

CANADIAN LITERATURE No. 53

Summer, 1972

OF HEAVENLY HOUNDS AND EARTHLY MEN

Articles

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BY ROBERT HARLOW, GEORGE WOODCOCK

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George Woodcock

DAWN AND THE DARKEST HOUR

A study of Aldous Huxley

In *Dawn and the Darkest Hour* George Woodcock sees the moving force of Aldous Huxley's life as the search for light in darkness, both in the sense of his struggle against blindness and personal tragedy and his yearning for spiritual experience. That search is also the grand metaphor which holds the key to Huxley's career as a writer. In his books the quest for illumination in an intellectual and later in a spiritual sense is always present. Huxley came to believe in the pursuit of mystical religion; that pursuit led in the end to his abandonment of the very idea of literature as an art and to his ultimate failure – in his last works of fiction – as a novelist. Using biographical facts where necessary to supplement his critical judgement, George Woodcock evaluates the whole body of Huxley's work, and finds in the quest for light a pattern that unites the life and the writings.

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OR EVERY BELLOWS BURST...

*An intellectual hatred is the worst,
So let her think opinions are accursed.
Have I not seen the loveliest woman born
Out of the mouth of Plenty's horn,
Because of her opinionated mind
Barter that horn and every good
By quiet natures understood
For an old bellows full of angry wind . . .*

SO, PRAYING for his daughter and animadverting on his love for the splendid Maud Gonne — ruined by nationalist politics — wrote W. B. Yeats. These days his words return to me, not only — and most appropriately — in connection with his native Ireland, but also when I see the rising effects of “intellectual hatred” in Canada as well. Here I refer not only to what has gone on in Quebec, but also to much that happens in Anglophone Canada.

Canadian Literature is not a journal of politics, but there are ways in which the literary and the political life unavoidably meet. When any country emerges into a sense of the need to claim its political destiny, it is inevitable — and just — that writers should be called on to speak (which is their way of acting), and with a very few exceptions — Mordecai Richler is perhaps the most distinguished and certainly the most regrettable — Canadian writers have taken their stand

for independence. They have shown themselves — to use an uneasy but exact word — patriots.

But, as I have said elsewhere, patriotism and nationalism are not the same. The *patria* is a cultural and physical entity, a land and a way of life that accept love; the nation is a political entity, a machine that demands obedience. It is the failure to understand this truth that still produces so many fruitless controversies which, through the present close link between literature and the academy in Canada, impinge upon the world of writing. Even twenty years ago, a controversy over the employment of American scholars in Canadian universities would have sounded a distant drum for most Canadian writers. Now that CanLit has become an academic field, in which courses are proliferating from year to year, we find ourselves forced to listen to the confusions of those who seek to apply political criteria where, as the experience of so many totalitarian lands has shown us, their effects can only be fatal.

Too often the arguers tend to divide themselves into dogmatic blacks and whites, in an area of light where it is only the prismatic colours of creation that count. After five recent months abroad, which only enhanced my sense of personal identity with Canada, I returned to find the same old issues being threshed out in *Canadian Forum*. In a feature entitled "The Canadianization of our Literature Departments", S. P. Rosenbaum, a Canadian who appears to have spent some decades in the United States before returning to run a small English Department in Ontario, criticizes the more extravagant talk of our cultural nationalists (e.g. the Mathews-Steele demands for citizenship quotas applied to teachers in Canadian universities) and suggests also that the creation of more courses in Canadian Literature may not be the best way to encourage a real feeling for what writers are doing in this country.

Valid as these arguments may be, they are advanced with a cold intellectuality and a curious imperviousness to the depth of feeling — the sense of frustrated need — that today inspires the resolve of Canadians to create a culture of their own, independent and expressing a consciousness that — whether one chooses to call it regional or national — is unlike any other. It is a matter of opinions versus feelings and, as Yeats knew, in that struggle it is always safest to trust feelings. This is the conclusion that Professor Rosenbaum's opponent, Henri Beissel, has unfortunately also missed. Though he lacks the peculiar acrimony of *écrivains manqués* that distinguishes the leaders of the academic Canadianist movement, he still bases his arguments on strangely legalistic criteria. "What our nationalists are interested in knowing," says Professor Beissel, "is a man's citizenship since

that is the measure of his commitment . . . ” It is, of course, nothing of the kind. Patriotism and citizenship have no necessary connection, nor have citizenship and commitment, for the simple reason that the acquisition of citizenship is a mere form which the most cynical of intriguers can and often does adopt in order to further his own ends. A man who hesitates to take up citizenship because he feels that forms are meaningless may in fact have a truer sense of identity with Canada than a man who hastens to take the oath merely to make sure of his job. So far as writers are concerned — I leave it for others more qualified to speak of teachers of literature — it is in their work rather than in the political acts they may perform outside their writing life that we must look for evidence of their commitment.

The truth is that the feelings which accompany a man's transfer from one land to another, from one culture to another, are far too complex to be funneled into that moment when, in some courtroom, he takes an oath and signs a paper. We would certainly have a poorer literature, and a less interesting society, if there were no-one here but birthright Canadians. Yet there is no simple way of changing over, no total and irrevocable moment of rebirth in which a man ceases to be a foreigner and becomes a Canadian. Our greatest Canadians have often been precisely those in whom the impulses of their originating cultures survived most strongly. (Was not even Sir John A. Macdonald conscious to the end that he could not discard his British roots, and are not an essential Scottishness and a radical Irishness necessary components in the peculiar achievements of Hugh MacLennan and Morley Callaghan?)

Here the most salutary book that has been published in Canada for many a day is undoubtedly Naim Kattan's *Reality and Theatre* (Anansi, \$6.50), which appeared two years ago in Montreal in its original French, and last year in Paris. Kattan, who was born in Bagdad 44 years ago and migrated to Canada 18 years ago, has been a contributor to *Canadian Literature* almost from its beginnings, commenting with the sensitivity of an outsider steadily moving inward on Canadian writers in both our languages. His past presents an almost kaleidoscopic pattern of shifts, from the Jewish ambience of his childbirth into the Arab world, and thence on to the peripheries of English culture and into the luminous vortex of Paris, until at last he came to Canada and settled. That the end of such a pilgrimage should have been Canada and not France is something that can only be understood by reading *Reality and Theatre*. It is a series of essays, circling round a central theme that in Middle East, from which Kattan came, man — whether he is Moslem or Jewish — faces reality directly and

nature as an enemy, without the mediation of icons, while in the west such mediation is a necessary part of man's approach, so that in every way life becomes a succession of theatres. This results in a progressive loss of contact with reality, the death in life that characterizes modern civilizations and which entraps even the peoples of the East as they are led away by the passions of nationalism. Among the many striking sentences of a classically aphoristic book, Kattan makes a notable distinction between the fates of civilizations and those of individuals (of whom, after all, cultures are composed).

Death comes in any case. It ends as winner, and no civilisation has escaped its reign. Only a few isolated individuals, exiles from civilisation, escape death's domination, accepting each day as a rebirth. Doubtless they merely postpone the final deadline. But when it comes, they do not depart as losers. They do not submit before their time.

The most significant of the essays of *Reality and Theatre* to those Canadians who share with Kattan our multiple origins is that chapter, entitled "The Word and the Place", in which he talks of his own voluntary exile and his equally voluntary acceptance of a new home. And, for anyone — immigrant or birth-right — who attempts to live with full awareness in that peculiar dynamic equilibrium of origins and cultures which we call Canada, the last sentences of his book bear a salutary message: that we cannot create our present by rejecting our past.

If I accept the fact of being divided between communion and the ancient hope, it is because I reject the division of being, I refuse to live simultaneously in two worlds. My two universes are not superimposed. They continue each other, prolong one another in the movement that is life. Though my relationship with reality is conscious, it is not frozen by a lucidity of awareness that rules out adventure or chance. Alternation within continuity is creation; and my rapport with others is not a closed achievement but an eternal starting-point. I have opted for a language which I must invent as I speak. I have chosen a place which I endow with presence by inscribing my invention upon it. I have chosen a rapport with others which, far from imprisoning them in their own language or in a fixed place not of their choosing, draws them into a movement where language, place and the Other are invented every moment, obliging me to invent myself. I do not accept the fixity of safe places or the comfort of certitudes.

* * *

As I have been writing these last words, on a darker morning than June should offer, a flat voice from Toronto has announced over the radio the death

of Edmund Wilson. There can have been few practical critics who — in the past generation — have entirely escaped the influence of this man who raised reviewing once again from a mere craft to the kind of art that Hazlitt had once practiced. His polymathic grasp of so many fields of knowledge, used by a supple and penetrating intelligence, enriched his writing in every direction, and books like *Axel's Castle*, *The Wound and the Bow* and *To the Finland Station* became classics in their own time and are likely to remain so. In *O Canada*, though his vision was at times a little blurred, Wilson showed a sympathetic understanding, before other American writers, of the forces that were creating a native Canadian literature.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

HEMINGWAY AND CALLAGHAN

Friends and Writers

Fraser Sutherland

IF MORLEY CALLAGHAN has a hound of heaven on his trail, it is probably Ernest Hemingway, for Callaghan cannot escape the Hemingway legend. This is what comes of knowing a famous writer in his struggling years. No matter where Callaghan turns people will ask what Hemingway was *really* like and worse, from Callaghan's point of view, find the work of the two writers similar.

The details of their friendship are well known, and Callaghan has helped make them so in *That Summer in Paris*. Indeed, he hardly does a talk or article on a literary subject without at least one mention of Hemingway; possibly this is inevitable for perhaps no writer, except Joyce, has had more influence on the techniques of modern literature in English. The friendship lasted from the fall of 1923, when Hemingway briefly returned to Toronto from Europe, to late 1929, when a barrage of letters ensued over a rumour that Callaghan had knocked out Hemingway in a Paris gym. Callaghan hadn't, though he did knock Hemingway down, partly due to the fact that Scott Fitzgerald, acting as time-keeper, accidentally prolonged the round. "All right, Scott, if you want to see me getting the shit knocked out of me, just say so,"¹ Hemingway had told an aghast Fitzgerald. Hemingway claimed, then and later, that he'd had a long, boozy lunch at a local restaurant before the bout, to the detriment of his boxing.² The episode — and its aftermath — is trivial, but it does point up the surfeit of pride Hemingway and Callaghan shared. One might have expected the friendship to end like this: both writers were zealous in their own interest and even had simi-

lar features, if one may believe John Glassco's amusing account: "Morley Callaghan was short, dark, and rolly-polly, and wore a striped shirt without a collar; with his moon face and little moustache he looked very like Hemingway; he had even the same shrewd little politician's eyes, the same lopsided grin and ingratiating voice."³ Fellow politicians or not, the two writers were running, and as in the *feria* at Pamplona, the running had its hazards.

Without question, Hemingway was vital to the first phase of Callaghan's career. "No man meant more to me than Ernest,"⁴ Callaghan remarks. While Callaghan went to law school in Toronto and worked summers at the *Star*, Hemingway acted as a sort of Paris literary agent for him, showing his stories to Ezra Pound, Ford Madox Ford and Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald spoke well of Callaghan to Max Perkins, Scribner's editor in New York, and Scribner's went on to publish Callaghan's first two books, *Strange Fugitive* and *A Native Argosy*. Perhaps more important was the timely encouragement Hemingway gave during his Toronto stay: "You're a real writer. You write big time stuff. All you need to do is keep on writing."⁵ A writer may indeed succeed without a single word of praise or support from another older writer (Hemingway was three years and five months older) but he will become more bitter than he has to be. "There has to be some one person in the world who thinks you're good,"⁶ Callaghan himself once told Robert Weaver.

Though he frankly confesses his early debt to Hemingway, Callaghan goes on to say in *That Summer in Paris* that "In the years since those days he had gone far along another path."⁷ In reviewing the careers of both men, however, one finds that the paths are comparable. Every career has its pattern, and the patterns of Hemingway's and Callaghan's careers have similar shape. Both had some of their early success with stories published in Paris "little" magazines, before decisively breaking through to widely-read outlets in the United States like *Atlantic Monthly* and *Scribner's Magazine*.

By 1929, however, Hemingway had produced his greatest work: *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, and the superb stories of *In Our Time* and *Men Without Women*. Callaghan had written some fine stories in *A Native Argosy* but his first novel was not good enough to be truly lasting, and neither were the works that shortly followed it: the novella, *No Man's Meat*, published in Paris (1931), and the novels *It's Never Over* (1930) and *A Broken Journey* (1932). In terms of popular acceptance, though, the early books had a modest success. For Callaghan the success was soured by the Scribner's promotion that linked his work with Hemingway's. Callaghan seems to have bitterly resented this, and

his admirers have never tired of piously decrying the terrible injustice perpetrated by Scribner's copy-writers and by critics who dared to associate the two writers.

The Thirties were to be good years for both Hemingway and Callaghan as far as volume was concerned. But in overall quality, Callaghan's work would triumph. Hemingway would produce the two 'non-fiction' works, *Death in the Afternoon* (1932) and *Green Hills of Africa* (1935), the fourteen stories of *Winner Take Nothing* (1935) and the broken-form novel, *To Have and Have Not* (1937). *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine Stories*, mainly comprising earlier work, was published in 1938. Looking over it all, though, no one could deny that some kind of decline had taken place.

In the same year as *Winner Take Nothing* appeared Callaghan's parable-novel *Such is My Beloved*. This book, and three others which quickly followed it — *They Shall Inherit the Earth* (1935), *More Joy in Heaven* (1937) and the short stories of *Now That April's Here* (1936) — marked the peak of Callaghan's career. During the decade Callaghan settled down in Toronto, but Hemingway, with his extreme life style, was on the move: from Tanganyika to Cuba to Spain. The books began to be less integrated works than by-products of a legend.

After the fine flow of the Twenties and Thirties both writers entered a period of drought. Callaghan called his a time of "spiritual dryness."⁸ Whether one calls it *accidie* or simply "Black-Ass",⁹ as Hemingway did, it is the valley of the shadow to any writer. Callaghan's lasted from 1938 to 1948 when two short — and slight — works appeared, *Luke Baldwin's Vow* and *The Varsity Story*. Hemingway, too, would come upon arid days, ten years from the publication of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* to 1950 and his worst book, *Across the River and Into the Trees*. During the long period of limbo, Hemingway spent much of his time in legend-making: touring the Far East for the newspaper *PM*; hunting German submarines in the Gulf Stream; and helping to free Paris from the Axis.

Callaghan was busy in the war years and he too was building a public image, though one rather different from Hemingway's. After 1943 he toured the country as chairman of the CBC radio show that became known as "Citizen's Forum". Thus emerged the Morley Callaghan of radio and television: pipe-smoking, affable, folksy, the homey underlilt of Irish brogue and just a whiff of the cracker barrel philosopher. Besides his "Citizen's Forum" stint, and the later appearances on the TV show, "Fighting Words", Callaghan also, like Hemingway, kept his hand in magazine journalism, with pieces for *Saturday Night* and the now-defunct *New World*.

By 1948, Callaghan felt able to resume "serious" writing. *Luke Baldwin's Vow*, a juvenile-novel (an expanded version of the unbearably-titled short story, "The Little Business Man") and a quasi-novella, *The Varsity Story*, were published, the latter to help out a University of Toronto fund drive. *The Loved and the Lost* followed in 1951 and brought him the Governor General's Award for Fiction, the first of many honours. The award was an example of the "sigh of relief effect" that often comes when a writer, barren for a long spell, bears forth something that at least resembles a worthwhile work. The same phenomenon occurred in 1952 with the publication of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* that won the Nobel Prize for him, a sort of universal sigh of relief after the long drought of the Forties and the critically-disastrous *Across the River and Into the Trees*.

After *The Loved and the Lost*, there was an eight-year fallow until *Morley Callaghan's Stories* was published in 1959, and *The Many Colored Coat* in 1960. At this point the critic Edmund Wilson intervened with one of his papal bulls, published in *The New Yorker* and later in *O Canada: An American's Notes on Canadian Culture*, to the effect that a neglected Callaghan deserved to be canonized with the like of Chekhov and Turgenev. There was a strong reaction to the charge of unjust neglect, but whether his reputation was new-found or not, it was, as George Woodcock says, "quietly brought to earth, and by Callaghan himself, who published a novel — *A Passion in Rome* — which not even his most devoted admirers could compare with the masterpieces of the Russian Golden Age."¹⁰ Callaghan's next work, *That Summer in Paris* (1953) was, however, a success in every sense. Now, one awaits publication of his new novel, *Thumbs Down on Julien Jones*, from which four excerpts were broadcast on CBC Radio in June 1970.

For Hemingway, the later years were not those of fallow and then harvest but almost a total drought, silence except for a few attempts half carried through and work on the beautiful, bitter *A Moveable Feast*, published in 1964 after his death: silence until that shotgun blast in Ketchum, Idaho.

CALLAGHAN'S RESISTANCE to any attempt to associate him with Hemingway has been bolstered by a few knights who come stumbling to his defence. One of these is Brandon Conron, who writes:

The history of Callaghan's image is charged with irony. His literary reputation was jeopardized from the very beginning when Scribner's Magazine linked him with Hemingway. The effects of this association are not yet obliterated. Almost every review of Callaghan's early works, and even of many of his later writings, contains the inevitable, and too often irrelevant, mention of Hemingway. Most critics, indeed, in their confidence of the similarity of style in these two writers have never bothered to examine carefully Callaghan's work. Their reviews are full of frills, inaccuracies and misinterpretations because they failed to see that his fictional technique is highly original.¹¹

This is nonsense of course. Callaghan's technique is not highly original but derives from a "school" of North American writing that has common techniques and at least some of the same concerns. When Hemingway said that "All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*"¹² he was pointing out this school, a North American branch of what Cyril Connolly, in *Enemies of Promise*, calls "The New Vernacular". The writers who followed Twain, whether at a first or further remove, had a wide-eyed way of looking at the world, an innocence of perception that in story-form allied itself with seemingly dull-witted narrators. Twain and his heirs travelled light. They might have read all the books in the world, but this in no way blurred the clear-sighted integrity of their vision. All surplus intellectual baggage was shucked off, whole trunkloads of western culture, for the sake of seeing, tasting, feeling on one's own. Though Callaghan's overall vision depends to a degree on a species of Catholicism, he believed with the others in keeping his lens clean. From *Huckleberry Finn* to Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* to Hemingway's *In Our Time* this line has profoundly affected modern writing, in poetry spinning off the movement called Imagism and in turn, Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams. Callaghan, through Anderson and Hemingway — and like all the others — drew on this bank of resources and all of those writers could have espoused his desire to have writing "as transparent as glass."¹³

Victor Hoar is another one of those who are quick to defend the unblemished maidenhood of Callaghan's work, citing Hemingway as one "to whom Callaghan has been persistently and tediously compared."¹⁴ After saying this, Hoar goes on to compare, with some justification, the figures of Marion Gibbons in *A Broken Journey* and Lady Brett Ashley in *The Sun Also Rises*. Callaghan himself protests too much. When Robert Weaver tells Callaghan that "the Canadian idea used to be that you are sort of a Canadian Hemingway", he replies:

I really don't know what to do with people. You shouldn't blame this on Canadians. You see, the difference is that as soon as a new writer appears, you feel uncomfortable unless you can label him or link him with something. And I — unfortunately or fortunately as the case may be — was linked with Hemingway. All my early stories were appreciated by Hemingway, that's true. He really liked them, but then we had the same editor, Max Perkins, at Scribner's. . . . But the relationship was very flimsy in terms of writing so what I would like some of these boys to do is get a collection of my stories and get a collection of the early Hemingway stories, and sit down and read them. Wyndham Lewis, the English critic, did this; and he wrote a piece about it — he was astounded by it. He said that he went on for years thinking that I was somehow or other very close to Hemingway until he read a collection of my stories. Wyndham Lewis said that he could see a very close relationship between me and Tolstoy but he could see very little between me and Hemingway.¹⁵

Every writer likes to be compared with Tolstoy but it's not quite so cosy being likened to a contemporary. No writer likes to be called a camp-follower, imitator, or sycophant. Callaghan is none of these but it's silly to pretend that he didn't learn from Hemingway, almost as silly as to claim that "his fictional technique is highly original." After taking Callaghan's advice and reading a collection of his stories — in fact all his works — I have found dozens of meeting-points with Hemingway's fiction.

Both Callaghan and Hemingway have been concerned with telling a story from the point of view of someone who is "abnormal", a difficult problem for any writer. The early Callaghan stories, like "Amuck in the Bush" and "A Country Passion" succeed very well, and in the same way as Hemingway's "Up in Michigan". In "Amuck in the Bush" Gus Rapp, a lumberyard worker, gets in a fight with the boss, is fired, and drinks some squirrel whiskey. Planning to revenge himself on Walton, the boss, he sits with "his head in his hands, spitting at a bug crawling on the picket walk and thinking about grabbing the kid that always became Mrs. Walton when he thought about it much."¹⁶ He assaults Walton's wife and daughter. Failing in the kidnap attempt he is later captured. As he is put into the police car "the kids yelled and threw pebbles and sticks at him."¹⁷ His mental fog as thick at the end as it was at the start, the things he cannot change inside him have their correlatives in a crawling bug, a screeching night-bird, a swooping bat.

This literary country is sometimes called Moronia and another of its denizens is Jim Cline, the ex-convict protagonist of "A Country Passion". Cline wants to marry Ettie Corley, a pathetic sixteen-year-old who is about "to go away to an

institution in Barrie."¹⁸ When he takes Ettie for a drive he is charged with seduction and abduction. He convinces himself that if he escapes he could "get people behind him."¹⁹ He does escape, only to be re-captured.

Gus Rapp and Jim Cline might well be cousins of Jim Gilmour in "Up in Michigan". Gilmour, a blacksmith, "came to Hortons Bay from Canada." One night he gets drunk and lays the shy hired girl at his boarding house. The girl, who has wanted yet been frightened of this, is left with a drunken Jim sleeping on the dock — their bed — and a "cold mist coming up through the woods from the bay."²⁰ Just as Gus Rapp has a sexual desire for Mrs. Walton, without being able to know it as such, so Liz Coates desires Gilmour. Her pathos is that all she gets in return for this feeling, a tender one, is a hard ride on a harder dock.

The single or dual point of view; the simple, direct diction and clipped dialogue; the use of repetition to denote welled-up feeling (the verb "liked"²¹ or its variants are used nine times in the fairly short third paragraph of "Up in Michigan") are all devices Callaghan and Hemingway use in giving voices to the inarticulate. It is part of their legacy from Twain and Anderson.

The Hemingway influence lessens after the early stories and *Strange Fugitive*, though one may find traces of it in all Callaghan's work. Even as late as *The Loved and the Lost*, one sees passages like this:

The church hung there in the snow; it could sail away lightly like a ship in the snow. Then he turned and looked at Peggy's lifted face, on which the snowflakes glistened and melted, making her blink her eyes. He looked again at the church and then at her face. Her shoulders were white, his own arms were white, and the slanting snow whirled around them. Feeling wonderfully lighthearted he started to laugh.²²

The main features of the style: the subtle alliteration of the w's; the repetition of a key word, "snow"; and the simple straightforward diction all could have been learned from Hemingway. This is not to say that Callaghan lacks a style of his own, one different in some respects from Hemingway. Hemingway's pacing, for instance, is much more urgent, the tempo quicker. A Callaghan story is a heavy mist or at most a spring shower; a Hemingway story is a rainstorm. Callaghan's irony tends to be more subtle than Hemingway's; his lyricism has a different rhythm, and the details he chooses are more abstract. But these differences are secondary; in general they have the style of their school.

