of her own weakness. She chastises herself for being so weak and timorous; but the only result is that she retreats further into the world of day-dreams, where all her desires may be satisfied. Even her surrender to a passionate love affair proves to be no more than a surrender

to another illusion; and at the end of the novel she is left to speculate about a future which offers little promise of change from the past. Rachel is a prisoner of her background and upbringing as much as of her ever-present sense of inferiority. What she wants for herself is always coming into painful collision with what she knows is expected of her, and the first-person technique conveys the intensity of this waking nightmare by the constant juxtaposition of the dreams of her inner world and the demands of the external world. The small-town morality against which she struggles is given concrete embodiment in the words of the people around her, and in the strong sense of place evoked by her detailed and perceptive observation of her environment. Manawaka provides the sombre perspective against which we can measure Rachel's pain, and no detached omniscient narrator is needed to convey the claustrophobic atmosphere which threatens to stifle her.

In this examination of the inescapable bonds of personality, Mrs. Laurence has created a fictional world with a significance stretching beyond the city limits of Manawaka, Manitoba. The drama of Rachel's struggle and failure is played out entirely within her consciousness, but

the narrowness of the point of view does not limit the novel's meaning. The theme of individual aspiration conquered by social convention and personal guilt is all the more forcibly conveyed by this intense concentration on a single sensibility.

H. J. ROSENGARTEN

CANADIANA

Sir,

I am currently engaged in a major revision of my *Check List of Canadian Literature and Background Materials 1628-1950*. Not only do I intend to extend coverage to at least 1960, but also to include earlier titles and authors omitted because they were undiscovered, overlooked, or unlocated.

If you or any of your readers would draw to my attention any omissions, errors, or misclassifications in the present volume I shall be very grateful. I should also like to receive the names and addresses of persons with substantial private collections of rare Canadiana whose help I might be able to enlist to make this revision as complete and authoritative as possible.

R. E. WATERS,
Royal Military College of Canada,
Kingston, Ontario.

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happened on the way
to the Great Canadian
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