Callaghan's view of style, says Woodcock, "is essentially moralistic, and every one of his works fails or succeeds according to the ability with which he manipulates the element of parable within it."²³ The choice of the parable-form, the

mould into which the style is poured, is the one major technical difference between the work of the two writers. Although there is always a moral centre to Hemingway's work, the only thoroughgoing parable he ever wrote was *The Old Man and the Sea*. The Callaghan book which best develops the parable's potential is *Such is My Beloved*, in which the young priest, Father Dowling, is determined to give meaning to Christian love and in doing so is driven to madness. In loving two prostitutes in his own way, he is destroyed by pimps, hypocrites and Pharisees. He is a smashed man, like so many of Hemingway's people and especially Frederic Henry in *A Farewell to Arms*. In his *Spectator* review of Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast* Callaghan sneers at what he calls "the farewell to arms theme".²⁴ Though *A Farewell to Arms* is a romance and not a parable-novel, how like Father Dowling's situation is the one in which Frederic Henry finds himself:

If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle, and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you but there will be no special hurry.²⁵

Father Dowling is one of those "strong at the broken places". Like Henry, too, he has made a kind of "separate peace".²⁶

Of course, the formal Christian vision which Callaghan brings to *Such is My Beloved* ("Man's career occurs in the imperfect world of time, but its meaning . . . depends finally on a larger reality *out of time*,"²⁷ as Hugo McPherson puts it) is very different from that in most of Hemingway's work, as is its structural co-efficient, the parable form. But Callaghan is not more "religious" than Hemingway. With both, the object is to make the best of human possibilities, and the ethic revealed in their work is a species of humanism.

Interestingly enough, the figure of the "smashed man", of which Dowling is one example, recurs through all of Callaghan's and Hemingway's work. Young or old, the smashed man — usually the central figure of the story — is wrecked by the forces of nature or his society. With Hemingway, the damage is usually, though not always, done by nature; in the case of Callaghan it is usually society. Jim Cline and Gus Rapp are smashed men, as is K. Smith, the hangman in "Two Fishermen". Smith is a pleasant little guy who likes to go fishing, yet at the end of the story, "Smitty had his hands over his head, to shield his face as the crowd pelting him yelling, 'Sock the little rat. Throw the runt into the lake'."²⁸ In the

novels, too, the central figure is always a smashed man. Harry Trotter in *Strange Fugitive* and Kip Caley in *More Joy in Heaven* both die in a burst of gunfire. John Hughes in *It's Never Over* and Peter Gould in *A Broken Journey* are both reduced to a kind of numbness, Gould with his broken back and Hughes severed from his girl: "It was such a cold wind it was more important Lillian should not miss the car than they should go on talking."²⁹ Bill Lawson in the early novella "In His Own Country", and Father Dowling in *Such is My Beloved* are driven insane. Andrew Aikenhead in *They Shall Inherit the Earth*, Jim McAlpine in *The Loved and the Lost* and Harry Lane in *The Many Colored Coat* all lose jobs and social rank. Sam Raymond, the painter turned photographer in *A Passion in Rome* arrives in Rome a broken man though he is healed, or perhaps annealed, by the fires of aesthetic, erotic and divine passion that Callaghan attempts to stoke all at once.

It would be tiresome to recite all the broken men in Hemingway's fiction. The portraits range from Krebs in "Soldier's Home" (a preview of Jean-Paul Sartre's novel, *Nausea*) to Harry in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" to Manuel Garcia in "The Undeclared." The great bull-fighters in *Death in the Afternoon*: Maera, Belmonte and Joselito, are all smashed men. From Jake Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises* to Robert Jordan in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* to Santiago in *The Old Man and the Sea*, the central figures are emasculated, destroyed, or ruined.

IN TRACING some of the similarities in the writers' work, two important points may be made. The fact, first of all, that Callaghan's work comes close to Hemingway's or other American models does not make him a citizen of the literary United States. Though Callaghan has called himself an American writer, Canadian mythic patterns and nuances of tone can be found throughout his fiction. It is not, however, my concern to bring them out here.

As a second point, there is no basis for saying that Callaghan is a Canadian Hemingway or for that matter anyone else other than himself. He is his own man, and has his own "view of life",³⁰ as he likes to call it. As a writer with a good deal of stubborn courage, Callaghan would want to resist anything that diminishes his own identity. This is easy to understand but it should not obscure the fact that he has taken those things he wanted — and perhaps some he did not want — from Hemingway and the writers they mutually admired. Nor, simply because it may hurt someone's feelings should the critic ignore the meet-

ing points. A mature criticism must take account of a writer's context, the "school" in which he learned his lessons, and what these lessons were. There is nothing to be lost in that, and a great deal to be gained.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Morley Callaghan, *That Summer in Paris*, New York, 1964, p. 212.
- ² Carlos Baker, *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story*, New York, 1969, p. 598.
- ³ John Glassco, *Memoirs of Montparnasse*, Toronto, 1970, p. 89.
- ⁴ *That Summer in Paris*, p. 6.
- ⁵ *That Summer in Paris*, p. 25.
- ⁶ Robert Weaver, "A Talk with Morley Callaghan" in *The First Five Years: A Selection from the Tamarack Review*, Toronto, 1962, p. 120.
- ⁷ *That Summer in Paris*, p. 6.
- ⁸ Morley Callaghan, "The Pleasures of Failure", *Maclean's Magazine*, 78, March 6, 1965, p. 13.
- ⁹ A. E. Hotchner, *Papa Hemingway*, New York, 1967, p. 72.
- ¹⁰ George Woodcock, "The Callaghan Case", *Canadian Literature*, Spring 1962, p. 61.
- ¹¹ Brandon Conron, *Morley Callaghan*, New York, 1966, p. 167.
- ¹² Ernest Hemingway, *Green Hills of Africa*, Hammondsworth, 1966, p. 26.
- ¹³ *That Summer in Paris*, p. 17.
- ¹⁴ Victor Hoar, *Morley Callaghan*, Toronto, 1970, p. 27.
- ¹⁵ "A Talk with Morley Callaghan", p. 127.
- ¹⁶ Morley Callaghan, *Morley Callaghan's Stories*, Toronto, 1959, p. 84.
- ¹⁷ *Morley Callaghan's Stories*, p. 88.
- ¹⁸ *Morley Callaghan's Stories*, p. 7.
- ¹⁹ *Morley Callaghan's Stories*, p. 13.
- ²⁰ Ernest Hemingway, *The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*, New York, 1966, p. 86.
- ²¹ *The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*, p. 81.
- ²² Morley Callaghan, *The Loved and the Lost*, Toronto, 1951, p. 33.
- ²³ George Woodcock, "Lost Eurydice: The Novels of Morley Callaghan" in *Odysseus Ever Returning*, Toronto, 1970, p. 29.
- ²⁴ Morley Callaghan, "The Way It Was", *The Spectator*, May 22, 1964, p. 696.
- ²⁵ Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*, New York, 1957, p. 249.
- ²⁶ *A Farewell to Arms*, p. 243.
- ²⁷ Hugo McPherson, "The Two Worlds of Morley Callaghan", *Queen's Quarterly*, Autumn 1956, p. 352.
- ²⁸ *Morley Callaghan's Stories*, p. 202.
- ²⁹ Morley Callaghan, *It's Never Over*, New York, 1930, p. 225.
- ³⁰ "A Talk with Morley Callaghan", p. 138.

POET AS PHILOSOPHER

Douglas Barbour

LOUIS DUDEK, along with Irving Layton and Raymond Souster, was one of the prime movers of modern Canadian poetry in the 1940's. As members of John Sutherland's *First Statement* group, these writers brought a new excitement to the poetry of the time, a brash vulgarity which revealed their proletarian adventurousness. Layton and Souster are today very popular with the poetry reading public. Dudek has failed to attract a similarly wide readership, and during the poetry explosion of the past decade, has managed to publish only one book (*Atlantis*, 1967). To most younger readers and poets he is known less for his poetry than his élitist statements about recent Canadian poets, like those which fill his *Canadian Literature* 41 article on Poetry in English during the Sixties. The recent publication of his *Collected Poetry*¹ is thus a most welcome event, for it provides the needed opportunity to read and assess the whole body of his poetry.

For a reader not very familiar with Dudek's work, the overwhelming fact about *Collected Poetry* is the way in which it demonstrates how much of a piece his poetry is. Dorothy Livesay² has said that Dudek had not yet found his voice in the early poems of *Unit of Five* (1944), *East of the City* (1946), and *Cerberus* (1952). This is true, of course, as true as such a statement can be about any young, apprentice artist. What struck me, however, as I read through this book, was the way in which certain approaches to subject matter, certain ways of articulating what can only be called arguments, form a part of his poetic *content* right from the start. Although he doesn't find the proper form for his "statement" right away, he is always striving for an intellectually tough poetry. Even in the early poems, where his control of "voice" is weak, the philosophic tone that marks all his serious poetry is present.

ONE OF DUDEK'S CONTINUING INTERESTS has been the *process* of thought. His poems often provide paradigms of that process, or icons of the results of that process. They move from a formal, traditional metric towards a prose-like, argumentative, "open" metric, which often resolves (in the longer poems, and especially *Atlantis*), into a near-prose of short maxims which remind me of La Rochefoucauld. Dorothy Livesay, writing before the appearance of *Atlantis*, noted this tendency towards prose statement but concluded that his "prose content, like his prose syntax, is a kind of disguise."³ But such an early poem as "On Poetry", for example, is full of abstractions and presents a definite argument; it is not merely a disguise of those things:

The flame of a man's imagination should be organic with his body,
coincident with an act, like an igniting spark.
But mostly, he fails in the act
and expels his bad humour in visions. A man curses,
seeing the thing he hates in pain, cursed by his vision:
this is poetry, action unrealized:
what we want most we imagine most, like self-abusing boys.

Later in this poem, Dudek suggests Shakespeare "should have been all his monarchs", an argument closely analogous to Borges' in "Everything and Nothing". The point of this comparison is that Borges, too, is presenting a subtle, philosophical, aesthetic argument, and he does so in prose: the medium considered most proper for that kind of *intellectual* subtlety.

"On Poetry" is interesting partly because it is an early poem in which Dudek essays the open form. But he does not stick with it, and many of the poems of the next few years (I think they are from the forties and early fifties) are in traditional forms, like the quatrains of "Flower Bulbs". This very interesting poem, which is a love poem of sorts, is yet very reminiscent of metaphysical poetry in the way it uses an image from nature as a basis for a closely argued and witty proposition. The argument is just as important as the lovely image which informs it, if not more so.

The poems about the city, usually New York, from this period, relate to the social-consciousness poetry of the thirties, but once again reveal the philosophical interest with which Dudek approaches all his subjects. They are socio-political meditations, and would be entirely suitable to a book of essays by a left-wing historian. "Line and Form" is one of the most interesting of the pre-*Europe* poems, because it is so obviously an essay in the aesthetics of universal creation.

Aesthetics is one of the major areas of philosophy that interest Dudek, and the concerns of this poem will reappear throughout all his later poetry.

Eternal forms.
 The single power, working alone
 rounds out a parabola
 that flies into the infinite;
 but the deflected particle
 out of that line, will fetch a frisk
 of sixes and eights
 before it vanishes:
 an ocean arrested
 by sudden solid
 ripples out in the sand.
 So this world of forms, having no scope for eternity,
 is created
 in the limitation of what would be complete and perfect,
 achieving virtue only
 by the justice of its compromises.

This is only the final third of the poem, but that last sentence, with its opening “So”, the “Thus” or “Therefore” of this particular demonstration, perfectly illustrates the argumentative method Dudek is using.

Even in such an obviously philosophical poem, however, Dudek makes use of what is an obsessive image in his work, and that is the great Sea itself. Here the line, “an ocean arrested” is both a major link in his argument and a reference to the vast chaos of possibilities that the sea has always represented to man. It is a natural reference for Dudek to make, for he has always been possessed by the sea; it appears in all his work, from the early tone poem, “The Sea”, through *Europe* and *En Mexico*, to *Atlantis* and beyond. Although his poetry tends to be intellectual and lacking in obvious emotionalism, the sea always provokes emotional outbursts from him. It is his true muse.

DUDEK WROTE A LOT OF SHORT POEMS in the Fifties, including the formal and philosophical love poems collected under the heading “Pure Science” and the various humorous poems and parodies that were published in *Laughing Stocks* (1958). Personally, I find few of Dudek’s “humorous poems” funny, and I don’t think his sense of humour is amenable to poetry. Too often

such poems telegraph their punchline and utterly fail to provide the "surprise" of a good joke. Arthur Koestler says that the "unexpected" climax to a good joke must be "both unexpected and perfectly logical — but of a logic not usually applied to this type of situation."⁴ It is precisely this "logical unexpectedness" which is missing in Dudek's poems. His parodies of Canadian poets, however, especially those of A. J. M. Smith, A. M. Klein, and Irving Layton, are often dead on, and reveal an acute *critical* wit.

The Fifties are crucial years in Dudek's career, however, because during them he wrote the two long poems, *Europe* (1955), and *En Mexico* (1958). It was in these poems that he came into full command of his voice, and it was there that he truly became a philosophical poet. *Europe* is an extended personal essay, a travelogue by a philosopher with a gifted and far-ranging eye. The branches of philosophy which engage Dudek's mind — philosophy of history, politics, aesthetics (and art-history), and ethics — all appear in *Europe* and in *En Mexico*. All will reappear in *Atlantis*.

I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT to note that Dudek is a student of modern poetry and a follower of Ezra Pound. Unlike many of the younger practitioners of the popular poetry of primitivism he lashed out against in "Poetry in English", he is a highly educated student of poetic tradition, especially of twentieth-century modernism. To him the following point has the force of a prime-directive:

Integrity, we should remember, has been the prime virtue of the great twentieth-century poets. The entire modern movement was a retreat from the idols of the marketplace to the private household gods of art and knowledge.⁵

I think there can be little doubt that Dudek has practiced that kind of integrity and faithfully served those gods. He is the only one of the three *Cerberus* poets even to attempt a truly long poem. He has walked the paths of his art alone. If he has not been completely successful in his poetic quest, surely one of the reasons is that he had to do it all by himself: he had no other poets in Canada to share his particular problems and efforts.

Europe is an oddly likeable piece of writing. Although I am not at all sure that it fully succeeds as poetry, I find myself completely won over by the man behind the work. This says a great deal for the poem, for I began the *Collected Poetry*

with a definite bias against him, based mostly on my disagreement with many of his criticisms of his fellow poets in "Poetry in English". In *Europe* the poet shows such a genuinely and engagingly interesting mind, uses that mind to deal with such interesting materials, and expresses his opinions with such a refreshing forthrightness, I found it impossible to dislike him. In this he is like Ruskin, another traveller in Europe, to whom he refers occasionally in the poem. As he continues to speak on various subjects during the poem's progress he wins our respect because his intellectual engagement with them is so clear and intelligent. He is also like Ruskin in creating a series of little personal essays, even if they appear to be parts of a poem. Although they contain many richly poetic images and metaphors, the very stuff of poetry, to bolster their various arguments, they are basically essays, as, for example, the lesson in art-history that is No. 50:

The Greeks were fine, but French classicism
 using the Greek for its own purpose,
 smooth hypocrisy, conceit, & the display
 of that corruption, *le bon goût*,
 — the worst taste in manners or in art
 the world has ever seen —
 spoiled two centuries of European art,
 opened the arts to worse corruption still —
 the monstrous sugar teeth
 of 'money' and 'amusement': here you see
 in Chartres
 art is no entertainment, it does not amuse;
 money paid for it, but it paid for
 something that the sculptor really preferred;
 pride was satisfied, but it was pride
 in objects, the full scale
 of human performance — they worked for this, gladly.
 The wedge of ignorance entered Europe
 with a blind idolatry
 of Greece and Rome; you can see it
 as a straight line from the 15th century down,
 "art for art," copying the Greek forms,
 shape without sense, imitating
 imitations, dramatic motion, sensuality
 for the boudoir, decorativeness
 to make room for gold, for size.
 After this, there was no honesty
 whether in art or trade, to fight off the incisor

final nail in the coffin of traditional verse, as far as Dudek was concerned, for in it he insists that if you write in one of the formal metres, especially iambic, you "thus neglect the essential music, which is that of your sounds, *as they fit the content of your poetry*, and you produce for the most part an empty rattle of sounds."⁸ *En Mexico*, and all the poems following it, are written in the light of that statement. Dudek's rhythmic achievements in this poem have been pointed out by Dorothy Livesay in *Canadian Literature* 30. His achievements in *content* are every bit as important. *En Mexico* is a more successful whole than *Europe* because of Dudek's new mastery of rhythm, but the centre of interest in the poem remains the philosophizing that the trip to Mexico engenders.

No. 3 of *En Mexico* is a commentary on religion, full of the short maxims that I find so fascinating in his poems:

Optimism is foolish. Life can only be tragic, no matter what its success . . .

Knowledge is neither necessary nor possible
to justify the turning
of that huge design.

He achieves here a kind of juxtaposition of epigrams which is far more powerful than mere statement could be. The mixture of the maxims and the images of life in Mexico creates a powerful commentary on contemporary civilization, just as Dudek wants it to. Because the whole poem provides such a resonant context for them, these short aphoristic statements have a power and interest that is entirely lacking in Irving Layton's "Aphs" from *The Whole Bloody Bird*. There is a decorum to Dudek's epigrams which the boring and boorish statements of Layton lack, and that decorum is provided by the unity of tone of the whole poem. It is also interesting to see, as in so many philosophical works, the statement, again justified by the whole context, that "Knowledge is neither necessary nor possible".

No. 4 is a description of life in the people, of "America, the Continent, dancing". Here Dudek displays another technique, that of "borrowing" the voice of another poet to make a point. In a sequence climaxing with the lines:

now! say the strings in singing consummation
we have touched the life-giving current,
making a relay!
Take it from us, you swarming futures!
Sing, as we now sing!

he uses the voice of Whitman to further the argument of his poem. These "vocal borrowings" serve the same purpose as quotations would in a literary or philosophical discussion. Finally, he reaches the philosophical climax of the poem, flowing in the way of logical discourse out of what came before:

Form is the visible part of being.
We know the logic of its adaptations,
a signature of individuality, of integrity,
the end of perfect resolution —
but not the inner stir.

Rest. Rest in that great affair.

The ending is a fitting one for such a poem, and it attains a powerful philosophical intensity. In many ways, *En Mexico* stands as Dudek's most successful poem: an organic, unified whole.

"Lac En Coeur", another fairly long poem of the time, is a quiet meditation full of questions about life. It is a lovely small personal poem, an essay from "the mind and heart of love" of the natural world around the poet. But it is a philosophical meditation, sharing, as do parts of *Atlantis*, the concerns of such poems as Yeats's "Lapis Lazuli" and the later *Cantos*, but without their "passionate intensity" (which may be a good thing, but "passionate intensity" in "the best" is not the same as it is in "the worst").

DUDEK, THE POET, seemed to drop out of sight from 1958 until 1967 (although excerpts from *Atlantis* began appearing in *Yes* as early as 1965), the very years when Layton and others were reaping their first major popular successes. *Atlantis* (1967) showed that he had not retired from the field, but had engaged his muse in a lengthy and difficult struggle.

Atlantis is not the unqualified success that *En Mexico* was. It is Dudek's longest piece of sustained writing, gathering all his themes and ideas into a single massive argument. Yet, in the final analysis, it fails because he is unable to incorporate everything he wants in quite the manner he wants. Had he paid attention to W. C. Williams's *Paterson*, rather than just the *Cantos*, he might have learned an invaluable lesson: that if you do use actual prose, it can mix with your own poetry without much trouble, so long as you juxtapose with care, but if you merely make your own poetry too prosaic in places, the obviously "poetic" parts

force that is entirely lacking in Dudek's rather abstruse, though very interesting, discussion. Or take his comment,

This voyage is almost over. I think
how everything will go on here
as before. As it must. And yet I know
that somehow I am a part of it, in it
for good — or I do not live at all.

and compare it with the sardonic and yet loving appreciation of the same fact in George Johnston's concentrated epics, "In It" and "O, Earth Turn!". This statement should be a "passionate moment" and yet it isn't, quite.

The Epilogue to *Atlantis* almost saves the whole poem. This is a poetry like that of the late *Cantos*: pristine, the language pure and magnificent as it apotheosizes "Atlantis", that region of the human/divine soul for which Dudek has quested through all his poems. The first two pages of the Epilogue shine with the very "Light" they celebrate, but the effort of such an ecstatic flight proves too great, and the poet returns to earth, except for a few leaps of a line or two, for the remaining five pages of the poem. Still, it is beautiful, it is a passionate moment, however brief, and yet it does seem somehow out of place in this particular poem. It is not that Dudek is wrong in his approach to poetry; he is following a major modern tradition, one whose value has been proven time and again. It is merely that in *this* poem he has failed to weld all his various elements into a harmonious sculpture of words.

Since the publication of *Atlantis*, Dudek has written a number of short “Jeux & Divertissements”. They are all poems with a point to make, many of them about our sexual lives. “Erotic Tropes”, for example, perhaps the best of the lot, is full of a wit reminiscent of Oscar Wilde’s prose. Dudek obviously does not consider these poems important. The groups of longer poems, collected in the section, “Reflections After Atlantis” are important to him, I think.

Basically, they continue the approach worked out in *Europe*, *En Mexico*, and *Atlantis*. "The Demolitions", an elegy for destroyed architecture, is essentially a lyrical, autobiographical essay. "Canada: Interim Report" is a bitter, politically oriented, polemic. There are some rather neat juxtapositions, but the tone is too angry, the bitterness too diffuse; it all sounds like a variant on the poems Souster and Layton had in *The New Romans*, and that kind of poetry is something Dudek has always, until this poem, had the good sense to ignore. The philosopher ranting can provide little pleasure or stimulation, for he is using language in a

manner, for him, meretricious. "A Circle Tour of the Rockies" is a mistake from start to finish, but not for the same reasons as "Canada: Interim Report", and it is a mistake of major interest, which also differentiates it from that poem. It is another very good essay, and one could imagine Ruskin, or even Dr. Johnson, writing it in prose. But to even *think* that such language would work in a poem about mountains betrays the kind of one-sidedness Dudek's preoccupations have led him to. There is absolutely no sense of a response to the overwhelming (*emotionally* overwhelming!) *grandeur* of the Rockies.

Clear it to the peneplane of un-being,
 an empty consciousness, space-time, a blank page,
 and something begins again. God knows
 maybe just a new area of suffering. Of experience.

Is this all he can say? These words are refractory in this context, they are not the right material for a poem. Compare Ralph Gustafson's "Rocky Mountain Poems" in *Ixion's Wheel*: by a variety of strategies they immerse the reader with the poet in the many experiences the mountains offer the sensitive observer. Where Dudek's poem discusses all kinds of things *around* the basic and absolute fact of the mountains, refusing to confront them in their being, almost as if they were unnecessary to the discussion, Gustafson takes us right into the experience of them with all the "visceral drive, committed passion"⁹ Dudek has accused him of lacking. If the mountains were unnecessary, they should never have been invoked at all. The point is that Dudek failed to recognize the limitations of his poetic; he did not understand that it was not meant to deal with the kind of *grandeur* (the Awesomeness that the great Romantics felt in the presence of mountains) the Rocky Mountains are. His refusal to use image or metaphor to any extent in the poem is the measure of that failure of recognition.

The last poem in the book is the beginning of what may become another very long poem called "Continuation I". It is another attempt to use "only a language/to contain the essentials that matter, in all the flux of illusion" to construct an artifact of words. Once again, a man of rich philosophic experiences is reflecting upon all the things which interest him. I hope he will keep it going.

THERE IS A FASCINATING ASIDE on the poet in "Continuations I": "O the poet that incredible madman", says Dudek. "He is possessed with possibility." These are strong words, yet they have authority. Dudek has always,

like his mentors, especially Ezra Pound, been "possessed with possibility"; that is why his philosophizing has been so rewarding, to him, and to his readers. But he is no "incredible madman"; all too plainly the opposite. I see him as a product of the Enlightenment who has been forced to cope with certain aspects of humanity (the "Evil" of the twentieth century which he has written so many pages about) the eighteenth century did not have to face. But he seems somewhat out of place, really, in a world which is still living in the Romantic Age, for Romanticism has touched him only slightly, if at all. Perhaps that is an overstatement, but I think it helps to define him and his art. Pound was just such a madman, but Dudek pleases us most when he is rational, meditative, the philosopher to be listened to and argued with, but not possessed by.

We are overburdened these days with "possessed" and "incredible" madmen in poetry. But there is no one else to speak to us in the reasonable, honourable, voice of intellectual integrity that is Louis Dudek's. Too many younger writers have been ignorant of his work, and the possibilities for poetry that it represents.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Montreal: Delta, Canada, 1971. \$5.00/\$4.00.
- ² "The Sculpture of Poetry," *Canadian Literature* 30, Autumn 1966, pp. 26-35.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- ⁴ *The Act of Creation* (London: Pan Books, 1969), pp. 33-4.
- ⁵ "Poetry in English," *Canadian Literature* 41, Spring 1969, p. 114.
- ⁶ "The Prose Tradition in Verse," *Literary Essays*, ed. T. S. Eliot (London: Faber & Faber, 1954), p. 373.
- ⁷ "The Serious Artist," *Ibid.*, p. 53.
- ⁸ "A Note on Metrics," *Delta* 5, October 1958, p. 17.
- ⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 120.

THE MAINSTREAM

Ronald Sutherland

ALONG WITH A NUMBER of other activities in Canada, literary criticism has picked up a great deal of momentum in the last decade. Like the St. Lawrence River it has deepened and broadened as it moved along, and to a large extent it also has divided in two at the Island of Montreal. In view of the mighty St. Lawrence's present state of pollution, however, it would perhaps be injudicious to pursue the analogy.

But it can be said with reasonable confidence that the steady increase in the volume of Canadian literary criticism is having and will continue to have a beneficial effect on creative writing in this country. I imagine that there is nothing more debilitating for a writer than to be ignored, to be working in a vacuum as it were. Frederick Philip Grove comes immediately to mind.

Despite the recent increase in the volume of literary criticism, however, several major problems remain to be resolved. They are basic problems which glare like a hole in a girl's stocking or a pair of mismatched shoes, but they can also be covered up and ignored. They would seem to invite attention, and then again they do not. For they are often charged with emotional overtones. For instance, there is the question of who precisely is a Canadian author. Anthologies and literary histories, to say the least, have tended to be gloriously free of discrimination, grabbing all that could possibly be grabbed. One wonders, indeed, how Jacques Maritain, Wyndham Lewis, Willa Cather and Ernest Hemingway, all of whom lived for a time in Canada, escaped the conscription, not to mention Alexis de Tocqueville, Charles Dickens and Henry David Thoreau. Perhaps they escaped because their remarks about the True North were often in a somewhat unappreciative vein.

But what about Frances Brooke, Louis Hémon, Brian Moore, Malcolm Lowry, Arthur Hailey, Georges Bugnet, Robert Goulet (the writer, not the

actor), Jack Ludwig, even Leonard Cohen, Mordecai Richler, François Hartel and Marie-Claire Blais? Does citizenship matter? Does it matter whether a writer came to this country after growing up elsewhere, or went elsewhere after growing up here? If one takes the view that where a person was born and grew up is the determining factor, then the first six of the above dozen authors must be disqualified as Canadian. If one takes the opposite view, then evidently the second six would have to go. Or can we have it both ways? Are the pickings so slim that we cannot afford to be fussy? Do we really have to stick national labels on creative writers at all?

On the one hand, I am not especially concerned about national labels. Or at least in the application of national labels. As I have suggested, it can be a tricky business, highly emotional as in the case of certain Quebec poets who have refused to be called *poètes canadiens* and insist on being *poètes québécois*. On the other hand, it seems to me that in a relatively young country like Canada, with its mass psychological complexes and crucial problems of national pride and identity, it is necessary to seek definitions. To imagine that Canadian criticism can become an organized scholarly discipline and attain a degree of sophistication without defining its basic subject matter is surely an example of disorganized and very unscholarly thinking. Some critics and budding authors have attempted to avoid the issue by proclaiming that a writer's universality is more important than his "Canadianness." Of course it is. In the long run. But one must keep in mind that an author does not become truly "international" by virtue of intent, but by virtue of merit — by creating a vision which transcends rather than disregards a particular national or regional consciousness. Consider for a moment some of the more famous of internationally recognized authors — Shakespeare, Molière, Burns, Flaubert, Tolstoy, Dostoevski, Joyce, Twain or Faulkner. It is not without significance that these men were all strongly associated with unmistakable national or even regional consciousness. It may not, therefore, be entirely idle to speculate that the Canadian writer most likely to achieve a lasting international reputation will be one who at the same time is most obviously and thoroughly Canadian.

At the risk of infuriating the faithful of various camps, then, I am going to explore the question of who is a Canadian writer, limiting myself, of course, to those cases where there may be some measure of doubt. Furthermore, I am going to present certain ideas on the closely related question of the "mainstream" of Canadian literature, a question I have already touched upon in previous studies.¹

The first problem, that of identifying the Canadian writer, may not be as mystifying as it seems. All writers produce their works from within a certain sphere of consciousness. Unless one subscribes to the notion of spirits from the great beyond descending to guide the pens of the entranced, then one must presume that a writer can express only what is within his awareness, however clear or vague this awareness might be and whatever unforeseen or unrealized implications the writing might turn out to have. Consequently, the work of every writer must perforce be informed by the sphere or range of his consciousness. This sphere of consciousness is in turn the product of what might be called cultural conditioning. People think, feel, act, react and express themselves in certain ways because of cultural conditioning and how this conditioning has shaped their hereditary potentials. Outside of complete brainwashing, this conditioning, the united effects of acquired knowledge and the experience of living in particular places, with particular people, and speaking a particular language at a particular time in history, is impossible to escape. When the biblical Joseph, after so many years in Egypt, overheard his unwitting brothers speak to each other in Hebrew, it is said that he turned and wept. James Sutherland, in his *Oxford Book of English Talk*, begins with a passage which seems to be in a strange and obscure tongue; he then goes on to explain that the passage is in the Aberdonian Scottish dialect which he spoke as a child, and that unintelligible as it may be to other people, it is music to his ears. Cultural conditioning makes the man. It is possible, however, for this conditioning to be multilateral, for a person to be conditioned by more than one culture; although it would appear that there is usually a dominant influence, or at least one influence which eventually gains dominance.

Now in pinning a national label on a writer, I would suggest that the determining factor is not primarily where he was born, where he was brought up or where he has chosen to live, but rather the sphere of consciousness in which he has created his works, the result of his total cultural conditioning and especially of the dominant influence. Who would question that Ernest Hemingway is an American writer, despite the years he spent outside the United States? Or the Verdun-born Saul Bellow? Or James Baldwin? Or Richard Wright? In the great majority of cases, the dominant influence is evident, and there is no problem of identification. In other cases, rare but often important, two or more influences appear to be of equal strength, and the critic is obliged to create special categories. I am thinking of T. S. Eliot, Henry James, Samuel Beckett and Karl Marx.

It is, of course, easier to determine the dominant cultural feature of a writer's sphere of consciousness after he is dead than to attempt to do so while he is still writing. Alive, he may yet shift one way or another. But I see no harm in making an informed inference, subject to adjustment in the light of possible further development. With regard to the dozen authors mentioned at the beginning of this study, application of the dominant-influence sphere-of-consciousness criterion produces interesting conclusions. Of the six writers raised outside Canada — Brooke, Lowry, Hémon, Hailey, Moore and Bugnet — only Hémon and Bugnet qualify to be considered authentic Canadian writers.

Brief as his stay in Canada was, brought to a tragic end by an accident in 1913, Louis Hémon, judging from his *Maria Chapdelaine*, became immersed in a distinctly Canadian sphere of consciousness. There are a number of reasons why this immersion should have taken place. Although he was born and raised in France, Hémon was hardly a typical Frenchman. He was from Brittany, an area which has resisted to some extent the formidable assimilative power of French culture and from which, incidentally, came many of the ancestors of French Canadians. Moreover, Hémon was apparently repelled by the French civilization which surrounded him. He went to England, stayed eight years and wrote a sports story called *Battling Malone*, but then decided that English civilization was just as decadent as that on the continent. Seeking the primitive and natural in human beings, he evidently found what he was looking for in rural Quebec. The cultural atmosphere was compatible, and he was able to lose himself in it, to become attuned to its nuances and subtleties. Louis Hémon did not write more novels. Had he done so, perhaps he might have revealed that his cultural immersion in Quebec was only temporary. But on the basis of the sphere of consciousness which produced *Maria Chapdelaine*, a book so well known that it requires no commentary here, it is appropriate to consider Louis Hémon as a Canadian writer.

Georges Bugnet ought to be likewise considered. From a town in east central France, at the age of about 26 he settled in a wilderness area of Alberta shortly after the turn of the century. In his forties, during the periods of winter isolation, he began to write books. His novels *Nipsya*, the story of an Irish-Cree halfbreed, and *La Forêt*, an impressive study of the effects upon the human soul of a constant struggle against the vast Canadian bushland, reveal that Bugnet's sphere of consciousness became dominantly conditioned by his life here. One may not agree with the theme of *Nipsya*, that Christian resignation is the only hope for the Cree Indians, but there can be no doubt about Bugnet's

acquired sensitivity to the peculiarities of the people, including Indian, métis and white, and to the particularities of the physical geography and climate of Canada.

BY CONTRAST, the works of Frances Brooke, Brian Moore, Malcolm Lowry and Arthur Hailey do not reflect any significant or extended immersion in a Canadian sphere of consciousness. Mrs. Brooke, who spent five years in this country when her husband was chaplain to the Quebec garrison, was by no stretch of the imagination culturally influenced in any way except that her conviction of the superiority of the English race was confirmed. Of course, at the time when she was here, 1763-1768, there was hardly anything to be culturally influenced by, any way. Why, then, should she be referred to as the first Canadian novelist, or her *History of Emily Montague* be called the first Canadian novel? She would undoubtedly have been shocked to the tips of her manicured fingernails if anyone had suggested to her that she was anything other than a purebred English writer.

Brian Moore, on the other hand, seems to have had no particular objections to being called Canadian. In an interview with Hallvard Dahlie he states:

Then when it might have seemed that someone in Ireland might have started writing about me, it was announced that I was living in Canada and was really a Canadian who was pretending to write Irish novels. I embraced the Canadians with both arms and became a Canadian citizen and announced to everyone that I was a Canadian writer, whereupon I spent my life being told by Canadians that I'm not really Canadian.²

One can sympathize with Moore; although with his proven and acknowledged talent as a writer, he is hardly in need of anyone's sympathy. I can distinctly recall, however, another of his published remarks, in *Le Devoir* some years ago, where he states that he could never think as a Canadian nor fit into the pattern of Canadian literature. Actually, George Woodcock's categorization of Moore as one of those "splendid birds of passage" appears to sum up the situation precisely. Moore did live in Montreal for a time, and he chose that city for the setting of his entertaining and charming novel *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*. But a setting does not mean a sphere of consciousness, an inside awareness of subtle peculiarities. *Ginger Coffey* no more makes Brian Moore a Canadian writer than *For Whom the Bell Tolls* makes Hemingway Spanish. In evaluating the sphere of consciousness in which a book was created, characterization is obvi-

ously of far greater significance than setting or atmosphere. The question to be posed is: To what extent does the author develop characters who are recognizably Canadian in more than name? There are no such characters in Moore's *Ginger Coffey*. The protagonist is a whimsical, impractical Irish immigrant. The one "Canadian" who is developed to any extent is Grosvenor, who however remains a vague shell to the end and whose major attribute is that he has an eye for Ginger's pretty wife. Another of Moore's novels, *I Am Mary Dunne*, has a protagonist who is nominally a Nova Scotian. But the novel, set in New York, is concerned with the problems of being a woman rather than a Nova Scotian. Brian Moore is an excellent writer, and no doubt history will decide whether he ends up with any kind of national label. On the basis of his six novels to date, however, there can be no real justification for calling him a Canadian writer.

Arthur Hailey's situation is much like that of Moore. He was born and educated in Britain, came to Canada for a time, then went to the United States, and he is now living, I believe, in the West Indies. He too used a Canadian setting, for his political novel *In High Places*, but he has since moved on to other things.

Malcolm Lowry? What can one say about Malcolm Lowry? I would dearly love to be able to consider Lowry a Canadian writer. But on what grounds? He lived a few years on the West Coast, then returned to England. He used a Canadian setting for the novella "The Forest Path to the Spring." With regard to the posthumously published *October Ferry to Gabriola*, George Woodcock feels that "it does become evident that he reacted with deep emotion and commitment to his Canadian environment." Yet in his masterpiece *Under the Volcano*, Lowry reacts with at least equal emotion to the Mexican environment. So far as sphere of consciousness is concerned, Lowry seems to be in a kind of no-man's land, or perhaps everyman's land would be more exact. Further research and deeper understanding of Malcolm Lowry's art may modify this view, but for the moment I see nothing significantly Canadian about his sphere of consciousness. And just in case there is doubt in anyone's mind, I should make clear at this point that whether or not an author can be considered Canadian has no connection with the literary merit of his work.

There is, then, no reasonable justification for Canadian literature to claim Brooke, Hailey, Moore or Lowry, all of whom were culturally conditioned elsewhere and whose spheres of consciousness were not noticeably affected by their sojourns in Canada. Swinging over to those writers who were born and raised

here, then moved away, the same argument which excludes four of the six foreign-born authors can be used to preserve Canadian claim to five of the second half-dozen: Leonard Cohen, François Hertel, Mordecai Richler, Marie-Claire Blais and Robert Goulet. There seems no need to provide detailed analyses. Each of these writers may in the course of time become assimilated into another sphere of consciousness, but so far, judging from their major works, the Canadian cultural factor is still manifestly dominant. Goulet has not provided much to go on of late, but *The Violent Season* is as Canadian as a book can be. The same can be said of Hertel's and Richler's principal writings, if not for every work of each man's total production to date. Despite their physical absence from the country, these five writers have without doubt remained essentially Canadian.

Jack Ludwig, on the other hand, makes an interesting contrast with the other two Jewish-Canadian-born authors, Leonard Cohen and Mordecai Richler. All three are naturally more or less concerned with the Jew in North America, but Cohen's *Favourite Game* and *Beautiful Losers* and Richler's *Son of a Smaller Hero* and *Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, all four novels set mainly in Montreal, are distinctly Canadian. They are, in fact, when compared with Jack Ludwig's *Confusions* or the works of Jewish-American writers such as Philip Roth and J. D. Salinger, much more Canadian than they are Jewish. As critics have often pointed out, the novels of Cohen and Richler listed above embody many of the characteristic themes of Canadian literature — the land, the old order versus materialism, the profound nothingness that results from a break with the established system, the frantic search for replacement values. Ludwig's *Confusions*, in striking contrast, is American through and through, from the comic quasi-dedication to Richard Nixon, Tennessee Williams, Liberace, J. Edgar Hoover, Mitch Miller and other institutions of the United States, to the settings of Ivy League New England and a small college in California. The book is funny, and stylistically clever *à la New Yorker*. It is part of a strong trend in contemporary American literature — the new novel of manners, distinguished from the former variety by its complete sexual frankness and its poking beneath the surface to expose the hidden quirks of the social animal. The theme of *Confusions*, the individualist resisting pressures to conform, is of course as archetypically American as coca-cola and manifest destiny. The only recognizable feature of the one nominally "Canadian" character in the book, a Cree Indian who spouts Thoreau, sexually services a good proportion of Ameri-

can womanhood, and talks in the idiom of the mod graduate student, is that he dislikes American beer. There can be no question, accordingly, that Jack Ludwig's *Confusions* was created from a sphere of consciousness in any respect Canadian.

Like Louis Hémon, Ludwig appears to have been able to become effectively immersed in a new sphere of consciousness. He has taught for years in the United States, and his novel is distilled exclusively from that experience, it would seem. It is of interest perhaps to note here that Ludwig is one of a large number of Canadians who have been attracted to teaching positions in the United States. Some of these expatriates, A. J. M. Smith and Robert Kroetsch for example, appear to defy cultural assimilation, while others are drawn rapidly into the American sphere.

To return to our original list of twelve writers, we must conclude that when the works of each are examined in the light of the sphere-of-consciousness criterion, only seven remain as authentically Canadian.

I have not, of course, exhausted the list of immigrant or expatriate writers whose inclusion in anthologies and histories of Canadian literature leaves room for doubt. Patrick Anderson, Arthur Stringer, Marie Le Franc, Maurice Constantin-Weyer, David Walker, Robert Fontaine, Norman Levine, Thomas Costain, Lionel Shapiro, Mavis Gallant, Michael Sheldon, Gerald Taaffe are a few other names which come to mind. But an exhaustive investigation is not my intention here; rather I want to suggest and to illustrate a criterion which is possibly more sound and sensitive than whatever has operated in the past. This criterion, based upon analysis of an author's sphere of consciousness as revealed in his published works, is certainly more reliable than the circumstantial evidence of birthplace, citizenship, settings of books or sojourns in Canada.

I might add, incidentally, that the phenomenon of certain Quebec writers not wishing to be called *canadien* is more political than literary. The very statement presupposes a sphere of consciousness which is acutely Canadian, at least so long as Quebec remains a part of Canada. Paradoxically, there is also something peculiarly Canadian about the wish not to be considered simply Canadian in the political sense; it has to do with what has been called Canada's "vertical mosaic." I should point out, moreover, that so far as the terms *Canadien français* and *québécois* are concerned, the latter has now taken on a special significance. It symbolizes the new, dynamic, progressive Quebecker, as opposed to the backward, inferiority-complex-ridden *Canadien français*.

NOW THE CONCEPT of a writer's sphere of consciousness not only serves for general identification purposes; it also has bearing on what I believe to be the emerging mainstream of Canadian literature. Within Canada itself, because of the diversification of cultural influences, there are numerous possible spheres of consciousness. Actually, each individual's sphere will be at least slightly different from another's, but general transcendent patterns can be discerned. In Canadian literature, these general patterns are often associated with geographical area — Toronto, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Quebec City, rural Quebec, rural Ontario, the Atlantic seaboard, the small town, the prairies, the foothills of the Rockies, English Montreal, French Montreal, Jewish Montreal. Some of the general spheres in Canada are very similar to those in the United States, the small town and the prairies for instance. In addition, more often than not American writers have created influential works from within these spheres, making it difficult for Canadians to produce something strikingly original or distinctive. Morley Callaghan, Sinclair Ross, Sheila Watson, Stephen Leacock, Ethel Wilson, and several poets among others have all been impeded to some extent by this phenomenon.

On the other hand, a sphere of consciousness which is peculiarly and distinctively Canadian does exist in this country, and from within this sphere the mainstream of Canadian literature is rapidly emerging.

The distinguishing feature of the sphere of consciousness which governs the mainstream of Canadian literature is, understandably enough, the same feature which principally distinguishes the Canadian nation — the co-existence in this country of two major ethnic or language groups. There are several other side streams, some conditioned by attitudes which derive from the Calvinist and Jansenist traditions, such as the phenomenon of the *prêtre manqué* which has recurred so often in works of both language groups;³ a good amount of Quebec literature is floating along in these Canadian side streams. On the other hand, a lot of Canadian writing in both English and French is in various tributaries of British, French and American literature. Lately, however, the mainstream has been gathering force.

May I repeat once again that the mainstream of Canadian literature has nothing to do with literary merit; it is a matter of sphere of consciousness, an author's awareness of and sensitivity to fundamental aspects of both major language groups in Canada, and of the interrelationships between these two groups. At one time, Hugh MacLennan appeared almost the only modern

creative writer in Canada who was moving with the current. Political writers, commentators, journalists — many of them had been swept up, but creative writers no. A few writers in each language group, of course, had indicated a superficial awareness of the other, resulting in the stereotyped anglophones in such books as Jean Simard's *Les Sentiers de la nuit* or Lionel Groulx's *L'Appel de la race*, and stereotyped French Canadians in the works of Ralph Connor, Hugh Garner, Morley Callaghan or Ellis Portal, to name just a few. But in recent years, several Canadian authors have been drawn into the mainstream, have developed much more than a superficial awareness. Hugh Hood, in both his novels and stories, is one example. James Bacque, in the novel *The Lonely Ones*, Leonard Cohen in *Beautiful Losers*, Ralph Gustafson in his recent poetry, Dave Godfrey both explicitly and symbolically, D. G. Jones in *Butterfly on Rock* and his latest poems, Louis Dudek, Frank Scott and John Glassco, the last three heightening an awareness they have always had, George Woodcock, Philip Stratford, Fred Cogswell, even Al Purdy and George Ryga, are some of the others. The recent wave of translations, and the magazine *Ellipse* out of the University of Sherbrooke, presenting contemporary anglophone and franco-phone Canadian writers in translation, are still other examples of literary activity governed by the sphere of consciousness which characterizes the mainstream of Canadian literature.

Among French-language Quebec writers, ironically enough, those who are the most nationalistic, who do not want to be called *canadiens*, are generally the very ones who are right in the middle of the Canadian mainstream as I have defined it. For clearly they have the most acute awareness of the anglophone presence in Canada, of *la mentalité anglo-saxonne* as it is often put. In contrast to so many Quebec writers of the past, who were in tributaries of French literature or in little Quebec puddles and side streams of their own, contemporary authors such as Jacques Godbout, Hubert Aquin, Roch Carrier, Gaston Miron, Michele Lalonde, André Major, Paul Chamberland, Pierre Gravel, Yves Préfontaine, Claude Jasmin, Gérard Bessette, to mention just a few, have waded to varying depths in the mainstream, exhibiting in their works an indisputable, if sometimes subjectively painful, consciousness of the co-existence of two major ethnic groups in Canada. Compare, for instance, the spheres of consciousness of the above with those of St.-Denys Garneau, Albert Lozeau, Emile Nelligan, Anne Hébert, Roger Lemelin or André Langevin. Among the *chansonniers*, compare Gilles Vigneault with the more recent arrival Robert Charlebois.

Another irony is that the one phenomenon which has done more than anything else to get the mainstream of Canadian literature flowing, the stroke that finally burst the dam of isolation as it were, is the upsurge in Quebec Separatism. I have said before that Separatism, whatever implications it has for the Canadian nation, has been an extraordinary stimulus for Canadian literature.¹ It has had the effect of tremendously increasing mutual awareness in the two language groups of Canada; it has created the tensions, turmoil, anxieties, soul searching and commitment which, unfortunate as the fact may be in terms of tranquil existence, are the stuff of great literature.

Quebec Separatism, then, has turned out to be a powerful motivating force in the emergence of the mainstream of Canadian literature. In a way, also, it has become a guarantee of the legitimacy and truth of the whole concept of a mainstream. For clearly if enough English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians do not become engulfed in a sphere of consciousness embracing a mutual awareness and comprehension, then Canada as a nation is not likely to survive. At least it is not likely to survive as anything worthy of being called a nation. Which means, of course, that the question of a mainstream of Canadian literature would become an intellectual exercise in redundancy. Conversely, if Canada does survive as a nation, it means that the mainstream sphere of consciousness has in fact predominated, that enough representatives of the two major ethnic groups have actually developed a sufficiently effective awareness and comprehension of each other. And one should not underestimate the force and importance of this awareness. Modern sociologists and ethnologists have of late been swinging around to the view that pluralist societies *can* survive and are preferable to homogeneous national communities, the kinds of nations where one man can persuade 98 per cent of the citizens to stand up and shout "Heil — my country right or wrong." Speaking about the Caribbean nations, Sidney W. Mintz makes a general observation which is highly relevant to the Canadian situation:

The supposition that national identity is interdicted by the presence of large and seemingly unassimilable ethnic groups rests upon yet another supposition — that national identity hinges upon some sort of total social homogeneity or homogeneity of values, Furnivall's concept of "social will." Thus argued, those societies with the greatest sense of national identity will also be those whose populations are most homogeneous in their values. While this view has certain common-sense appeal, it is not supported by fact. . . . An unqualified emphasis upon the notion of homogeneity — either of population or of values — implies that national inte-

gration increases as the number of distinguishably different social groups within a society declines. Yet both history and sociological theory qualify this view; not the number of groups, but the extent to which they interpenetrate in the maintenance of communication and in the solution of national issues, may be the critical factor. National identity can be built in part on the recognition of conflict as integrating, and does not require cultural (or, for that matter, economic) homogeneity. At the same time, cultural and economic heterogeneity can serve to inhibit the growth of national identity if communication between social segments, and their interpenetration, are hampered.⁴

Communication between the segments of Canada, interpenetration if you will, is, as this essay has illustrated, steadily increasing. And the supreme irony of all, to carry the argument to its logical conclusion, is that Quebec Separatism, as the motivating force in the increase of communication and the emergence of a mainstream sphere of consciousness, may one day have to be regarded as the phenomenon which did most to promote a genuine Canadian sense of identity and the very survival of Canada as a nation.

We may conclude, then, that many weird and wonderful things are now happening in this country and being reflected in the Canadian literary scene. We are at the moment of serious re-evaluation, definition, purification and consolidation, finding ourselves as it were. Perhaps we are at last experiencing our great awakening. As I mentioned at the beginning of this essay, there has been a notable increase in all areas of literary activity. And this increase, happily, is coupled with a heightened awareness. Perhaps, like the great *Fleuve St.-Laurent*, despite obstacles, rapids, shores in the United States, divisions and pollution, we may yet find our way to the open sea.

FOOTNOTES

¹ See "The Fourth Separatism," *Canadian Literature*, No. 45 (Summer 1970), p. 15ff.

² Quoted in *Brian Moore* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1969), p. 2.

³ See my essays "The Calvinist-Jansenist Pantomime," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, V, 2 (May 1970) and "Children of the Changing Wind," *Op. cit.*, V, 4 (November 1970).

⁴ "Caribbean Nationhood in Anthropological Perspective," *Caribbean Integration*, 1967, p. 153. Available in Bobbs-Merrill Reprint Series in Black Studies, BC-206.

BREBEUF'S SPIRITUAL JOURNAL

Kathleen O'Donnell

THE WELL KNOWN WRITINGS OF Jean de Brébeuf consist of the two lengthy reports included in *The Jesuit Relations*, and several letters. Other works such as the Christmas carol, the Huron catechism, and particularly the spiritual journal, are less widely appreciated. Brébeuf's spiritual journal has not yet been wholly translated and published in English. This work contains thirty-eight entries, thirty-one of which are written in Latin and the rest in French.

The original text of Brébeuf's spiritual writings is included in a manuscript of 1652 entitled *Quelques Graces/Visions. Illustrations et autres/Remarques extraictes des/Manuscripts du P. Jean de Brébeuf*. A further source of Brébeuf's spiritual notes is Chapter V of the *Relation* of May 1, 1649 written by Father Paul Ragueneau to Father Jerome Lalemant. More recently, there has appeared a modern French version and study of the original text in René Latourelle's *Etude sur les écrits de Saint Jean de Brébeuf* (Montreal, 1953). His work is the basis on which my English version is made.

Brébeuf's spiritual journal is of interest as a historical document and as a report of the author's spiritual experiences. As entries are dated, there is historical precision in this work. It records, for example, under the date of 11 April 1640, the attack made against the Frenchmen. Brébeuf's voyage to the Neutrals is noted under the date November 17, 1640. On January 16, 1641, Brébeuf refers to Father Coton's defence of the Jesuit Order.

Brébeuf's notes, which extend from 1630 to 1645, reflect his occupations in those years. The first entries were written when Brébeuf was thirty-seven years old. He had already experienced a four-year sojourn in Canada. In 1629, after

Kirk's capture of Quebec, Brébeuf was obliged to return to France. From 1629 to 1633, he remained in France where he was occupied in schools except during a period of illness in 1630. In 1633, he returned to Canada and worked mainly among the Hurons until 1640. He was missionary to the Neutrals in 1640-41, then returned to Huronia, and to Quebec in 1642. From 1644 until his death in 1649, he laboured among the Hurons.

In the first entries of 1630, there are evident the complete dedication and prayerfulness of Brébeuf. He had at this time already experienced disappointment and suffering. These, as much as the ecstasy which is recorded, were the beginning of his spiritual advance.

The progression is marked by three vows. The first of these is the vow of service written in 1631. For the second vow, that of martyrdom, there exists a record in Father Paul Ragueneau's *Relation* of 1649. He reports the vow to have been made by Brébeuf as follows:

My God and my Saviour Jesus, what can I render to you for all the benefits which you have conferred upon me? I will take from your hand the cup of your sufferings, and I will invoke your Name. I then make a vow, — in the presence of your Eternal Father and of the Holy Ghost; in the presence of your most sacred Mother, and of her most chaste spouse, Saint Joseph; before the Angels, the Apostles and Martyrs, and my blessed Fathers Saint Ignatius and St. Francis Xavier, — yes, my Saviour Jesus, I make a vow to you never to fail, on my side, in the grace of martyrdom, if by your infinite mercy you offer it to me some day, to me, your unworthy servant. I bind myself to it in such a way that I intend that, during all the rest of my life, it shall no longer be a lawful thing for me, when remaining at my option, to avoid opportunities of dying and of shedding my blood for you. (Save only that, in some emergency, I should judge that, for the time being, it might be to the interests of your glory to behave otherwise in the matter.) And when I shall have received the stroke of death, I bind myself to accept it from your hand with all pleasure, and with joy in my heart. And consequently, my beloved Jesus, I offer to you from to-day, in the feelings of joy that I have thereat, my blood, my body, and my life; so that I may die only for you, if you grant me this favour, since you have indeed condescended to die for me. Enable me to live in such a way that finally you may grant me this favour, to die so happily. Thus, my God and my Saviour, I will take from your hand the cup of your sufferings, and I will invoke your Name, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.¹

The third vow, that of perfection, is dated August 18, 1645, in Brébeuf's spiritual journal. The expression of these vows reveals Brébeuf's great humility and submission before God and before his religious superiors.

That the greatest part of the journal dates from the year 1640 may probably be explained by the fact that Brébeuf had at that time been commanded to record his spiritual experiences. "He had been commanded to write these extraordinary things which occurred within his soul, — at least, those which he could most easily remember."²

The soul of the author shines through these writings. Most apparent are his humility and dedication. The following words of Brébeuf as given in the *Relation* of 1649 show clearly his attitude to suffering and to approaching death.

O my God, why are you not known? [he wrote some time before dying] Why is this barbarous country not all converted to you? Why is not sin abolished from it? Why are you not loved? Yes, my God, if all the torments which the captives can endure in these countries in the cruelty of the tortures, were to fall on me, I offer myself thereto with all my heart, and I alone will suffer them.³

The dominant image is that of the cross which is at once a sign of security and a premonition of suffering and death. There are troublesome visions from evil sources, as permitted by God, and also visions of consolation and elation. In perfect submission, Brébeuf accepted these experiences by which he was prepared for martyrdom.

The journal is given here in English. It may be appreciated as a historical document, and as the writings of one of the first mystics of Canada.

* * *

JANUARY 1630 — *I felt an ardent desire to suffer something for Jesus Christ; I fear being reproved because up till now he has treated me with too much mildness; I am afraid especially at the thought that I have grievously offended his divine majesty. Nevertheless, I shall hold firmly the hope of my salvation when occasions of suffering present themselves.*

THE 11TH — *Having considered attentively my sins so serious and so numerous, I believed nevertheless that I saw the divine mercy that extended its arms to me to embrace me with kindness and that pardoned by amnesty all my past sins; it revived the memory of my good works performed in charity, but stifled by sin, and finally invited me to join in close friendship, saying to me as to Paul formerly: "He will be to Me a vessel of election and will carry my name to Nations." Then I thanked God, I offered myself and said: "Make of me, Lord, a man according to your heart. Teach me what You want me to do. In the future, nothing will separate me from your love, neither nakedness, nor the sword, nor death. Did I, a member of your holy company, I, destined to be your apostle of Canada, if I had been faithful, I to whom was given, certainly not the gift of languages, but a great*

facility for learning them, did I have to be so careless! oh evil! oh unseemliness! oh deformity of my conduct!"

I did not find in myself any affection for venial sin that would lead me to commit such with pleasure.

I prayed to God not to cut me down like a useless tree, but to grant me still this year, and I promised to bear better fruits.

FEBRUARY 9 — *It seemed to me, being suddenly ravished, that I was deprived of all my senses and united to God. In truth, this ravishing was accompanied by a transitory physical feeling.*

On the 25th of March of this year 1630, I shall have passed thirty seven years; in fact, I was born in 1593 on the feast of the Annunciation.

On the 20th of January 1630, I pronounced the vows of coadjutor in the chapel of the college of Rouen, before the Reverend Father Jacques Bertrix, rector.

In the month of September 1631, I received the subdiaconate at Lisieux; then, the same year, the diaconate at Bayeux in December; in 1632, I was ordained at Pontoise, at the beginning of Lent and, on the feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin, I offered to God my first Mass at Rouen.

DURING THE EXERCISES OF 1631, BEGUN ON MAY 12 — *Lord Jesus, my Redeemer, you have redeemed me by your blood and your very precious death. That is why I promise to serve You all my life, in the Society of Jesus, to serve no other than You, and You alone. I sign this promise with my blood and my hand, prepared to sacrifice my whole life as willingly as this drop.*

ON SEPTEMBER 4, DURING THE EXERCISES — *In His goodness, God has provided me with mildness, with gentleness and with charity towards all; with disinterestedness as regards all things and with patience to endure contrarities. His divine goodness wills that by these means I come to perfection and to eternal glory. That is why that will be the matter of my particular examination, to know whether I am using these talents that He has confided to me as I should.*

1637 — *On the 21st, or the 22nd, or the 23rd of the month of August, and at the time of the evening examination of conscience and the litany of the Virgin, in a vision of the spirit or the imagination, I believed I saw an immense horde of demons who approached me with the intention of devouring me, or at least, of biting me. But not one of them succeeded in harming me. Those that were in front were like horses of strange grandeur, with hair long and curly like that of goats; I scarcely remember the forms of the others, but I know that I had never seen anything so numerous, so diverse and so horrible. This vision lasted perhaps for the space of a Miserere. I do not remember having been afraid, but, placing my confidence in God, I said: "Do all that God permits you; you will not pull out one hair of my head without a sign of His will."*

DURING THE EXERCISES OF 1645.

AUGUST 18 — *Henceforth, I shall make, every day at the time of communion, with the consent of the superior, the vow to do all that I know will contribute to the greatest glory of God and to His greatest service.*

This Vow will have two rules: (1) When I myself, reasonably, with clarity and without any doubt, shall judge that something is for the greatest glory of God; (2) the superior or the spiritual director whom I must consult when in doubt if I can.

I add as explanation: (1) This vow extends to all that is concerned with the rule, so that where there would be mortal sin in virtue of the precept, there would also be sacrilege in virtue of the vow; (2) in things which are of simple counsel and not of precept, but which are important and of grave consequence for the glory of God, this vow binds me under pain of mortal sin. If the thing is less important, it binds me only under pain of venial sin; (3) in order that in a thing of small importance I be held by this vow under pain of venial sin, I must see clearly, with certitude and without hesitation, that it may contribute to the greatest glory of God, whether I judge it according to the law of God, or according to the rules of decision given in the Exercises, or finally according to the lights of my reason and the grace of God, or whether I take as rule the judgment of the superior or of the spiritual director.

DURING THE EXERCISES OF 1640 — On the day before retreat, after the examination, while I was confessing, and afterwards while I was performing my penance, two suns appeared to me, shining with a bright light, between which there was a cross whose arms, head, and foot seemed of the same dimension. I did not see what material this cross was made of, but each extremity ended in a fleur de lis or in the face of a cherubim. On the upper part of the cross there appeared, if I am not mistaken, the image of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Afterwards I had doubts, asking myself whether it was not the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary. From that time, I felt myself called interiorly to the cross and to mortification.

The following day, it was February 12, during the first exercise, I endeavoured to be in God in a thought of pure love and I thrust aside the sight of every creature: also I was pursued by all sorts of distractions and burdened with aversion. Then I believed I heard within myself: "Turn towards Jesus Christ crucified and He will be henceforth the base and the foundation of your contemplations." At once I felt devoted to Jesus Christ.

The same day, I believed I saw a truly terrible figure resembling the lion head that is seen, I think, in a picture of Father Joseph Anchieta, but larger at the first and increasing little by little. I believed it to be the devil; however, I did not experience any fear, but I said: "Act if God permits you." I made the sign of the cross, it seems to me, and at once the spectre disappeared.

On the 14th, at the time of the meditation, I believed I saw Our Lord Jesus Christ, fixed to the cross, who came towards me to be relieved of the burden and to place it on my shoulders; willingly I offered my shoulders, but I do not know what happened. I know only that a dead body appeared to me, separated from the cross, not as it had appeared previously, but entirely covered with leprosy, without form or beauty. All the time I thought that it was the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ because I saw the wounds in His hands, and I understood that we must not

think of Jesus crucified as we ordinarily imagine, but rather as a leper in whom there was neither form nor beauty.

The same day, in the evening, as I prepared to meditate on the perfections of Jesus Christ, on His various communications with me and my misery before Him, thinking that all His other titles must come together, as to a centre, in His extraordinary love for us, I at once believed I saw an immense rose, marvellous in size and kind, with all its beauty radiating from such a centre.

On the 18th, I seemed to see the Blessed Virgin Mary carrying the Infant Jesus as on an azure blue cloud, and golden rays of rare beauty sprang out of this cloud. I hoped that the Virgin would present me to Christ, but nothing happened.

On February 23, during the evening examination, I thought I saw something like the face of a Spaniard, wearing a pleated ruff and a Spanish hat. At once the thought came to me that the devil was hiding under this form, seeking to distract me from prayer. I quickly turned my thoughts to other things.

On the 26th of the same month, at night, during the recitation of the rosary, I believed I saw the tabernacle of the Sainte-Marie residence on which seven angels are painted, and I felt myself urged to prayer. Then it seemed to me that I was in the house and in the chapel and that I saw the relics there: I was greatly inspired to invoke all those saints.

On March 9, after the evening examination, I was reading a spiritual book near the fire. Then I saw, near the little house of Sainte-Marie, an enormous streaked serpent that seemed to come out of the river and creep towards the house. It appeared to be five or six cubits long. When it was near the house, it rose and threw itself on one of our Frenchmen that it seemed to seize by the ears and the hair, until one of our Fathers, running behind, seized the serpent and crushed it against the ground. All then began to tramp on it and the vision disappeared at once.

Next I saw, behind the gable end of the little house of Sainte-Marie, four dogs of astonishing size, with long ears. They were resting on their haunches and looking towards the house. Two were smoke-coloured, and two were dark brown. I did not see any more than that.

On March 11, as I began the morning examination before the blessed Sacrament, I saw a Jesuit — I do not know which one — elevated in space, in the manner in which we ordinarily paint our Fathers, with the head surrounded by a great light. Shortly after, antennae like those of a crab projected from the head of this Jesuit, then the whole head changed into a river crab, evident from the numerous feet, and he hung down towards the earth. This vision was brief but it frightened and upset me greatly, at the thought that I might be this unfortunate Jesuit in whom such a terrible change would be produced.

On March 21, being at the residence of Saint Joseph, during my night prayer, I saw a human form arise above the altar. It had wings and, moving them, balanced and supported itself in space, but could hardly go forward, held as it was by a cord or by some other means. I believed at first, when it appeared and attempted to fly, that it had four wings, but then I saw only two. This vision signifies, had I thought,

that I or some other person tries to rise to the contemplation of celestial things, but finds himself prevented from attaining them by worldly affections.

On March 30, after my Mass, as I was recollecting inwardly to listen to Christ speaking within me, I believed I saw a hand that anointed my heart and my whole spirit with oil. This sight filled me with extreme peace and tranquility.

On April 11, at the residence of Saint Joseph, a sedition arose, during which Pierre Boucher's arm was injured, while Father Chaumonot and I were stricken with blows; burdened with injuries and greatly frightened, we were all ordered by Ondihoahorea and the other captains to leave the village. At night, as I was thanking God for all that had happened, forcing myself, although very upset and distressed, to conform my will to God's, I believed I saw the Blessed Virgin Mary—as she is represented in pictures—greatly afflicted and her heart pierced with lances. I felt inwardly a voice saying to me: "The Blessed Mother of God, although greatly afflicted, was always perfectly submissive to the will of God and she must be an example for you in adversities."

On May 9, in the town of Saint Joseph, I was enraptured in God by flights of vehement love that urged me to strain towards Him with effort. Then something appeared to me under the form of an old woman who, hastening to embrace me, struck her head against mine so violently that I was hurt. Then I suspected this old woman to be the devil; I fortified myself with the sign of the cross and at once the old woman, remaining at a distance, did not dare to approach me any more.

During the days when I was at Teanaostaiae, I was often carried to God by flights of love.

On the seventeenth of the same month, during the day, while I was praying to God, I felt my spirit raised while I was considering a cross made like the one at Sainte Marie in which relics from the holy land are enshrined, or like some crosses that are made of stars. This vision lasted a long time, and during it I had no other thought but that God wanted to send me some new cross.

On August 4th, having returned from the burial of our late Chrétien, in the evening during the examination, I had various visions. I remember nothing at all of the first. The second presented to me a pavilion or dome that descended from the sky and rested over the grave of our Chrétien, and next it seemed to me that his same pavilion was pulled up by the two ends and drawn on high as if it were to be raised to heaven. I did not see however that it was raised, nor the persons who drew it. This vision lasted long enough and ended there. The sentiment that I felt from it is that God wanted to make understood the state of the soul of this good Chrétien.

On the 12th or 13th of August, I seemed to see a high mountain entirely covered with women saints. I do not know whether some men saints appeared, but more truly it seems to me that there were only women saints. They were disposed on this mountain in the way of an amphitheatre, in such a way that from the foot of the mountain up to the summit the ranks diminished until they were reduced to unity that was Our Lady, who was seated on the peak of the said hill. Then I thought

of our Joseph Chiwatenhwa, but I did not see him on that hill. I believed that this vision signified the excellence of the Blessed Virgin over all the saints.

On August 27th, at night, while saying the litanies, I saw the form of a man who was suspended in air, but inverted so that his head was below and his feet above. It seemed to me that his feet were not attached to anything, but only that this man was upheld in air in this posture. I could not distinguish who this person was. But immediately afterwards, I saw and knew distinctly a certain man, whether or not he was the same as the first, who was seated with his face turned towards the earth, and was totally covered with big postules, like some ill people who, during the contagion, were seen to be covered, not with a flax pox, but with large grains. And not only was he covered in face and body with this leprosy or pox, but also the air around him. And I do not doubt that there appeared someone a little distance from him, already infected with the same contagion. The idea came to me that that vision signified the sad state of that unfortunate soul and the contagion that communicated itself to others following contact with that man.

On August 31st, at night, during the litany and the examination, I first saw a woman's garment of a ravishing beauty, as much because of the material that appeared admirable as because of the ornaments and embroideries of gold and pearl that were on it. A lady, whom I do not doubt was Our Lady, was dressed in this garment; but I did not see her face at all, and my spirit was entirely occupied and ravished by the sight and consideration of this rich and marvellously ample garment. Then the question having come to me of why I did not look at this lady directly, I raised on high the eyes of my spirit, and seemed to see a high statue, covered with a veil and with a crown above, in the way in which we are accustomed to represent the glorious Virgin. But this vision hardly lasted and was not very distinct.

In the second place, beside Our Lady there began to half open a great globe the interior of which was decorated with many and diverse beauties more surprising and ravishing than I can conceive, and than I know how to explain. I had never seen or read anything of the like. The first idea that came to me on the opening of this globe was that it was the same vision that I had of a clock with infinite springs. But it was entirely different. The sentiments that I had at the time were admiration, love of God and fear of being wrong.

On November 17th, on my way to the Neutral Nation, at night, before arriving, while praying to God, I believed I saw a multitude of angels placed before me.

On December 13th, being at Andachkhroeh Chenusolahissen, it seems to me while making my examination, I saw a skeleton fleeing from me: did it come from me? or rather, coming from elsewhere, was it simply close to me? I do not know. I know only one thing: when I saw it, it held fast to my sides, and it disappeared at once.

On January 16, 1641, in a dream, I believed myself in the company of blessed Father Coton: he told me that the following day he had a case to plead before the judges; in my turn I told him that I also, in the following days, had a case to

defend and that however I had not yet thought of my defence. In retrospect, I thought that the Father would give me his kind help in the defence that I had to make.

On February 7th, there appeared two hands joined as in sign of pact. Also at this moment, it seems to me, or a few days after, during the night prayer, there appeared to me a quantity of crosses that I accepted willingly. The following night, while at prayer, as I tried to conform my will to God's, saying to him: "Lord, your will be done", I heard as it were a voice say to me: "Take and read." The day having arrived, I took up the Imitation of Christ, and I happened on the chapter of "The Royal Way of the Holy Cross." Thereafter, there ensued in my spirit a great peace and repose concerning the trials that would come to me.

On October 8, 1644, in Huronia, in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary, at night, during prayer, before the meal, I seemed to see violaceous or red blood stains on the clothes of all our fathers, as well as on mine, without anyone being excepted. As I was filled with wonder, the thought came to me that justice protected us all as with a garment of blood.

I, the undersigned, priest of the Society of Jesus, delegated by Reverend Father Paul Ragueneau, superior of this mission, affirm under oath that the present writings, contained in the leaves from page 217 to 250, have been read with great care and attention, and conform totally to the autographs of Father Joseph-Marie Chaumonot, of the surgeon Francois Gendron, and to the manuscripts of Father Jean de Brébeuf.

Dated at Quebec in New France, August 25, 1652.

JOSEPH PONCET, S.J.

I affirm the same. — PAUL RAGUENEAU.

FOOTNOTES

¹ "Relation of 1648-49," *The Jesuit Relations*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (New York, 1959), XXXIV, p. 167-169.

² *Ibid.* p. 163.

³ *Ibid.* p. 189.

LIVES OF THE HUNTED

James Polk

IN *O Canada*, Edmund Wilson confesses that Americans in the early nineteen hundreds tended to imagine Canada "as a kind of vast hunting preserve convenient to the United States"; he goes on to recall that myth of an edenic, pristine Canada which the majority of outlanders still seem to cherish:

Canada comes back to me from childhood as a realm of huge forests, frozen lakes, large and dangerous animals—animals which, however, in Ernest Thompson Seton's stories, seemed to constitute a special race that was capable of communicating with men, of becoming our fierce foes or our loyal allies.

Typically American, we sigh, to see Canada as a hunters' game park and to hold firmly to the legends transmitted by an outdated, scarcely respectable branch of our literature. Our own attitudes toward the natural world are less confident; much serious Canadian literature seems to express a jittery fear of the wilderness as a place which threatens human endeavour and self-realization, rather than a robust Leather-stocking-like delight in it as a challenging playground for the hunter, a kingdom of communicating animals. In "Wolf in the Snow", Warren Tallman identifies "the continent itself — the grey wolf whose shadow is underneath the snow"¹ as a forbidding presence which baffles the characters' aspirations in Canadian fiction, and Northrop Frye finds "a tone of deep terror in regard to nature" in Canadian poetry:

It is not a terror of the dangers or discomforts or even the mysteries of nature, but a terror of the soul at something that these things manifest. The human mind has nothing but human and moral values to cling to if it is to preserve its integrity or even its sanity, yet the vast unconsciousness of nature in front of it seems an unanswerable denial of those values.²

The turn-of-the-century animal story may seem to sugar-coat this distinctly Canadian vision of Nature, inasmuch as it attempts to shape the "vast uncon-

sciousness" through animals often equipped with at least quasi-human and quasi-moral values, to see Tallman's generalized "Wolf in the Snow" as a single furred individual with every day, minutely-described problems. In fact Sir Charles G. D. Roberts states that the function of the animal story is to mediate between the best of two worlds: it "helps us to return to nature, without requiring that we at the same time return to barbarism" and "without asking us to relinquish by way of toll any part of the wisdom of the ages."³ Obviously these remarks are wrapped around the horns of a familiar Romantic dilemma: Nature is good, but uncivilized; Civilization is good, but unnatural. However, Roberts insists that the kind of animal story he has in mind is of a specialized type, "a psychological romance constructed on a framework of natural science."⁴ He notes that Ernest Thompson Seton's works fit his category, but *Black Beauty* and Kipling's "Mowgli" stories are alien to the genre, since the animals are "frankly humanised" and their notions too "complex" to be realistic.⁵ What Roberts is really announcing in "The Animal Story" is the inadequacy of British fictional conventions to the Canadian landscape. The British writer, steeped in the social order, is doomed to transform his animals into miniaturized people: thus the moles, toads, rats, weasels and bunnies in Kenneth Grahame and Beatrix Potter have class accents, wear clothes and own houses. Whether dressed or not, the British animal usually inhabits a domestic world of farmyards and happy endings: Lassie comes home through hedgerows and towns — and she does come home. The supposed "wildness" of the animal is beside the point: Kipling's jungle beasts are disguised sergeants and schoolmasters. The Canadian writer of animal fiction, less concerned with a structured social milieu and living in a less cosy natural environment, is likely to find the British animal story an unconvincing model; Roberts and Seton each chose to create a mode of approach distinctively his own.

Distinctively Canadian? Roberts does not mention any American writers in his essay, possibly because the treatment of animals in American fiction is so different from his own practice as to seem irrelevant. The attitude toward Nature in America has remained firmly anthropocentric from the Puritans' identification with Israel in the Wilderness down through the great quest romances of the Nineteenth Century to the fiction of Hemingway, Faulkner and Mailer. Nature exists to challenge man, to jolt him into self-discovery, to reveal the truths of a transcendental universe, to shout out sermons from stones. Animals are often introduced to give striplings a chance at initiation into manhood, but even the animal as sacrificial victim has a way of turning into a furred or finned symbol, a cosmic beast whose significance transforms the insight of the hunter. Moby

Dick, triumphant and elusive at the heart of the tradition, is the classic example, but he (or He) is not alone. Indeed, the patterns in American writing about animals seem almost inverted in Canadian counterparts, where the emphasis is not on man at all, but on the animal.

A GROUP OF REPRESENTATIVE BEARS from both the American and Canadian traditions may illustrate the difference. The hero of Seton's *The Biography of a Grizzly* begins life by watching his mother and siblings killed by a hunter; he is painfully wounded in the paw, but flees into the forest, orphaned and whimpering. He grows up into "a big strong sullen bear, with neither friendship nor love", plagued along the way by unfriendly animals, hard winters, and the traps and rifles of men. In a fit of savage temper he mauls two hunters to death, Seton assuring us that this is only fair since the hunters wanted to kill him. In middle age he finds no mate, is afflicted with rheumatism and is finally tricked by a lesser bear into fearfully relinquishing his territory. At last, exhausted, half-blind and racked by physical pains, Seton's grizzly commits suicide, choosing to enter a glen filled with poisonous gases and to die in peace — "a truly Roman end", as one critic has remarked.⁶ The polar bear cub in Roberts' "The Summons of the North" also has an unhappy career. He loses his mother to hunters, then is picked up by a ship and imprisoned in a zoo. He seems to endure this last indignity with a noble indifference, until a blizzard in the zoo recalls to him his lost arctic home: "to his heart it was the summons of the north, — and suddenly his heart answered."⁷ His heart apparently cannot stand the strain and the bear collapses by the edge of his man-made pool, never to rise again.

We have no choice but to identify with these persecuted bears as they struggle to survive and heroically accept a defeat which is inevitable — "the life of a wild animal *always has a tragic end*,"⁸ Seton writes, and the italics are his. In William Faulkner's "The Bear", on the other hand, we are on the side of the young hunter who seeks a grizzly "absolved of mortality," a bear magnified into "an anachronism indomitable and invincible out of an old dead time, a phantom, epitome and apotheosis of the old wild life." There is an armada of critical exegeses on this story, but perhaps it is enough to say that the hunter's all but mystical encounters with the bear make him comprehend the inviolability of the wilderness and lead him to question the honour of his ancestral history: the real bear resolves into a personal symbol illuminating the life of the seeing "I". The plot

of Norman Mailer's *Why Are We in Vietnam?* centres upon a ritual bear hunt unifying, and then alienating, father and son. D.J., the hip young hunter, here finds a larger truth transmitted through the gaze of a dying grizzly: "something in that grizzer's eyes locked into his, a message, fellow, an intelligence of something very fine and very far away . . . those eyes were telling him something, singeing him, branding some part of D.J.'s future." Canadian bears are notably less spiritual and communicative, and it is not because Faulkner and Mailer may be "better" or "more serious" writers than Seton or Roberts; the difference is between the lives of the hunters and, to borrow a title from one of Seton's story collections, the lives of the hunted.

Sympathetic identification with the hunted is sustained in Canadian animal stories even when the narrator is also the hunter. Seton's "Lobo, the King of the Currumpaw", for example, is told by an expert in wolf-traps and poisons, but all the interest is in the wolf: his tragic early childhood, his cleverness in survival, his loyalty to his mate, his poignant, dignified death. When Seton was denounced for the unhappy ending of "Lobo", he insisted on the priorities of the hunted:

In what frame of mind are my hearers left with regard to the animal? Are their sympathies quickened toward the man who killed him, or toward the noble creature who, superior to every trial, died as he had lived — dignified, fearless, and steadfast?⁹

Conversely, the American story told from the animal's viewpoint tends to evade tragedy and slip into a celebration of the hunter's world. Jack London's *White Fang* seems to be a "Canadian" tale in its first half, where we follow the trials of a wolf as he endures the cruel north and even crueller men. But halfway through, *White Fang* is redeemed by the love of a good master, moves to California, begets children, alerts the family when his human "love-master" (London's phrase) breaks a leg, saves the household from a murderer, and is canonized as "The Blessed Wolf" by the admiring populace of Sierra Vista. This Horatio Alger-like rise to the top is alien to the Canadian tradition; in fact, in "Wully, the Story of a Yaller Dog", Seton gives us the pattern in reverse. Wully is a good sheepdog who, through human neglect, declines into a sheepkiller and is mistaken for a wolf. He is shot as he tries to attack his kindly owners when they find him out; redemption through "love-masters" is not a feature of the animal in Canadian literature.

Admittedly the human beings in Canadian animal stories are not often lovable. Wully's derangement is caused by a thick-skinned shepherd who abandons

him, and the hunters in other stories are often petty-minded, vicious and crass, such as the drunken coyote killer in Seton's "Tito" or the callous "sportsman" who shoots the leader of a seal herd in Roberts' "Back to the Water World". Man's world is anathema to the animals: the vixen in Seton's "The Springfield Fox" feeds her baby poisoned meat rather than see him live a captive; in "The Grey Master" Roberts shows that for a true wolf death is more honourable than pacing a cage as a spectacle for unfeeling people. By shooting two panthers, a man saves the lives of two children in Roberts' "Do Seek Their Meat From God", but the stark conclusion reminds us of the animals' rights: the children are saved, but two panther cubs now lie dead of starvation. The elegiac endings to many of these Canadian stories, particularly Seton's, remind us that the human world in a larger sense and as a whole is gradually obliterating the animals' domain. The coyote-protagonists of "Tito" survive through their cunning, but the buffalo and the antelope, we are mournfully told, have largely been hunted out of the Badlands. In "Redruff", a noble partridge dies in an untended snare, one of the last of his breed to flourish in the Don Valley: "now no partridge comes to Castle Frank," the story concludes, "and in Mud Creek Ravine the old pine drum-log, since unused, has rotted in silence away."¹⁰

These doleful endings and the number of stoic moose, tragic bears, grouse dying in the snow, woodchucks devoured, salmon failing to make it upstream, grief-stricken wolves and doomed balls of fur, feathers or quills squealing for dead mothers tend to instil a certain fatalism in the reader; it is interesting to speculate about the influence of Roberts' and Seton's books, as popular reading for children, on the collective Canadian psyche. Is there anything the Canadian animal may gain from his struggle, beyond survival? Does suffering improve his soul? Is tight-lipped Presbyterian endurance his only recourse? Certainly some animals are allowed to live beyond the last paragraph, but that this is an unusual event may be indicated by one of Seton's titles: "Badlands Billy: The Wolf that Won."

Roberts' animals are generally more cheerful and pragmatic than Seton's, and when the struggle is localized in a particular inter-animal fight, as in many of the stories in *The Kindred of the Wild* and *The Wisdom of the Wilderness*, the protagonist-animal often wins. But in the struggle with man even the rare triumph may seem an evasion, as in the conclusion of Roberts' novella *Red Fox*, in which the hunted fox hitches a ride on a wagon and is removed to "a wilderness to his heart's desire, a rugged turbulence of hills and ravines where the pack and the scarlet hunters could not come." The availability of more and better wildernesses

is not offered to every fox, however, and the captive animals in Roberts' *Kings in Exile* can only meet their defeat with outrage and forlorn dignity. Joseph Gold has argued that Roberts' stories affirm a larger vision of the natural cycle: "While individual creatures constantly lose the struggle for survival, life itself persists."¹¹ However, life's persistence offers little comfort for the animal one is sympathizing with in a given story; true, the cycle persists as the bear eats a salmon in "The Last Barrier", but it is the *salmon's* story.

I N SETON'S WORK, Nature can occasionally persist with a vengeance. The hunter who shoots a splendid mountain sheep for money in "Krag, the Kootenay Ram" grows obsessed with his kill and keeps the corpse with him in a mountain shack. Then "the Ram's own Mother White Wind" descends, "charged with a mission of revenge",¹² to crush the shack in an avalanche. The hunter's remains — "broken bones with rags and grizzled human hair" — are found beneath the body of Krag, whose shining golden eyes remain unclouded even after death. The hunter is forgotten, but the ram's head is "enshrined on a palace wall today."¹³ Nature prevails, but not a friendly Mother Nature or even a Thornton W. Burgess Mother West Wind; rather, it is chilling Mother White Wind, a personification of the kind of natural world Warren Tallman finds a dominant presence elsewhere in Canadian fiction and characterizes as "old Mother North America with her snow hair, her mountain forehead, her prairie eyes, and her wolf teeth, her wind songs and her vague head of old Indian memories."¹⁴ Seton's concern for the uncompromising aspects of Nature is also evident in his painting "The Wolves' Triumph" which depicts a pack feeding on a human body in the snow. The painting, rejected by a Paris exhibition for its revolting subject matter, was finally shown at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, "much against the wishes of some members of the Toronto selection committee," according to S. E. Read, "who were inclined to believe that it might leave an unfavourable impression of the Canadian way of life."¹⁵

In his writing Seton conscientiously tries to correct unfavourable impressions in several ways. There is an unconvincing "Angel of the Wild Things" who flits into the occasional story to guide the animal on the right path, and in *The Natural History of the Ten Commandments*, Seton tries to show (with dubious success) that animal behaviour may run parallel with the laws of the Decalogue. However he is too professional a naturalist to depend on angels and Christian teaching in his best stories, and usually goes out of his way to deny his animals a

metaphysical aura. Thus Lobo "had *not* a collar of gold about his neck nor was there on his shoulders an inverted cross to denote that he had leagued himself with Satan";¹⁶ he is a great wolf, but a real one. Yet in *The Trail of the Sandhill Stag* Seton writes a story which seems to follow the American pattern, complete with the redemptive "cosmic beast". Yan, the protagonist, grows from youth to manhood in his pursuit of a great stag, yet when he is at last face to face with the animal, he fails to shoot. Long years in the woods have taught the hunter to respect his quarry, and the deer's serene gaze quells the hunter's desire to draw blood. The story ends with an apostrophe to the stag:

I may never see you again. But if only you would come sometimes and look me in the eyes and make me feel as you have done to-day, you would drive the wild beast wholly from my heart, and then the veil would be a little drawn and I should know more of the things that wise men have prayed for knowledge of. And yet I feel it never will be — I have found the Grail. I have learned what Buddha learned. I shall never see you again. Farewell.

The pattern of the story may be American, but the spirit is undoubtedly Canadian. Even here, Seton's usual elegiac tone is evident: the stag will *not* return to drive "the wild beast" wholly from the hunter's heart, and in spite of having learned what Buddha learned, Yan accepts the limitations on his knowledge rather fatalistically. There is identification with animals throughout: on the trail, Yan feels "the strange prickling that he knew was the same as makes the wolf's mane bristle when he hunts". When Yan realizes that wolves are hunting him just as he hunts the stag, he reflects, "Now I know how a deer feels when the grind of a moccasined foot or the click of a lock is heard in the trail behind him," and at the end he addresses the deer as "Little Brother". Other men jeer at Yan for his persistence — indeed, in this story it is not always easy to tell the hunter from the hunted.

Whether or not the Ten Commandments, Buddha, individual victories, natural process or "The Angel of the Wild Things" offer convincing affirmations in a given animal story, a sympathetic identification with the hunted remains a constant factor. Perhaps this is connected with a Canadian habit of mind which shows up also in partisan emotions at the slaughter of baby seals, in campaigns for the better understanding of wolves, or in the popular adoption as a national symbol of the Ookpik, with its defenceless feathers and persecuted eyes. Certainly the obsession with survival in the Canadian novel, from Sinclair Ross and Ernest Buckler to Margaret Laurence and Mordecai Richler, may indicate that the animal story is more closely allied with the mainstream of our literature than it

would appear. At least, the predicament of the individual struggling for life with an indifferent natural world on one side and a hostile society on the other is as evident in, for instance, *The Mountain and the Valley* as in *The Biography of a Grizzly*. In recent Canadian fiction, the protagonists often seem to be copying their survival techniques directly from the animals: the man in the tree at the end of *Beautiful Losers* (a title that would do for a collection of Canadian animal stories) is literally one of the hunted. While her fiancé brags of his hunting prowess, the heroine of Margaret Atwood's *The Edible Woman* crouches in the Ladies', feeling kinship with a roll of toilet paper which is described as "helpless and white and furry, waiting passively for the end". Robert Kroetsch's Stud-horse Man, moving from one narrow escape to another, is repeatedly identified with his stallion, last member of a breed faced with extinction. However, at the finish there is a bleakly comic reversal: the stallion kills the man and becomes a respectable member of society, impregnating mares for science and birth-control, while the true spirit of the wild dies with his master.

As Canada's perennial questioning of its own national identity is increasingly coupled with a suspicion that a fanged America lurks in the bushes, poised for the kill, it is not surprising that Canadian writers should retain their interest in persecution and survival. The didacticism and elegiac melodrama of the turn-of-the-century animal story have given way to irony and black humour, and we look back on the golden age of nature writing from an iron age of urban desperation. But as Britain has not deserted the social order in its fiction (see Anthony Powell, or Anthony Burgess) and as America continues to turn out quest romances (see James Dickey), so Canadian literature may not be as far away as we think from the preoccupations of Seton and Roberts, the lives of the hunted.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ *A Choice of Critics*, ed. George Woodcock (Toronto, 1966), p. 10.
- ² *Literary History of Canada*, ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto, 1965), p. 830.
- ³ Charles G. D. Roberts, *The Kindred of the Wild* (London, 1903), p. 29.
- ⁴ The same, p. 24.
- ⁵ The same, p. 27.
- ⁶ S. E. Read, "Flight to the Primitive: Ernest Thompson Seton," *Canadian Literature* 13 (1962), p. 51.
- ⁷ Charles G. D. Roberts, *The Haunters of the Silences* (London, 1907), p. 30.
- ⁸ Ernest Thompson Seton, *Wild Animals I Have Known* (London, 1902), p. 12.
- ⁹ Ernest Thompson Seton, *Lives of the Hunted* (London, 1901), p. 12.
- ¹⁰ *Wild Animals I Have Known*, p. 58.

- ¹¹ Joseph Gold, "The Precious Speck of Life," *Canadian Literature* 26 (1965), p. 25.
- ¹² *Lives of the Hunted*, p. 103.
- ¹³ The same, p. 104.
- ¹⁴ *A Choice of Critics*, p. 76.
- ¹⁵ "Flight to the Primitive," p. 50.
- ¹⁶ *Wild Animals I Have Known*, p. 53.

LE CONTE AU QUEBEC AU DIX-NEUVIEME SIECLE

Jean Rigault

LA VEILLÉE donne aux anciens Québécois l'occasion de se divertir, de s'évader. Si les pieds et les voix y trouvent leur compte, les esprits, les coeurs, les âmes ne sont pas oubliés. Les conteurs, par leur art, fournissent aux gens de quoi peupler l'imagination, de quoi faire vibrer la sensibilité et bien souvent aussi de quoi "élever" l'âme. Le Québécois au siècle dernier dissocie difficilement la religion, au moins telle qu'il l'entend, et la vie; H. R. Casgrain souligne la différence qui existe à cet égard entre le paysan québécois et le paysan français, son cousin germain: "l'étranger qui ne connaissant pas l'habitant de nos campagnes croirait pouvoir l'assimiler au paysan de la vieille France, son ancêtre, se méprendrait étrangement. Plus éclairé et surtout plus religieux, il est loin de partager son état précaire".¹ La différence réelle au 19^e siècle, n'a pas toujours été aussi grande, et la majeure partie des contes québécois trouvent surtout leur origine dans le folklore français, et parfois dans le folklore irlandais et même écossais. Néanmoins, les contes à incidences religieuses dans le folklore du Québec sont plus nombreux que ceux des pays d'origine, principalement de France. Le fait est spécifique d'une âme collective due à un type de société, à un mode de vie, à des données historiques, à une psychologie nettement différenciés. C'est cette âme qu'on pourrait saisir à nu dans les légendes et les contes souvent naïfs transmis par la tradition orale; nous avons tenté de la découvrir à travers les situations, les commentaires, les morales que renferment les récits.

Nous tenons nos matériaux d'anciens qui les avaient eux-mêmes reçus parfois de leur grands-pères, nous avons souvent dû faire appel à des fonds recueillis par des folkloristes, enfin, nous avons puisé dans les recueils où des écrivains du siècle passé ou du début de celui-ci, conscients de la valeur du patrimoine folk-

lorique en voie de disparition, ont fixé ce qu'ils en connaissaient. Nous nous occupons particulièrement des contes et des légendes du 19^e siècle parce qu'ils alimentent encore les "diseurs" contemporains; mais il est évident que ces récits se sont transmis plus ou moins déformés, transformés, adaptés à travers les siècles; bien souvent, ils ont pour sujet le début de la colonisation, ce qui a l'avantage de les nimber de gloire et de mystère et de les perdre dans la nuit des temps!

Nous n'avons pas établi de distinction entre les contes et les légendes. Les différences les plus importantes entre ces deux genres sont sans doute la part de réalité plus ou moins grande que l'on peut trouver à la base de l'anecdote, le degré de créance que le conteur accorde à son histoire et la portée didactique de celle-ci. Or, dans notre étude, qu'il s'agisse de conte ou de légende, le narrateur commence presque toujours par annoncer: "voici un fait qui est réellement arrivé"; et bien souvent il est aussi sûr de l'existence et de la délivrance d'un loup-garou que de la rébellion de "37" et du passage des Habits Rouges; de plus, il est presque toujours un pédagogue et le merveilleux règne partout.

Nous nous sommes attaché surtout au merveilleux chrétien qui nous paraît plus révélateur de l'âme québécoise; c'est lui, d'ailleurs, que l'on rencontre dans la plupart des récits. Le merveilleux païen lui-même n'est-il pas baptisé par les habitants? Le feu-follet ne s'enfuit-il pas au signe de la croix et les loups-garous ne sont-ils pas de pauvres pécheurs? J.-C. Taché dans son avis au lecteur, en exergue de *Forestiers et Voyageurs*, écrit:

Le voyageur canadien est catholique et français; la légende est catholique et le conte est français: c'est assez dire que le récit légendaire et le conte, avec le *sens moral* comme au bon vieux temps, sont le complément obligé de l'éducation du voyageur parfait.

Les premières légendes à être retenues dans *les Soirées Canadiennes*, en 1861, sont empruntées au même Taché et s'intitulent: *l'Evangile ignoré*, *l'Evangile prêché*, *l'Evangile accepté*. Avec ce titre on pourrait penser à une manoeuvre due à des intellectuels tendancieux, mais les récits recueillis de la bouche même de gens du peuple ne donnent guère un autre son.

Qui sont les conteurs? De nombreuses histoires mettent en scène l'aïeul entouré de ses petits enfants: H.-R. Casgrain introduit ainsi un conte: "Tenez si vous voulez être sages et bien prier le bon Dieu, je vous raconterai une belle histoire. Oh! comme nous avons hâte que le chapelet soit fini". Cela rend un accent de vérité et il est permis de croire que, le travail des hommes et le climat

devenus durs et les enfants se multipliant, l'emploi de nourrice incombe naturellement au vieillard devenu une charge.

Il y a aussi d'autres conteurs, les colporteurs et les mendiants ambulants, qui véhiculent les récits des autres paroisses; il y a enfin des voyageurs plus importants qui raniment l'intérêt des veillées; surtout, parmi eux, les **prêtres colonisateurs**. Aubert de Gaspé écrit dans ses *Mémoires*: "Ces moines étaient souvent des journaux vivants (...) le Récollet bien accueilli de la population, le Récollet, ami de tout le monde, était la chronique vivante et ambulante de tout ce qui se passait dans la colonie"; son arrivée "était considérée une bonne fortune".

Au XIX^e siècle le "diseur" adapte son récit à son auditoire, aux circonstances et aux coutumes locales; c'est un pédagogue né. L'habitant a d'autant plus besoin de lui qu'il ne possède guère de livres, il en arrive si peu de France; d'ailleurs, le paysan québécois n'est pas un "liseur", par paresse peut-être; mais aussi, sous l'influence de ses pasteurs émus par "l'esprit de subversion" répandu dans les ouvrages français et craignant l'esprit critique né de la lecture, l'homme du peuple en est souvent arrivé à considérer le livre comme l'oeuvre de Satan; enfin les écoles françaises sont peu accessibles. Le conteur doit suppléer tous ces manques; il ne l'oublie généralement pas et joue de tous ses talents. Il sait capter et retenir l'attention du paysan épris de la réalité en insistant sur l'authenticité du récit, en apportant des détails suffisants de lieux et de temps qui puissent toucher l'auditoire; il ne manque jamais de glisser une leçon et de l'appuyer fortement. Il ne se contente pas du sens de son "narré"; il sait qu'il faut répéter et parler clairement pour se faire entendre. Il commence par créer l'ambiance: "je vais commencer mon histoire en faisant un grand signe de croix pour chasser le diable et ses diabolins. J'en ai assez de ces maudits-là (...)" Il fait des commentaires. P.-O. Chauveau, rapportant *l'histoire de Lanouet*, remarque: "il est bien malheureux de vivre et de mourir si loin de tous les prêtres"; Aubert de Gaspé dans *la Légende du Père Romain Chouinard* souligne: "Dieu seul, bon jeune homme, est le maître de la mort et de la vie". Comme dans les fables, la fin du récit semble l'occasion d'exprimer en clair le sens du conte. *Forestiers et Voyageurs* se termine par ces mots: "Heureux ceux qui croient!" *Le Sagamo du Kapskouk ou l'Evangile prêché* est plus poétique: "mais l'expérience nous apprend qu'il n'y a bois si sec que Dieu ne fasse reverdir quand il luy plaist!". "On ne prie pas, et le flambeau de la foi s'éteint vite quand il n'est pas ranimé par le souffle sacré de la prière!", s'exclame L.-P. Lemay en terminant l'histoire du "Spectre de Babylas", alors

que H.-R. Casgrain insiste sur le rôle de la Providence et que J.-C. Taché en arrive à intituler un de ses derniers paragraphes: "Réflexions"! Une fois encore, l'instinct didactique du conteur ne fait pas défaut. Et qu'on ne croit pas que cela est le seul fait des conteurs-écrivains; sans doute, la plupart de ceux que nous devons citer sont-ils de plats moralisateurs, mais un récit recueilli tout dernièrement d'un octogénaire adopte le même plan. Le conteur termine ainsi: "c'était la grand mention dans le village (. . .) tout le monde est convainc que c'était une punition que le Bon Dieu lui avait faite. D'abord lui, y avait pas d'affaire à aller là ousqu'y a été, pis toutes les affaires qui sont arrivées, c'était pas dû à arriver (. . .) Depuis cette affaire-là, on a ben slacké l'ouvrage le dimanche".²

PÉDAGOGUE, le conteur est surtout intéressé à enseigner deux choses: la morale, la morale chrétienne bien sûr, où l'observance de la pratique religieuse occupe une place de choix, et, plus rarement, mais cela se rencontre, un certain patriotisme. Le narrateur québécois ne peut guère passer pour un mystique, il oublie rarement les conséquences pratiques de son invention; il applique son sens du mystère et de la poésie à l'expression d'images et de mythes, mais son but est le plus souvent utilitaire. Il ne révèle son âme profonde que malgré lui, pour ainsi dire.

Il prêche la priorité du divin sur l'humain, la charité, la résignation, le courage, la modestie, la fidélité, le "culte" des enfants, le respect des personnes, des objets et des gestes saints. Il le fait parfois jusqu'à la superstition la plus intégrale, parfois aussi jusqu'à la coopération active à l'oeuvre de la paroisse. On lit dans *les Forestiers*: "Souviens-toi qu'à part le Ciel tout le reste ne vaut pas la peine qu'on se donne pour l'obtenir"; L. Fréchette ne manque pas de montrer le Québécois parti à Paris qui, enfin réduit à rien, "tomba à genoux, pleura longtemps et pria (. . .)". L'esprit humain a le droit de connaître. Mais qu'il ne cherche pas en dehors de Dieu, c'est peine perdue".³ Plus ou moins bien exprimée, cette sentence est à la base de bien des récits. Le "diseur" ne se contente pas d'humilier l'homme, il lui rappelle que, chrétien, il vit dans un monde double, à la fois naturel et surnaturel, le second étant de loin le plus important: "je dois vous dire que nous venons d'échapper, par un heureux hasard, ou plutôt par une protection spéciale de la Providence, à un ennemi autrement dangereux que les partis d'Iroquois qui rôdent depuis quelques semaines sur nos rivages" (*Légendes canadiennes*).

La menace franc-maçonne pèse sur les auditeurs; or se faire franc-maçon, c'est appartenir au Diable: "à la mort, le Diable en personne viendrait réclamer (l'âme de l'adepte) au tribunal du Souverain Juge". C'est L.-P. Lemay ("Le Baiser fatal") qui nous rappelle ceci; pourtant, comme aucune des traditions populaires directement recueillies ne s'en fait l'écho, il nous est difficile de savoir s'il interprète la tradition ou s'il écrit pour son propre compte pensant à un auditoire donné. Mais la plupart des conteurs s'accordent pour évoquer des pactes avec le Diable sous une forme ou sous une autre. C'est Colette qui périt dans l'incendie de sa mesure, pour avoir dit: "plutôt épouser le diable que de coiffer Sainte Catherine";⁴ c'est Corinne qui appelle ce même diable, danse avec lui et meurt folle.⁵ D'autres encore pactisent avec le Malin; "un bon paroissien craignant Dieu, ne (doit) avoir aucun rapport avec ses suppôts de l'enfer"⁶!

Il peut pourtant être bien utile d'avoir le diable "dans sa manche". Un vieux conteur ne commence-t-il pas son récit: "Quand les gens des chantiers sacrent ben, le Diable bûche".⁷ Mais les châtements sont sévères pour ceux qui oublient la grandeur de Dieu: "C'était dans la maison de Tante Guiguite. Ils étaient quatre. Ils ont décidé de voir celui qui sacrerait le plus. Ménou a sacré le plus. Tout à coup il a disparu par le trou de la cheminée. On ne l'a jamais revu. Le lendemain matin à quatre heures les trois autres étaient à l'église au confessionnal" (*Contes populaires*, p.116). Le conteur québécois aime à broder autour de cette phrase que lui rappelle la liturgie: "Homme, souviens-toi que tu n'es que poussière et que tu retourneras en poussière" et il ne se fait pas faute de rappeler que "le ciel (. . .) ne punit pas toujours en ce monde (. . .) c'est à la mort que les comptes se règlent . . ." (*Contes vrais*, p.434).

De nombreux récits voudraient inciter les auditeurs au partage; ils se terminent à peu près ainsi: "ils vécurent heureux, distribuant leurs richesses et faisant la charité à tous". La bonté d'un chrétien peut sauver l'âme d'un possédé; c'est ainsi que le cordonnier Richard a racheté sa femme qui avait vendu son âme au diable.⁸ Comme dans bien d'autres pays, le pauvre est assimilé à Dieu, sans doute en application de l'Evangile où il est dit: "Tout ce que vous avez fait au moindre de mes frères que voilà, c'est à moi-même que vous l'avez fait". Mais l'esprit du Nouveau Testament redevient souvent celui de l'Ancien. C'est ainsi que la terre de gens qui avaient refusé l'aumône au Mendiant, un jour des Rois, est transformée en un désert maudit, impossible désormais à travailler.⁹ Pourtant, le diseur exalte aussi le pardon des injures, la rançon du bien pour le mal, en vue de délivrer un loup-garou (*Contes vrais*, p.334).

L'habitant apprend encore la résignation; le narrateur est fataliste et son auditoire, sans cesse exposé à la rigueur du climat, à la difficulté de la tâche, est tout disposé à l'entendre. Le conte aide le paysan à justifier son acceptation de tout malheur; cela lui vient de Dieu en qui il doit mettre son espoir pour des jours meilleurs. L'aventure de David Larouche rapportée par Aubert de Gaspé, le père, illustre parfaitement cette leçon: alors que sa femme "en bonne chrétienne" rappelle à David qu' "il faut rendre au Bon Dieu ce qui nous vient de lui", l'homme erre; mais enfin, après des aventures, "Larouche se le tint pour dit, et accepta ensuite, avec reconnaissance, le bien que le Bon Dieu lui faisait, sans se mêler de vouloir régler les saisons". La légende de la Sainte-Catherine, quant à elle, peut bien avoir pour but d'aider les "catherinettes" à se soumettre aux "desseins de Dieu". L'exemple de la jeune fille préférant se damner et brûler dans sa maison plutôt que de demeurer à marier après vingt-cinq ans est d'ordre à faire réfléchir les demoiselles dans le même cas. Les exemples abondent à ce sujet.

Pourtant les conteurs ne veulent pas faire des "femmelettes" des gens qui les écoutent et ils insistent sur le courage qu'il faut pour blesser le loup-garou, sur celui qui manque pour délivrer le "fi-follet" ou pour répondre à l' "Introibo ad altare Dei" du "prêtre-revenant".

S'adressant aux femmes, et surtout aux filles, ils insistent sur la modestie. Comment préserver mieux les jeunes personnes alors qu'on doit les laisser partir aux veillées et s'enfoncer dans la nuit, en traîneau, seules avec leurs cavaliers, qu'en leur contant les mésaventures des filles qui ne sont pas sages. Les demoiselles sont, de plus, averties que se friser pendant la messe ou le chapelet, c'est faire apparaître le diable dans le miroir; c'est dire qu'elles devront être modestes et que le meilleur moyen pour ce faire est d'être pieuses, et d'assister aux offices. La légende de Satan au bal, qui se trouve au Québec sous de nombreuses formes et qui ressemble par certains aspects au Faust, prend ici une valeur nettement religieuse. La jeune fille, coupable de coquetterie, de légèreté, le plus souvent d'infidélité à un fiancé déjà désigné, arrive parfois à être sauvée grâce à l'intercession du curé du village, mais il arrive aussi que la danseuse reste dans les griffes du diable; et gare à celle qui demeure au bal après minuit, le soir du Mardi Gras!

Se faisant presque toujours l'auxiliaire du curé, le conteur encourage les gens à la "revanche des berceaux", en développant le culte de l'enfant. L'homme qui a injurié un squelette-revenant ne pourra se sauver qu'en portant dans ses bras un bébé récemment baptisé, encore incapable de marcher, et qu'il ne déposera

pas quoi qu'il arrive (*Contes populaires*, p.116). H.-R. Casgrain insiste sur la supériorité spirituelle du petit: "Si j'avais connu, il y a quelques heures, ce que le bon ange de cet enfant lui a fait voir et entendre" (*Légendes canadiennes*, p.105).

La plus grande partie des contes touche au culte et à ses ministres. L. Fréchette ne peut mieux donner une mauvaise opinion de son héros qu'en écrivant ceci: "jamais on voyait sa corporence à la messe; jamais il ôtait son chapeau devant le calvaire; c'est toute s'il saluait le curé du bout des doigts"; "c'était ben clair qu'il avait appris rien de bon pour le salut de son âme" (*Contes d'Autrefois*, p.119).

L'homme qui ose s'attaquer aux objets religieux est aussitôt puni: Jacques Ledur reçoit en châtiment la même balle qu'il a tirée sur le Christ d'un Calvaire. Il en meurt, mais non sans s'être confessé (*Contes Vrais*). L'objet béni et le symbole chrétien ont aussi une puissance conjuratrice: tant que Rose peut garder sa petite croix accrochée à son cou, elle est tranquille. Mais le diable malin veut la lui arracher et l'étole du curé arrive juste à temps pour la sauver.¹⁰ Le simple signe de croix a une puissance merveilleuse; on le fait parfois "des deux mains" (*Contes d'Autrefois*). Avant de défendre sa vie, devant les "Sauvages" comme devant le loup-garou, on se signe.

Celui qui ne respecte pas les rites et le calendrier liturgiques n'est pas "chanceux". Le conteur de "La mort du Bonhomme Price", donne au décès de son héros une raison religieuse: "Les curés avaient dans leur idée de l'arrêter de travailler le dimanche. N'importe quel curé qui veut s'en donner la peine est capable de faire ça. Y ont la force de faire ce qu'y veulent. Le curé Lapointe, y avait la tête pas mal dure. Probablement qui a ben prié, pis jeûné. En tout cas, y a certainement fait quelque chose pour poigner le Bonhomme" (*Il était une fois...* p.114). Celui qui laboure son champ le jour des Morts verra les sillons se remplir de sang; le loup-garou arrive parce que le moulin marche pendant la messe de minuit; Tom Caribou est attaqué par une ourse parce qu'il n'a pas voulu aller à la messe de minuit, "c'était sa punition pour ne pas avoir voulu [se] mettre [à genoux] d'un bon coeur le jour de Noël".

Mais ce sont surtout les Pâques qui fournissent l'occasion de se damner ou de se racheter. Dans la plupart des cas la légende est répandue et diversifiée. Il s'agit de sept ans loin de la fréquentation des sacraments: "la septième année approchait tout doucement, et comme c'était l'époque où les gens placés en aussi triste cas se transforment en loups-garous...";¹¹ "depuis sept ans que c'pendard de Tourteau faisait pas ses pâques; y'avait viré en Loup-garou à la

première heure du huitième Carême" . . . ;¹² "Qui courra le loup-garou un de ces jours, certain! — Dis-donc une de ces nuits plutôt. — Dame, quand il aura été sept ans sans recevoir l'absolution" (*Contes d'Autrefois*). Fréchette, donne une autre version; ce ne sont plus sept, mais deux fois sept ans, qu'il faut passer en ces conditions pour devenir "Fi-Follet" et être condamné par Satan à égarer "les passants attardés". Un conte narré par un homme de soixante-dix ans en 1942, reprend le nombre: "mon oncle disait avoir connu un nommé Lachance. Il n'avait pas fait ses Pâques depuis quatorze ans. Il mangeait toujours de la viande le Vendredi. Il partait tous les Vendredis Saints, au soir, et il revenait seulement à la Quasimodo. Cette année-là, il mouillait, il est parti. Où ca? Où qu'on ne le verra plus jamais. Un jour un étranger a vu de la lumière au bord du fossé. Il a été pour éteindre la lumière, mais la lumière reculait toujours. Le feu s'en allait du côté de l'église. Y'(l'étranger) garroche une pierre sur le feu. En garrochant la pierre, le feu disparaît! Mais Lachance était là! L'étranger a eu ben peur et il est retourné chez lui. Lachance va chez lui aussi. Et pis, le jour de Pâques, y va à l'église et y fait ses Pâques" (*Contes populaires*, p.111). Au Québec, comme dans bien d'autres pays, le chiffre sept et ses multiples revêtent une puissance mystérieuse. La confession ne semble pas être du goût du public, car en plus de tous ces châtements évoqués, L.-P. Lemay éprouve le besoin de finir un récit ("La dernière nuit du Père Rasoy") par un petit couplet sur sa nécessité.

LÉ CONTEUR voudrait encore inciter celui qui l'écoute à être un membre actif de sa paroisse. Bien sûr, il exalte celui qui porte sa dîme au curé (*Contes d'Autrefois*), mais il montre aussi les mauvais résultats de la démission des bâtisseurs d'églises: pratiquement toutes les églises de la Province ont été construites par le Diable. Les paroissiens ont bien voulu donner leur argent, mais pas leur temps; ils n'en ont déjà pas trop pour cultiver leur champ. Le curé, désespéré de ne trouver personne pour charrier ses pierres et les matériaux de construction, fait appel à la Vierge qui lui envoie un cheval fringant. Le bedeau est alors chargé de le conduire, mais avec défense expresse de lui ôter la bride. Comme il se trouve toujours quelqu'un pour enfreindre la consigne, au bout de quelques jours, le cheval noir, ou parfois blanc, redevient Satan. Le travail reste alors à terminer, et dans maintes églises on montre, comme à l'Islet ou à la Baie-du-Febvre, les quelques pierres qui font défaut (ce qui est une attraction touristique!). En 1899, l'Abbé Charles Beaubien fait

allusion à une peinture représentant un cheval blanc qui est Satan dans la sacristie de l'église du Sault-au-Récollet. Et le tableau aurait été peint par le curé de l'époque.¹³ Inutile de dire que cette oeuvre n'a jamais existé, mais le fait que les conteurs la citent en exemple prouve combien la légende est accréditée.

Le Québécois a une propension à se tourner vers son passé. Bien souvent, les "diseurs" narrant des histoires du temps des pionniers assimilent le chrétien au soldat, le fusil à la croix: "alors, avec un sang-froid admirable, pendant que les balles sifflaient autour de lui [...] il passait tout doucement le canon de son fusil à travers les branches, et au moment de viser faisait un grand signe de croix" (*Légendes canadiennes*, p.64). On ne sait s'il s'agit d'un exorcisme sur un geste coupable en soi, du "baptême" de l'âme du sauvage qui quittera le corps atteint par la décharge, ou de simple superstition ou coutume. Parlant encore du pionnier, Casgrain lui trouve trois types: "il est à la fois prêtre, laboureur et soldat. Prêtre! sa piété ardente, sa foi vive, son zèle pour le salut des âmes amolissent les coeurs les plus durs et entraînent vers la foi des peuplades entières. Fut-il jamais un plus beau sacerdoce?" (*Légendes canadiennes*, p.64). Il est à craindre que ce ne soit pas le type qui ait prévalu... à moins que le zèle ne consiste à peupler le ciel à l'arme à feu! Un autre conteur assimile à la vengeance divine le passage des Anglais: "ce feu a commencé à paraître pas longtemps après "le dérangement" de nos gens par les anglais, ajouta le vieillard (...). Soyez sûrs qu'il y en a, dans ces flammes, qui sont tourmentés pour de gros péchés. Ah! le Bon Dieu est juste, et on ne se moque pas de sa justice comme ça!"¹⁴ H.-R. Casgrain exprime pompeusement ce que d'autres conteurs disent avec plus de maladresse: "le peuple à qui la Providence a donné de tels ancêtres, s'il est fidèle aux desseins de Dieu, est nécessairement destiné à de grandes choses" (*Légendes canadiennes*, p.55). Les exemples fourmilleront si nous envisageons les contes hors de l'angle religieux, nous voulons seulement souligner ici, une fois de plus, le lien établi par le conteur entre les valeurs chrétiennes et les valeurs patriotiques.

A travers les contes, nous découvrons encore les habitudes religieuses des gens du XIX^e siècle; cette fois, l'auteur se livre à son insu. Parfois, à la fin du conte retranscrit nous trouvons: "ce fut le signal de la prière" (*Contes et Récits*), ou encore: "puis on fit très dévotement la prière en commun, et chacune aspergea copieusement sa couche d'eau bénite pour chasser les mauvais esprits et les cauchemars".¹⁵ La figure du prêtre est révéree: "et tout le monde se leva respectueusement devant le pasteur aimé et vénéré de la paroisse" (*Contes*

d'Autrefois, p.104). Personne ne s'étonne de son rôle: "nous ne pouvons rien contre les esprits observai-je, nous parlerons de cela au curé" (*Contes vrais*, p.26); "l'Curé y a été (...) Ils ont été trouver l'évêque..." (*Contes populaires*, p.113); "l'homme était ben en peine. Il va voir le curé et lui raconte son histoire" (*Contes populaires*, p.116); "quand le curé fut venu, elle lui raconta en secret toute son aventure" (Aubert de Gaspé, *Mémoires*). Le pasteur est un conseiller dont les avis paraissent parfois curieux. Pour délivrer quelqu'un d'une apparition le curé "lui dit qu'il ne pouvait faire autre chose, pour le moment, que de lui envoyer des saintes reliques". Les conteurs ont quelquefois de bizarres opinions de leur prêtre. L'un d'eux remarque: "tous les curés ont le *Petit-Albert* pour faire venir le diable quand ils en ont besoin" (*Mémoires*); or, le *Petit-Albert* est un livre de sorcellerie populaire aux XVIII et XIXe siècles, "publié en France et interdit au Canada puis-qu'il était censé donner le moyen de communiquer avec le Diable. Dès qu'un curé mettait la main sur un exemplaire, le *Petit-Albert* était brûlé". Le fait que le conteur suppose que tous les curés ont un *Petit-Albert*, ce que soutient aussi un habitant, un "diseur" populaire (*Contes populaires*, p.39), confirme le caractère de superstition dont le prêtre est entouré, beaucoup plus encore que de vénération au sens strict du terme. Combien de pasteurs sont peints passant l'étole "dans le cou" d'une pauvre créature menacée de damnation? (*Rose Latulippe*). Le curé acquiert certes une place de grand prestige; il peut même arranger des mariages entre des familles (*Contes d'Autrefois*, p.108).

Les cérémonies religieuses trouvent aussi leur place dans les contes: on décrit une noce (*Contes vrais*, p.430); on montre les garçons trouvant jolies les filles qui "font la quête le dimanche, à l'église, pour la chapelle de la Sainte Vierge"; on présente "un vieux chantre au lutrin (...) qui (met) sa gloire à chanter plus haut que les autres les psaumes des vêpres" (*Contes vrais*, pp.430-431). La pratique religieuse est toujours évoquée; un conte peut commencer ainsi: "par un beau dimanche, après la messe..."¹⁶ Le prêtre paraît, portant "sur sa poitrine, dans une custode d'or le suprême viatique", et les gens s'agenouillent "sur le bord du chemin, dans la poussière, saluant tête nue le divin Voyageur" (*Contes vrais*, p.15). "Les habitants [viennent] au marché" et emplissent l' "humble église de Notre-Dame des Victoires"; c'est "un va-et-vient continu", le benitier [est] mis à sec"; on va à l'église "faire une prière avant de mettre en vente sa marchandise" (*Contes vrais*, p.41). Au chantier, le contremaître "dit à ses hommes: approchez tous". Se recueillant un peu, il ajoute: "nous allons dire le Bénédicté" (*Forestiers et Voyageurs*, p.49). On tient à "quitter la terre du Bon Dieu" "muni de tous les sacrements de l'Eglise

sans en manquer un", mais on mêle parfois bien des choses. Si l'on fait des crèches au village (*Contes d'Autrefois*, p.85), on pense que le "petit Noël" connaît intimement le Bon Dieu et "sait sa toute-puissance";¹⁷ on parle du tison de Noël comme d'une protection contre le tonnerre: à cet effet, le 25 décembre, on met dans le feu un morceau d'érable, juste au moment du Sanctus, puis, avant qu'il ne soit consumé, on le jette dans la neige. Il servira tout le reste de l'année, à l'instar du rameau béni. On pense aussi que l'hostie consacrée ou une image de la sainte Face sont ininflammables et le marin s'abstient de toucher au haddock parce que c'est le poisson de Saint Pierre. Le conte nous révèle un mélange de croyances et de superstitions que les conditions de vie et la dure lutte contre les éléments suffisent parfois à justifier pleinement.

LES SAINTS n'ont guère de chance au Québec. A part quelques personnages de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testaments, Notre-Seigneur, la Vierge et Sainte-Anne, patronne des marins, le tour est bientôt fait. On raconte des histoires extraordinaires: une petite fille de l'Ile d'Orléans aurait été transportée en Louisiane par la Vierge et l'on cite en témoignage une lettre de l'évêque du lieu (*Histoire de l'Ile d'Orléans*, p.33); Marie, décidément remuante, viendrait soigner des enfants pour permettre à leur mère d'aller à la messe. Il y a encore l'histoire de la Vierge des Hurons de l'Ancienne Lorette qui s'est déplacée pour revenir à son village, et la légende de son rosier qu'on n'a jamais pu couper, avec la répétition lancinante, tout au long du conte: "la Vierge, les deux doigts levés, montrait le ciel".¹⁸ Mais il y a aussi, au Québec, les légendes au sens strict, les histoires de martyrs du terroir, telle l'*Iroquoise* (1827).

Les contes ou les légendes de saints sont pourtant relativement peu révélateurs de l'âme du pays, qui se dévoile mieux à travers les visions de sa fantaisie, de son imagination, et la fréquence du retour de certaines figures, de certains thèmes. Satan est sans contredit le héros du récit au Québec; il apparaît sous bien des aspects: cheval, chien ou chat, nain ou colosse, hideux ou séducteur. La plupart du temps le conteur mentionne les cornes et les doigts fourchus, les ongles qui blessent pour que le sang de la victime serve au pacte diabolique. Même quand il se transforme en "dandy", Satan doit garder sur la tête un chapeau en poil de castor et aux mains des gants de peau, il ne quitte que son manteau de racoon. Toujours, il se trahit ou se révèle par une odeur de soufre: "il me semblait qu'une haleine brûlante me soufflait dans la figure, et je crois vraiment que j'ai senti une odeur de soufre" (*Forestiers et Voyageurs*, p.75);

"le diable disparut aussitôt avec un bruit épouvantable en laissant une odeur de soufre" (*Rose Latulipe*). Bruit, soufre et flamme, tout l'arsenal moyenâgeux et international de l'imagerie chrétienne! Les chiens et les chats sont de préférence noirs; ils sont parfois accompagnés d'un "bûcher diabolique, qui (donne) flamme et lumière sans brûler" (*Forestiers et Voyageurs*). Les sorciers, associés aux démons, peuvent aussi prendre la forme d'un animal; dans le "Cabat des Chats au Pont-des-Chicanes", Marius Barbeau parle d'un pont où des centaines de matous se réuniss(ent) pour leur sabbat".¹⁹ Quand il s'agit d'un cheval, il est pimpant et noir ou blanc; c'est la Vierge qui l'envoie, tout harnaché; curieuse interprétation des rapports entre le Ciel et l'Enfer, Satan devenant un esclave.

Le folklore indien a été plus ou moins baptisé et introduit dans la littérature orale québécoise. Le Grand Manitou exerce son influence sur les sorciers (*Le foyer Canadien*, vol.IV, pp.534-551); c'est grâce à lui que le Carcajou fait tourner le lard dans les chantiers et c'est lui qui rend les plantes vénéneuses, telle l'herbe à puce. J.-C. Taché assimile parfaitement le Grand Manitou au Diable: l'un ou l'autre donne son pouvoir à la "Jongleuse". Les diabolotins ou Mahounets tiennent les hommes en esclavage: "Ikès était ce qu'on appelle 'un adocte'; c'est-à-dire qu'il avait un pacte secret avec un 'Mahounet': ils étaient unis tous deux par un serment comme des franc-maçons. Il n'y a que le baptême ou la confession et l'absolution qui soient capables de rompre ce charme et de faire cesser ce pacte" (*Forestiers et Voyageurs*). Le "Mahounet" moyennant quelques sacrifices n'est pourtant pas "mauvais diable", il aide son compère dans ses difficultés. D'autres êtres légendaires craignent comme lui les sacrements chrétiens; le Géant des Méchins, Outikou, "ne mange pas les Sauvages qui ont reçu le baptême et qui prient", mais son cri fait mourir les autres; de son bâton, un bouleau entier, on fera une croix qui chassera à tout jamais Outikou (*Forestiers et Voyageurs*, pp.115-123).

Les créatures de la mythologie païenne d'origine européenne sont introduites dans le conte chrétien. Le signe de leur insertion, c'est qu'on les chasse ou qu'on les apprivoise par la Croix. Ainsi des feux-follets, ou plus généralement "Fi-Follets", englobant les bons et les mauvais génies: "nos Canadiens des campagnes considèrent les feux-follets comme des sorciers ou génies malfaisants qui cherchent à attirer le pauvre monde dans des endroits dangereux pour causer leur perte" (*Les Anciens Canadiens*). Les "fi-follets" sont le plus souvent considérés comme des âmes en peine à l'instar des loups-garous; mais contrairement à ceux-ci, ils semblent heureux de leur sort. Les habitants de Beupré voient le

soir "des flammes [danser] sur la grève comme si tous les 'fi-follets' s'y étaient donné rendez-vous. De petits être grotesques, fantasques, chant[ent] et dans[ent] dans des rondes effrénées" (*Bulletin des Recherches Historiques*, 35, pp.645-650). Il ne s'agit que des pêcheurs de l'Île d'Orléans qui vont à l'anguille, de nuit, à la lanterne; mais leur île en a gardé une terrible réputation! (*Les Soirées Canadiennes*, I, 1861, p.144). D'après A. Désilets, vers 1800, les "fi-follets" hantent les eaux profondes du Saint-Laurent,²⁰ mais le voyageur attardé risque aussi de les trouver sur sa route. On a encore plus peur d'eux que du loup-garou, car ils sont insaisissables. Pour s'en sauver, il faut se mettre entre deux terres, en ramassant bien vite une motte de gazon qu'on se pose sur la tête; mais pour "délivrer" le feu-follet, le meilleur moyen c'est de planter une aiguille dans du bois ou, mieux encore, son couteau entrouvert. Le feu-follet, attiré par le métal, se fauflera dans le chas de l'aiguille ou s'introduira entre la lame et le manche du couteau; il se coupera, saignera et sera ainsi "délivré". Personne n'a jamais osé assister à la délivrance d'un feu-follet; seulement, le lendemain, celui qui revient chercher son couteau peut bien y trouver une goutte de sang. Certains prétendent que poser sur le sol deux objets en croix serait efficace, mais ce ne sont pas les leçons les plus communes.

Proche parent du "fi-follet", sinon par la taille, du moins par la signification, le loup-garou erre, cherchant qui dévorer. Il ne revêt sa forme animale qu'à la tombée de la nuit: "c'est pas drôle d'avoir un mari qui se vire en bête tous les soirs pour aller faire le ravaud le long des chemins, dans les bois, on sait pas où. J'aimerais autant avoir affaire au démon tout de suite" (*Contes d'Autrefois*, p.115). La peau du loup-garou est à l'épreuve des balles (*Contes populaires*, p.114), à moins que celles-ci ne soient auparavant trempées dans de l'eau bénite. L'animal n'est pas toujours un loup, à vrai dire; il se présente le plus souvent sous l'aspect d'un chien, d'un chat, d'un cochon ou même d'une poule. L'homme peut s'être vendu au diable pour obtenir sa métamorphose, mais généralement il s'agit d'un chrétien qui est resté quelques années sans faire ses Pâques et qui appartiendra à Satan jusqu'à ce que quelqu'un ait le courage de le délivrer. Il peut être fort gentil dans la journée! Pour se sauver, il doit saigner, recevoir une blessure en forme de croix; il faut surtout éviter de le tuer. Celui qui a délivré un loup-garou ne doit révéler son identité à personne pas même au curé. Un jour, le grand-père d'un conteur qui "était ben chum avec un autre gars", s'entend demander: "es-tu peureux?" Son chum lui donne rendez-vous à onze heures. Sur un pont "un gros chien arrive dessus. Le gros chien met ses pattes sur les épaules de mon grand-père. Mon grand-père lui sapre un coup de

poing en pleine face. Et pis y'voit mon gâs face à face devant lui, flambant nu. Mon grand'père dit: "maudit que tu m'a fait peur. Tu mériterais la meilleure volée . . ." — "Fais pas ça. J'suis délivré maintenant. Tu m'as délivré" (*Contes populaires*, pp. 111-112). On insiste sur le fait que lorsqu'il attaque, le loup-garou se souvient de la férocité de ses aïeux, et on raconte qu'une blessure faite à un loup-garou en état de métamorphose se retrouve sur son corps humain. On rappelle l'histoire de cet homme qui, ayant tué une louve à la chasse, lui coupe une patte et voit la main de sa femme, une Iroquoise. Arrivant chez lui, il trouve son épouse mutilée et apprend par là qu'elle est louve-garou. "Courir le loup-garou" est un châtiment du Ciel. Il s'agit là d'un mythe tenace et fort répandu dans l'Europe moyenâgeuse: crainte des animaux dangereux et, partant, assimilés au démon et aux possédés, mythe du rachat par le sang, mélange d'anciennes croyances où la métamorphose en animal inférieur dans l'échelle biologique est un châtiment. Combien de contes de fées à travers tous les pays ne sont-ils pas proches parents de ces histoires? (Même dans les contes non chrétiens; voir la Belle et la Bête, Blanche-Neige etc. . .). Ce que les récits québécois ont de particulier, c'est que, loin d'oublier l'élément religieux cause du châtiment, ils en font une pièce essentielle et le ressort dramatique. Les exemples fourmillent en ce domaine.²¹

Les Québécois ont encore fait des lutins des créatures du monde chrétien. En effet, pour se débarrasser de ces petits esprits malicieux, il faut tracer une croix sur les bâtiments et mettre un rameau bénit dans l'étable. Ils peuvent être fort bons, si on les traite bien, et on raconte l'histoire de cette jument que l'on trouve toute pansée le lundi matin (*Contes d'Autrefois*). Mais gare au paysan qui s'aviserait de dénouer les crinières de ses chevaux, tressées par les lutins, ses bêtes "attraperaient le diable!" Mécontents, les lutins font beaucoup de farces désagréables; H. Beaugrand parle de faux émoussées, de tourtières brûlées, etc. . . L'habitant associe plus ou moins les lutins au démon et leur accorde, dans ses contes, la même place que dans la vie journalière.

Quant au sorcier, il est omniprésent. Il n'est pas toujours métamorphosé, mais il a vendu son âme au Diable en échange d'un pouvoir maléfique ou pécuniaire, ou de tout autre avantage temporel. *Le Petit-Albert* donne bien des moyens pour ce faire. Les conteurs parlent, par exemple, d'une poule noire: "I' faut une fourche de trois ou quatre chemins. I' faut attacher cent pieds de corde à la poule. Faut qu'elle soit toute noire. Là, ils la vendent. A minuit juste, ils lâchent la poule et pis ils appellent: 'Charlie, j'ai volaille à vendre'. Ils entendent ben du train. Il faut qu'ils le fassent trois soirs de suite. Rien que le troisième soir il

voit [sic] Charlie. Ils entendent ben du train. Ca ne fait rien; faut qu'ils touchent. Ils vendent la poule pour une somme d'argent" (*Contes populaires*, p.113). Le refus de nommer Satan trahit la terreur superstitieuse que celui-ci engendre. Le réflexe est semblable à celui qu'on peut noter chez certains peuples africains, des Mossi par exemple, qui n'appellent jamais le lion que par le nom de Seigneur, de crainte de l'offenser ou de l'attirer. L'importance accordée au nom est signe d'une civilisation "nominaliste" où le vocable se confond avec l'être. D'autres diseurs évoquent la mouche que le bûcheron-sorcier cache dans sa cognée et qui lui permet d'abattre trois fois plus d'ouvrage que les autres. Attention aux manches de cognées qui portent une cheville!²² La mouche est bien maltraitée, serait-ce en souvenir des cruelles mouches noires du Québec? Le terrain d'élection des sorciers est l'Ile d'Orléans. Quand un sorcier meurt, il n'a de cesse de s'y rendre; la légende de *la Corriveau* nous montre la sorcière sautant sur le dos d'un passant et l'obligeant à transporter son squelette dans l'Ile; elle-même ne peut traverser le fleuve seule, car il est béni! Preuve supplémentaire, s'il en était besoin, de l'assimilation du sorcier au démon. La "Jongleuse", tellement crainte de tous, n'est qu'une forme plus ou moins indienne de la sorcière. "Les Jongleurs sauvages n'ont aucun pouvoir sur les blancs. La jonglerie ne prend que sur le sang des nations et seulement sur les sauvages infidèles, ou sur les sauvages chrétiens qui sont en état de péché mortel" (*Forestiers et Voyageurs*, p.83). Le souvenir de la "Jongleuse" est encore vivace à l'époque où H.-R. Casgrain écrit, tant le conte a imprégné les esprits: "le prestige et le merveilleux dont la superstition populaire avait entouré cet être mystérieux ne sont pas encore éteints et plusieurs prétendent que les pistes de raquettes qui se voient incrustées dans un des rochers du rivage ont été imprimées par ses pas" (*Légendes Canadiennes*, p.172). J.-C. Taché assimile le "rammancheux" au sorcier, il parle ainsi de la jonglerie qui s'appelle médecine: "ceux qui la pratiquent prétendent guérir les malades [. . .], ils s'enferment dans des cabanes à sueries, avalent du poison et font mille et un tours, avec le secours du diable comme vous pensez bien" (*Forestiers et Voyageurs*, p.89). On peut assimiler aux sorciers les "jeteux de sorts" qui ne peuvent être vaincus que par un sorcier plus fort. C'est un "quêteux" ou un simple habitant qui jouent mille tours aux gens et aux bêtes: on a vu des cochons en équilibre sur la tête, des taureaux ensorcelés, (à cette occasion, LeMay octroie, dans "le boeuf de Marguerite", dix pages de sermon sur le diable, p.140-149; nous ne savons si le conteur populaire était aussi prolix, mais c'est possible!), des chevaux devenus boiteux, des hommes forcés de se gratter l'oreille, des champs desséchés, des roues de

chairs reculant à partir du moment où on passait devant une certaine maison, jusqu'à la traversée de la rivière ces choses là ne passent jamais les rivières" (*Contes populaires*, p.112).

L'ACTION DU DIABLE se manifeste encore d'une manière fort curieuse. A condition de prononcer le serment suivant à Belzébuth, l'air peut se remplir de canots d'écorce de bouleau, bourrés de "possédés" s'en allant voir leurs "blondes": "Satan, roi des enfers, nous te promettons de te livrer nos âmes, si d'ici à six heures, nous ne prononçons le nom de ton maître et le nôtre, le Bon Dieu, et si nous touchons une croix dans le voyage. A cette condition tu nous transporteras, à travers les airs, au lieu où nous voulons aller et tu nous ramèneras de même au chantier. Acabris! Acabras! Acabram!... Fais nous voyager par dessus les montagnes..." On trouve ailleurs que les hommes ainsi embarqués ne doivent pas boire, sous peine de culbute (*Contes d'Autrefois*, p.258). Certains conteurs attribuent au "sacreur" le pouvoir d'obtenir un canot. Un camarade s'ennuie, "l'sacreur dit: 'Ben, j'vas demander l'canot pour nous transporter tous deux'. Comme vous savez il ne faut pas prononcer le nom du Bon Dieu ni toucher un clocher". Parfois un des voyageurs se repent et revient à pied au camp; en arrivant il apprend que ses camarades ne sont pas rentrés, ils ont dû culbuter. Des conteurs affirment avoir entendu chanter "dans les airs: c'est l'aviron qui nous mène, qui nous mène", et avoir entendu ramer, au "bruit sourd des rames frappant sur le bord du canot. Ca faisait roup, roup, roup" (*Contes populaires*, p.115). Voilà un conte bien proche du tapis volant des *Mille et Une Nuits*. On le comprend assez si on songe à l'isolement des bûcherons qui ne peuvent avoir de contacts avec personne et qui entendent le passage des outardes, des canards au-dessus de la forêt, parfois le soir... On trouve, près de Québec, une autre version de la chasse-galerie, plus proche de celle qui semble être l'originale et qui viendrait d'Anjou. Massicotte raconte qu'en Anjou, "un certain sieur de Gallery en expiation de la faute qu'il avait commise de chasser pendant la grand'messe, fut condamné à chasser de nuit dans les plaines éthérées jusqu'à la consommation des siècles" (*B.R.H.*, 4, 1938, p.163). C'est la version de Québec qui ajoute les cris: "Kss, Kss, mange-lé, mange-lé", perçus par les discours. Parfois les deux versions se mêlent, tel dans le récit recueilli d'une personne du Mont-Tremblant (*Contes populaires*, p.115).

Le conteur évoque encore les douleurs et les cris, les manifestations des possédés en quête de prières. Aux alentours de l'Anse Pleureuse, ce sont des

vagissements; "le feu des Roussi" (*Contes et Récits*) est une flamme bleuâtre qui court sur la baie pour avertir les passants de prier pour les pauvres noyés; de nombreux bruits mystérieux viennent déranger les habitants et leur rappeler leur devoir d'intercession (*La Tour de Trafalgar*). Un chrétien mort en état de péché, et enterré, est retrouvé pendu à un arbre. Si un passant insulte un tel squelette, il se voit donner par lui un rendez-vous impérieux. Il ne peut se sauver de remplacer le mort et de purger la peine à sa place que s'il porte le bébé; le squelette exige qu'il le pose; si le passant résiste, il a gagné. L'un des pendus s'adresse ainsi à son insulteur: "t'as ben faite, parce que si tu l'avais mis à terre tu serais à ma place. J'suis obligé de rester dix ans encore" (*Contes populaires*, p.116). Il est original de voir le corps sortir du tombeau pour aller dans un arbre tenter le badaud injurieux; de plus, c'est le curé qui a donné la recette du salut. Mais les revenants ne viennent pas seulement sur la terre pour se faire remplacer, ils peuvent y faire tout simplement leur purgatoire. Bien souvent, il s'agit de prêtres qui ont mal célébré leurs messes comme celui "des Trois messes" de Daudet. Le schéma est tout à fait le même et se répète dans plusieurs églises de la Province: Lotbinière, Ile Dupras ou Sorel. Plusieurs conteurs rapportent cette histoire:²³ "je fus condamné à faire mon purgatoire pendant trente ans, sur les lieux mêmes que j'avais profanés. Au coup de minuit, mon âme rentrait dans mon corps et se traînait sur les marches de l'église". Cela durera jusqu'au jour où un passant attardé et courageux osera répondre au prêtre. Il y a ici la foi naïve que le purgatoire dure un temps donné, que la punition correspond très exactement à la faute matérielle, que les lieux profanés doivent être purifiés par la pénitence du pécheur. Toutes ces croyances ne sont pas propres au christianisme; l'élément qui paraît peut-être le plus significativement chrétien, et qui recouvre alors tous ces exemples ainsi que ceux des "fi-follets" et des loups-garous, c'est la croyance fondamentale à la Communion des Saints, qui autorise et rend nécessaire la prière, l'aide pour la délivrance des autres, morts ou damnés. C'est certainement l'élément le plus constructif et le plus profond de ces mythes; il implique la foi dans un monde dépassant l'aspect du nôtre et où seule compte l'amitié de l'âme avec Dieu. A travers le conte, le "diseur" dépasse même le cadre de la doctrine catholique: il sauve aussi les damnés; signe qu'il est difficile à l'homme de croire que tout espoir est à jamais perdu, surtout quand cet homme est habitué à surmonter les obstacles nombreux créés par un pays redoutable.

Le Diable est un personnage tellement quotidien pour le conteur québécois qu'il lui fournit matière à conseils et à explications: on dit "ouvrez" et non pas

“entrez” lorsque quelqu’un frappe à la porte de peur de permettre l’intrusion du Malin (*A la veillée*) ; on sait le pourquoi des îles desséchées : Satan y a jeté une femme vendue à lui ; pourquoi aussi le curé commence si vite à lire les vêpres après la messe de “la Notre-Dame de Mars” : c’est que le Diable chagriné du mystère de l’Incarnation a obtenu d’avoir les âmes des enfants nés entre la messe et les vêpres de ce jour-là, et l’Eglise l’a joué . . . Mais Satan fait aussi bien des tours. Il s’acharne à empêcher la bénédiction des églises ; on raconte que celle de l’Etang du Nord aux Iles de la Madeleine, construite avec du bois d’épaves a été abattue avant d’être terminée. Les naufragés survivants, interrogés, ont rapporté que le capitaine du navire, le matin de la catastrophe a dit : “je donne la cargaison au Diable”. Le bois est maudit, des prières publiques et une bénédiction permettent pourtant de terminer l’église. Mais Satan ne fréquente pas que les temples, il va aussi aux “petits bals à l’huile”, et nous connaissons les exemples de Flore de Sainte Luce et de Rose Latulipe qui se sont laissé enjoler par le démon. Parfois, les cavaliers et les cavalières sont happés dans la nuit par le diable et on ne les voit plus, ils s’enfoncent dans la neige. Heureusement, le curé est bien souvent en prière dans son église, il sait qu’une âme se perd et le bedeau doit le conduire bien vite sur les lieux.

L’Eglise a le pouvoir de conjurer les sorts et de mettre en échec le démon. Cela est particulier aux contes du Québec, qui sont, finalement, assez optimistes. L’Eglise a tout pouvoir, sauf sur les trésors qui, enfouis dans les poêles ou dans le sol, ont la propriété extraordinaire de se mouvoir de haut en bas et de gauche à droite, empêchant ainsi toute possibilité de récupération ; pourtant les trésors cachés ne manquent pas au Québec!²⁴ Mais l’Eglise n’y peut rien tout ce qui est enterré appartient au démon ; souvenir naïf peut-être de la croyance qui situe le Malin au “sous-sol”, au centre de la terre, ou reste d’un manichéisme plus ancien. Mais aussi l’argent n’est pas si important que les âmes ; l’essentiel c’est qu’elles puissent être sauvées et cela est bien sympathique dans un peuple de paysans ! Le conteur a souvent recours à l’exorcisme. P. Aubert de Gaspé dans sa “légende de Joseph-Marie Aubé” (*Mémoires*, pp.186-196) et P.-O. Chauveau dans la “Légende de Lanouet” en décrivent le processus. Dans le dernier récit, on trouve ces mots : “Tu le vois bien, Fanfan, c’était bien le démon (sous forme d’ours). Et la blanche lumière était la Sainte Vierge”. Il y a toujours un antidote et pour que personne ne puisse en douter, le conteur ajoute : “une de nos légendes a une authenticité que je ne lui soupçonnais pas d’abord, c’est l’histoire de Lanouet. Il paraîtrait que le fait s’est passé à la Baie des Chaleurs et non pas

au Labrador, et que le prêtre qui reçut la lettre était M. Dejardins, chapelain de l'Hôtel-Dieu".²⁵

Dans le conte, au Québec, le Diable est bien souvent enchaîné sur une haute montagne et Dieu lui accorde même de dormir un peu, pendant la procession des Pâques Fleuries! Le Christ est humain: tandis que le jongleur assène des coups de marteau sur un crucifix, "les yeux mourants du Manitou crucifié versent des pleurs" (*Contes vrais*); alors que le Père Rasoy meurt, Séraphine, l'abandonnée, voit le crucifix saigner; à quelques maisons de là, le moribond le voit aussi, il sait que le sang coule pour Séraphine, à qui il abandonne tous ses biens et qui choisit le Christ pour époux (*Contes vrais*, p.236). Dieu enfin permet que des morts viennent annoncer à des vivants leur fin prochaine, afin que ceux-ci s'y préparent en chrétiens. La Croix a vaincu le vieil arbre du péché et une curieuse légende l'explique parfaitement: "Dieu ordonna qu'on mit sur la langue d'Adam quand on l'enterrerait un pépin de la pomme (qu'il avait mangée malgré le Bon Dieu et pour écouter le démon). Or ce pépin avait germé sur la langue d'Adam, et produit un pommier avec le bois duquel on a fait la croix de notre Sauveur. Et cette croix, ajouteraient encore quelques uns plus instruits, a été plantée justement sur la fosse de notre premier père" (*Contes populaires*, p.118). Traduction simpliste et naïve du parallèle établi par Saint Paul entre Adam et Jésus: "d'un côté, le péché d'un seul passant à tous les hommes pour leur condamnation; de l'autre, la justice d'un seul, passant également à tous les hommes pour la justification de la vie" (Romains, V, 18).

TOUT N'EST POURTANT PAS ROSE au pays de Québec et l'orthodoxie de la religion catholique est parfois malmenée. Ainsi, les contes, rapportés par Marius Barbeau dans "Grand'Mère raconte", laissent entrevoir toute une tradition manichéiste où Satan est créateur comme Dieu, créateur du mal; le crapaud, par exemple, serait son oeuvre. Il est vrai que cette tendance ne constitue pas l'essentiel, mais elle traduit certainement un aspect de l'âme d'un peuple relativement primitif, isolé, dans un monde dur et hostile. D'autre part, on ne se gêne guère pour introduire dans les contes les plus traditionnels, du type de la bergère épousant le Roi, le rôle de la Vierge Marie veillant sur la jeune fille.²⁶ La lutte des bons, soutenus par le Ciel, et des méchants, avec les forces infernales, est toujours évoquée. Sans faire tout à fait de Satan un créateur, combien d'anciens chrétiens n'ont-ils pas cru à un monde plus ou moins manichéiste? Mais, il est vrai, ceci n'est pas la norme au Québec, ce n'est qu'une

des tendances d'une âme, inquiète en même temps que sensée. L'élément apaisant triomphe, dans les contes où le diable est joué par les hommes et par les femmes (*Contes populaires*, p.114).

Vers 1861, les veillées, les conteurs, les loups-garous, les "jeteux de sorts" etc. . . . deviennent de plus en plus des souvenirs. F.-A. Larue écrit: "dans le temps passé c'est à peine si vous auriez pu rencontrer une seule personne de nos endroits qui n'eût délivré son loup-garou et conversé deux ou trois fois au moins avec les morts. Aujourd'hui plus rien; mais aussi les temps sont bien changés" (*Soirées Canadiennes*, 1861). L. Fréchette abonde dans le même sens; après avoir parlé de loups-garous, il écrit: "inutile d'ajouter que cette scène se passait il y a bien des années car fort heureusement, l'on ne s'arrête plus guère dans nos campagnes à ces vieilles superstitions et légendes du passé".²⁷ Cependant, dans les régions plus reculées de la Province, beaucoup d'habitants restent superstitieux et quelques conteurs exercent encore leur art. H.-R. Casgrain note, parlant d'une époque antérieure, il est vrai: "la superstition était encore si répandue et si vivace, que les personnes instruites mêmes qui n'ajoutaient aucune foi aux contes populaires, ne pouvaient, en les écoutant, se défendre d'une secrète terreur. Et dans un pays comme était le Canada, couvert d'immenses forêts inexplorées, peuplées de races étranges et à peine connues, tout était propre à entretenir et à fomenter les idées superstitieuses". (*Légendes canadiennes*, p.108).

La peur, l'isolement, le mystère d'un monde immense, dur et en partie inconnu; les longues soirées d'hiver avec la neige, peu de feu et peu de lumière et si peu loin des loups et des ours; le manque d'instruction, l'emprise d'un curé prêchant surtout la loi morale, invitant à craindre les forces du Mal, expliquent le développement religieux du conte au Québec. L'originalité est moins dans les formes, communes à bien d'autres pays, que dans la force de persuasion du conteur et dans l'insistance sur l'aspect religieux. Le conte doit instruire en divertissant; il y parvient grâce à l'art du conteur, pédagogue intelligent, grâce à son intention d'enseigner et de préparer à mieux vivre, par des exemples souvent pitoyables, grâce à son imagination créatrice d'un monde où le naturel et le surnaturel se côtoient et se mêlent, un monde où finalement le Bien triomphe.

Le conte au Québec est une mise en scène animée, turbulente parfois, fantastique souvent, de cette réflexion d'un Sauvage: "le chêne séculaire me rappelait en quelque sorte la puissance de mon Dieu".²⁸ Mise en scène non pas mystique, mais extrêmement quotidienne, réaliste, voire même intéressée,

n'oublions pas qu'il faut se sauver. Les contes du XIX^e siècle au Québec révèlent un tempérament à la fois actif et rêveur, tempérament d'un petit groupe de paysans d'origine française dans un immense pays où il faut lutter pour survivre.

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BETWEEN MINDSCAPE AND LANDSCAPE

D. G. Jones

DOUGLAS BARBOUR, *A Poem as Long as the Highway*. The Quarry Press, \$2.00.

DOUGLAS BARBOUR, *Land Fall*. Delta (Canada), \$2.00.

ANN WALL, ed. *Mindscape: Poems by Zieroth, Jiles, Musgrave, Wayman*. House of Anansi, \$4.50.

IN A RECENT BOOK Robert Hunter wrote, "Our awareness of the environment is growing at the moment like a bruise: we are beginning to feel pain and becoming conscious of lacerations, deep self-inflicted wounds." If anything links the five authors and three books under review, it is just such pain, symptomatic of a split between mindscape and landscape.

Douglas Barbour's *Poem as Long as the Highway* traces a journey from Ontario's 401 westward to the Pacific Coast. As travelogue it is surprisingly thin. George Woodcock's cross-country tour in *Canada and the Canadians* yields a much richer harvest of local detail: flowers, wildlife, incidents of history, past and present. Barbour's book, as it turns out, is not so much a landscape as a mindscape.

It is concerned with an imaginative space, a map of community, but of a community that hardly exists. The old communities, like small towns bypassed by the Trans-Canada, are now off the map. "Our past," says Barbour, "is too

close, it/remains unseen." It is not just too close, it was conceived on too small a scale: "Grandfather's inch of shade on a barren map." With no great imaginative effort Barbour can call up the experience of a spring night in a farmhouse of fifty years ago—in all its sensuous immediacy. But it's not on the map:

We see the still houses,
they might be empty
as we pass.

The poem is really concerned with another, and greater, imaginative effort.

The journey becomes an exercise in "drawing the mind through the iris out/ to the turning rim." The speaker wants to break out of the old flat projections that produced an inch of shade on a barren map. He would have us listen to "descants on/ the song of a sphere."

The actual travelling is not the most effective way of accomplishing these things. "Learning is not/ direct// in ratio to distance/ travelled." And though the author is concerned to keep the senses

honest, there is, inevitably, an element of the willed in such an imaginative project. Like the poem as long as the highway, such new mindscapes will "have to be crafted, structures/ to cross vast territories," and "construction is/ slow as/ growth is."

Until growth catches up to the mind's drive outward, and love follows, until that vaster space is mapped and inhabited, we shall travel in a kind of no-man's land, lonely, sharp with light, freezing with snow. These images, linked to the Alberta landscape, colour much of Barbour's other book, *Land Fall*, which taken by itself might also appear slight.

Land Fall contains two poems explicitly about pain — Barbour refuses to cultivate pain, except as "an occasion for a possible song." He will affirm it only as a guide, or as something that in another perspective may become ecstasy. Meanwhile, just as in the physical body pain "comes/ and goes through the interstices of the flesh/ to mesh certain forward nerves,/ relay news to the front lines," so we may suggest it comes and goes in the body politic, amid the interstices of the many small communities. And the news that it relays to the front lines demands a new growth in the organism.

Meanwhile the individual remains exposed to a purely northern knowledge, a frigid brilliance, cold, the seasons of death. The opening "Poem: The Distances" links the two volumes.

Say only this, say only the hope
the urge expressed
in the movement outwards the
sweeping gesture of construction;
and isn't this enough and
can't we say and saying
comprehend
its magnanimity:
to whisper

across this frozen country
certain possible words.

At the other extreme is the work of Susan Musgrave. Of the four new voices in *Mindscapes*, hers is the most startling. Her nearest relative might be Sylvia Plath. What she gives us is a map of intimacy, of the rich gardens and underground wealth of the individual psyche, raped. The inner world becomes no less than the body of creation, teeming with vegetable and animal life: mindscape is revealed as landscape, myth. Ideally these would be love poems in which that creation finds its fulfilment and celebration within a larger map of community. As it is, these are poems of malediction, the cry of a creation abandoned to a bankrupt mindscape. It is the invasion of Eden. Love becomes hate; the communion becomes a cannibal feast. "Once More" begins:

We sit at the river
you, drunk already,
and I
your day's feed.

Somehow, the speaker goes on, the body survives:

Though not for long.
I toss you pieces from my thigh,
fingernail parings,
a section of hair.
I could last. What might vanish
is the offering I never made.

Love, the spiritual body, cannot be offered because it is not on the map; it is not visible to this mind which, having lost its love, can see only flesh.

Though many of the poems focus on a very personal, individual relationship, the mind in question and the nightmare it generates is not so much individual as representative, as these lines from "The Way Out" may suggest:

For too long my veins have been filled
with unaccomplished people,
my body is an exquisite lair
for middle-aged defeat.

Paradoxically the bankrupt mind takes
refuge in the flesh, and Eve, nature, con-
tains stillborn in her womb the spiritual
body that ought to contain her. Converse-
ly, the natural child that should be born
of love becomes an abortion. "Now, too/
you are wanting the spilled child out of
me," she begins in "The Spilled Child."

Now you too,
Down among the many dawns
bleached in iron rivers
whoring on chains
of muddy fish —
 you too
in the blackness that bites off
all the white flowers,
the darkness that meets you
everywhere
with sad news from home —
 you too
want the spilled child
to die in secret
or not at all,
to sew her body
to the ground with worms

Spiritual and physical have been turned
upside down and inside out; the poems,
correspondingly, reveal startling shifts in
imagery, and violent reversals in normal
perspective. In a world where only the
ghost of love remains, one can logically
say:

Love

you're gone now
anyway
and all but the living
wish they could die.

Not surprisingly, the speaker of these
poems may look for life in death; or, in
a mad world, for sanity in madness.
"Celebration" begins:

Being somebody's last woman
and the only passenger of the day
I rode out after madness.

Here, where the world gives no sign of
that movement outward, the sweeping
gesture of construction, where there is
nothing of that magnanimity, we find a
landscape of pain.

Paulette Jiles does not intend to suffer
the full impact of that pain. "There are
fools," she writes in "Privacy," "who say
what they think/ and there are places for
them." More to the point still, "Someone
is always fool enough to feel what he
feels." Miss Jiles defends herself with wit,
inhabiting a middle ground between
privacy and publicity. Her work is not a
map of intimacy, nor of new and larger
community, but rather of tense neurotic
landscape we inhabit in the meantime. It
is one in which landscape is seen through
a distorted but familiar mindscape. Here
the blacksnake becomes:

A tangle of black calligraphy,
taut as a telephone cord during an
important call.

He has the arrogance of Texas oil, the way
his eyes dart little migraines.

The ironic eye may be brilliantly
pointed, but since the speaker cannot
help feeling what she feels, sometimes, it
is inevitably turned upon herself. Her
schoolgirl self has suffered the same dis-
tortions as the snake. There she is:

My head is stuck in a large, five-pointed
star.
It is wired for neon.

She must cultivate her own schizophrenia.
The big, simple-minded shape of the star
reminds her of the 34,080 hours spent in
"damp classrooms, made of children,/ wood,
and negative writing," where:

I betrayed my friends by becoming
 catatonic;
 my chintz clothes tied themselves on me
 every morning.
 My friend the epileptic foamed and
 snapped
 but the teacher read on anyway
 her voice like a pill
 soothing my nerves.
 Sometimes I wondered whose nerves they
 were.

Miss Jiles navigates by constantly making adjustments for the deflections or distortions in the map provided by her society. But not surprisingly she may exclaim, "Here I am twenty-five/ And I'm tired of it already." In an Eden of "Mechanical Vegetables," she too may take refuge in madness. And the growing images of snow, freeze-up, white-out betray the real nature of the garden clearly. It is one in which there are communications but no communion. One can only hope that the network will break down, which is just what happens on a small scale in the found poem, a CBC telegram from Inuvik describing a breakdown in radio communications owing to extreme weather conditions. In part two, Miss Jiles undertakes an apocalyptic re-writing of the message. In the snowy silence, one hopes, the Eskimos:

WILL SPEAK WITH THE RED, ELECTRIC FIRE
 OF RADIOS, TRANSISTORIZED,
 A NEW COMMUNITY!
 AIRWAVES WILL SPLINTER
 AT LAST, WITH A HERMIT'S URGENCY
 SAYING EVERYTHING
 THAT HAS NOT BEEN SAID.

The character of what Miss Jiles has achieved as well as of what may be still to come is suggested in "Faustus":

After finishing this assignment on off-shore
 oil
 I will write poetry like
 Nobody ever wrote it before.

It will be less writing than it will be a bodily
 attack — the ballet of karate,
 the gestures of defiance and defense.

Such a poetry has in a measure been written by Ginsberg, though Miss Jiles may attack with more precise and lethal finesse. But, perhaps we may also expect that everything that has not yet been said on behalf of the outraged spirit, the voice of the silence, may also be made articulate with the same urgency and the same deft force. I'm told that Miss Jiles is now in Africa. May we suppose that her eyes are white, the pupils:

turned inward staring
 for weeks at a time at [her] personal
 landscape.

Dale Zieroth is possibly the first important poet to come out of the country north of Winnipeg. *Mindscape*s begins with his evocation of life on the prairie farms and in the small Manitoba communities in which he had his childhood roots. Yet these particular inches of shade, or sunlight, of snow or wheatfields or pool halls, however much part of his body's chart, seem to have no place on any contemporary map. To return to them is like returning to the prairie grade-school:

Even now, we enter quietly afraid
 to interrupt and wondering about the
 unlocked door. Later we could speak of
 the broken water cooler, covered with dust
 and tracks of mice, of the word
 scratched with a nail on the blackboard, of
 the smell of damp earth and rot. We had
 almost expected this. Still, no one
 would mention how we were surprised not
 so much
 by the dead meadowlark in the broken
 window
 as by its silence . . .

The school does not speak, except of the past. It is a landmark, of a kind, but only

to the "homecoming sons of farmers." The intimate knowledge of the land, the values of the community served by that school, may survive here and there, but need not be marked except as some things are marked by historical monuments. They are not particularly relevant. Though what is may be equally puzzling.

Times are when we're
no longer sure of the things
we wanted to say, guessing at least
that we have nothing important
left to report. My father for one
could tell us nothing about cities
yet he knows muskeg and wheat and certain
kinds of weather better than most men
with a daughter and three sons.

Zieroth confesses that he himself has no better knowledge of cities, of what the significant landmarks may be. "I am not ready for the morning," he begins frankly:

My life fragments too easily, things
have no core, break up, sometimes end.
I am not tough.

Yet he is not simply the farmboy, new to cities. He speaks collectively for urban man when he says:

Everyday we drive through this city, like
tourists who have driven far out of their
way and
spent the last of their money to find this
place
holds nothing delightful.

The image, rooted in the most familiar and commonplace experience yet embodying the whole delusory order of contemporary urban experience, is typical of Zieroth's laconic, understated but pointedly accurate language. Zieroth's "friends" explain that the barren city is the product of American capitalism; "their days full of books by Marcuse and Marx," they prophesy its defeat before

the new revolutionary order. Yet that is equally a delusion: Zieroth's irony makes it evident that he has little faith in the uprising "that will lead them forever/ out of the hands of the odious strong." That city too will hold nothing delightful.

There remains the pain: the pain of the would-be suicide, the pain of being caught in the daily machinery of this city, which so defeats desire that it invades even sleep.

We cannot forget
the timeless clock-watching work, bordered
morning
and night by the push and smell of bodies.
Already
the morning is in sight. We are not yet
asleep
when the journey begins again, full of the
stony
senselessness that changes nothing, choked
with
a thousand small and nasty turns. Each day
is the same and brings us one day closer to
the
angry ideology of random targets and
stones.

Life as seen from "The Queen Street Trolley" invites a revolution in perspective. But the required drive of the mind outward toward a larger map of community may be not only more extensive than that conceived by any of the traditional revolutionaries but more extensive than any one man's imagination can at the moment conceive. Like Barbour, we find Zieroth resorting to the image of the continental drive.

Ahead of us, a country
forever too large for one man's mind;
behind us
more of the same.

Edmonton looked like Winnipeg, and
Winnipeg looked like something else . . .

More sceptical than Barbour, he nonetheless implies that this is the kind of

road we must travel if we are to even approach our Pacific desire:

There is so much road behind us; there is always more ahead: these are the facts of a continent.

We stop for a moment, beside this road the length of a country, to check our maps, and then move on, dreaming of the Pacific.

It is with "The Dream of the Guerillas" that Tom Wayman begins the concluding section of *Mindscales*. And that is a nightmare of violence in which the dreamer is whirled away from the steel carnival of the cities, from his father standing with one leg in his brother's coffin, from love to where "a stream of lead hoses a body to bits/ under the noise of the nightly warplanes," and where it is said, "the guerillas are coming/ for you, and you must go with them." Wayman also questions the possibility that the violent distortions of the contemporary mindscape can be corrected by the violent rhetoric and guerilla warfare of the revolutionaries. The war of words continues on both sides, and "*Where is Che Guevara?*"

Lead in the clay, he is still:
mucked in under the earth
like a half-rusted gun,
dead.

The problem remains: "A duty to words you can live for," which is one's real duty towards Che.

It is a duty towards a generation of youthful deserters who have rejected the mindscape of their parents. Wayman's moving poem "For the American Deserters" puts its finger on the extraordinary inversion or perversion of values that has accompanied the older generation's attempt to maintain that mindscape intact.

Their parents want them to be dry sticks,
old bones with bits of meat on them.
They want to carry them out at night
in bags across the lawn to the incinerators.

The cannibal feast that in Miss Musgrave's poems replaces the lover's communion becomes a self-devouring parody of family life in which the old consume their young. Wayman's irony touches us closer to home, if less viciously, when he tells us that the people of Vancouver want the deserters to be birds, sea-gulls, to fly away, to disappear.

The people of Vancouver do not want
anyone
to be lonely, or hurt, hungry or frightened.
But there would be nothing they could do
if anyone were. Sometimes they wonder why
the deserters are becoming an army again.

Wayman's defence is neither in death nor in madness, nor in revolution nor in wit, but in a kind of folly. He plays the buffoon. He is the fool wise enough to worry, at least for a moment, amid the asinine antics of "Poets Fucking by Moonlight," what may happen to the girl clumsily initiated in those games. Elsewhere, he confesses his fear of flying and prays to those on the ground to pray for his little light passing overhead. He presents a grandiose vision of himself as literary dictator of America as he sits in his Colorado office slashing poems and grinding out rejection slips in "*Life on the Land Grant Review*." But he knows well enough where the real power lies, and what its effects are. As he says in "Ecology of Place":

The City dreams of balance.
Of finding land under its feet.
Of exchanging commodities that are not on
fire.
But it is the dollar and oil who stay awake
all night

to draw up the Plan. Fish offshore
begin to choke.

I walk into the street.

Wayman also ends on the road, but on
"Interstate Eight" he only confirms his
awareness of ecological disaster, the white
terra incognita on the map of community.

Between Utah and Laramie the dead
Indian
lies over the settlements.
Name, face travestied on oil company
billboards
and fading local hotdog stands.
Only the land does not care:
the snowcoated slopes of Wyoming
sit empty in the wind,
small squared houses of the railroad towns
stuck on the hills like tiny burrs of ice.
Even at Sinclair, the refinery
looks self-conscious, ashamed.
And is gone.

Compared to Newlove's "The Pride,"
compared even to Atwood's "Backdrop
Addresses Cowboy," this landscape is
mute indeed. Here the land does not
speak, finds no mirror in the mind. Here
there is no evidence of Barbour's move-
ment of the mind outward, nothing of
that magnanimity. There is only evasion
as the cars, slicing the lunar landscape of
Colorado, "swerve to avoid/ caved-in fur
and red flesh/ of the bear dead in the
road." Here there is only a mindscape
that seems designed to self-destruct.

This happens
but the mind does not budge.
The scientists lie:
in bone-cold space, the rock America
the Indian planet earth does not move.

There is every reason to sing descants
on the song of a sphere. But any possible
words that might be whispered across
this frozen landscape are drowned out
where "Violence overflows, the shouting
and/ the bodies crowd in sometimes," and

the red-faced officials simply keep talk-
ing. What comes through loud and clear
everywhere in *Mindscales* is the news for
December:

In the papers
an oil tank burns at El Segundo
and a girl is jailed for fifteen days.

The one thing certain is the pillar of fire
and smoke drifting south over the Christ-
mas freeways. It is the smell of death.
After days filled with "nothing more im-
portant than despair";

after arguing through her prison night
that the wine is good, that our individual
tragedies
are inevitable against the historical one,
black under the moon, the smell of oil
like touring between the decks of a warship,
the smell of oil.

Of the various collections of new verse
to appear in the last couple of years *Mind-
scales* is the most cogent, the most con-
trolled, the one with the most wallop.
Four pairs of eyes look steadily at the
confusion and violence of contemporary
society and see clearly the murderous
character of what we have called civiliza-
tion. And they keep their cool. They keep
their humanity, and that gives them an
ultimate saving humour that guarantees
the integrity of their reports, that even in
the mental hospital allows Susan Mus-
grave to speak for outraged sanity:

In the mental hospital where you live
there are rows and rows of lavatories —
sometimes late at night you can go
from one to the other
and pull the chains.

Even the most radically metaphorical
or mythical of the four poets has her eye
on the plain fact, and the ultimate banal-
ity becomes a potent metaphor: no bull-
shit. The language of all three books is

tempered and held as closely as possible to the rhythms and syntax, the armature of direct speech. All three books exhibit an unusual unanimity. If Barbour is concerned to speculate on the apocalyptic form of new maps, Musgrave, Zieroth, Jiles and Wayman show us the need for such speculation. They chart the body of fragmented humanity.

The three books would make highly appropriate companions to Robert Hunter's *Storming of the Mind*, or vice versa, the one illuminating the other. Together they would make up a shelf, not six feet, not even six inches, but devastatingly relevant to every home in America, on the Indian planet, Earth.

ARTIFICE AND EXPERIENCE

W. H. New

IAN ADAMS, *The Trudeau Papers*. McClelland & Stewart, \$5.95.
 JUNE BHATIA, *The Latchkey Kid*. Longman, \$6.95.
 LLEW DEVINE, *The Arrow of Apollyon*. McGraw-Hill-Ryerson.
 GRAEME GIBSON, *Communion*. Anansi, cloth \$6.95, paper \$2.50.
 DAVID HELWIG, *The Day Before Tomorrow*. Oberon.
 JOAN HAGGERTY, *Daughters of the Moon*. Bobbs-Merrill.
 CHRIS SCOTT, *Bartleby*. Anansi, \$8.50.

THE TECHNICAL RANGE of contemporary Canadian novels indicates not simply the degree of experimentation of which their authors are capable; it suggests also the multiple guises in which "reality" can be recognized. Consider, for example, the opening passages of a few recent books:

a) The ladies of Tollemarche, Alberta, were always wonderfully clever at disposing of their menfolk; so that these gentlemen, if not already in their graves, were encouraged by their wives to depart northwards in search of business. . . (Bhatia: *The Latchkey Kid*)

b) It is early in April but the snow still lies on the ground, shrouding the vague contours of the landscape. My emotions of this morning are like that, pale and tenuous, a simple line drawing. . . Our lives have been brutalized beyond belief, reduced to a bleakness impossible to express. (Adams: *The Trudeau Papers*)

c) Later that evening, Anna left by the same door, the weighted hinges dragging it closed behind her. Ibiza again, bare feet in

white dust. She was back, back from Paris. . . (Haggerty: *Daughters of the Moon*)

d) Heavenly reader, let me anticipate your two most serious objections to *Bartleby*: the first that it is a work of plagiarism; the second that it employs too many gimmicks, stocks in trade, and clichés of the writer's imitative art. (Scott: *Bartleby*)

June Bhatia's gauze ironies reveal her acceptance of an empirical view of society, while Ian Adams' portentous alliterative utterances make us conscious of the rhetoric of his story more than the story itself. Joan Haggerty, by contrast, relies on image and rhythm, to focus on two women's dislocating responses to their sexuality. And Chris Scott, ingenuously probing the artifice of language itself, circles again and again over the reality of the creative imagination.

The most easily approachable books are certainly Adams' and Bhatia's, and they might seem at first thought to be the

most "real" simply because of that. The ladies and gentlemen of Tollemarche, Alberta, have their counterparts in material society, that is, and if, in creating them, their author exaggerates social prejudices for the sake of her ironic tone, she remains pictorially descriptive in her exploration of human behaviour. Yet "human behaviour" is not ultimately illuminated by such a book. When it ascribes motivation to any of its characters, it does so with such abruptness as to deny life its complexity and subtlety. And the resolutions possess all the credibility of the average television show, geared to the timing of the commercials more than the pace of the drama.

Mrs. Bhatia's commercial is announced fairly early: "In this war amongst the teacups, the worst sufferers were the children." However admirable the sentiment, the constant urge to reduce experience to epigrams makes stereotypes out of her characters. Hank Stych, the "latchkey kid" of the story (or child with a housekey round its neck, to obviate the need for a parent or babysitter at home), grows up to resent his parents' involvement in Moral Causes rather than Human Beings. At about age eighteen he therefore writes a scandalous, best-selling book to discomfort them, dislodge them from their social niche, and demonstrate the deeply-felt truth that he Really Cares. His mother belatedly discovers that Tollemarche's mentally retarded children need her as a volunteer. In such humble circumstances she finds true reward, for a travelling princess visits her. And Hank, who is given to saying contemporary things like "Jeepers" when he isn't writing dirty books, heads off to England (apparently the spiritual home of every Albertan), marries the widow who used

to live next door, enjoys his money, writes another book, and gives promise of Some Day being reconciled with his family. Hence what could have been a very witty book is punctuated with so many clichés that it trips over its own technique. As critical views of "Albertan" moral legislation, Robert Kroetsch's *The Words of My Roaring* and *The Studhorse Man* pierce pretentiousness and provoke indignant laughter much more readily; they use language coruscatingly and wittily to an artistic purpose. *The Latchkey Kid* merely romanticizes, and however much it attempts to represent daily life and attack superficial social conventions, it simplifies experience too often to do other than escape life and ends up the prisoner of conventions of another kind.

Avowed thrillers like *The Trudeau Papers* or Llew Devine's *The Arrow of Apollyon*, by contrast, openly admitting their use of a conventional form, manage to convey a certain rough vigour. Both books, moreover, use the suspenseful swift narrative to probe as urgent a moral issue as that which lies behind *The Latchkey Kid*: the impact of money on conscience. Devine's book opens with a murder associated with the Toronto Stock Exchange and investigates the manipulation of people and currency that lead to and follow upon it. The greed of one man, the weakness of another, the amorality of a third: all bear upon the way in which the Market works and ordinary people are unknowingly affected. We respond to the characters in exactly this dehumanized way, however. Two-dimensional, they are not "real"; only their greed or weakness or amorality is, as though the author were writing a latter-day morality play in which virtues and vices contend for the soul of modern society. Indeed,

the central presence of the book, an archer-financier and international mystery allegorically named Max Bowman, is drawn in such deliberately larger-than-life terms as to become a counterpart to the mediaeval *deus ex machina*. Myths collect around him. Beyond close acquaintance, he is therefore beyond knowledge; beyond knowledge, he contains all possibilities and acquires any powers that the imaginative minds of ordinary men accord him, either for good or evil. Whether people thus relinquish their will to control their own affairs, or eternally require a saviour, or are inevitably controlled any way by some external force remains unanswered. And the book's closing ambivalence counters any easy resolutions that might readily have sprung from Devine's literary form.

It is still neither more nor less than capable escape fiction, a rendering of social pressures in such a way as to make them both comprehensible and bearable. Any such form is beset by the dangers of oversimplifying, sentimentalizing, and such distancing that the book's presumptive relationship with actual life may go unnoticed. *The Latchkey Kid* fails in part because it pretends its radically simplified characters are real. Devine's is openly allegorical. Ian Adams' *The Trudeau Papers* demands that we accept as "real" a world of the near future when nuclear "accident" over Canada causes an American "peacekeeping" occupation and engenders divisive internal fighting. Such imaginative speculation acquires its fictional credibility in two ways: by the author's journalistic amassing of data and by the rhetorical bias he gives his narrator. The motivation of behaviour and the sequence of events are worked out with the clarity of a well-written news story,

and the effect of that documentary sensibility is to imply the truth of non-fiction — just as in Brian Moore's recent *The Revolution Script* — even when the force of the author's argument lies not in the logical arrangement of empirical facts but in emotional intensity and interpretation. Adams has a shrewd sense of what makes convincing detail and a knowledge of how to use political rhetoric to underline his message. He is concerned not only with the insidiousness of American influence in Canada but also with the insidiousness of power itself. Hence his guerilla nationalists turn out to rule as corruptly as did the Old Guard. Idealism fails to flower in such a desert, but it does not thereby cease to be, and if the novel accomplishes its underlying aim, it will provoke a number of readers into questioning the nature — or the very existence — of the ideals that motivate Canadian society in time present.

In concerning himself manifestly with the superficially subdued present instead of distancing cataclysm into the future, David Helwig writes in *The Day Before Tomorrow* a less spectacular book than *The Trudeau Papers* but an even more disturbing one. The impact of the kind of violence he describes depends on controlled use of understatement, and the novel has more of the brooding nightmare about it than does Adams' overt object lesson. The dangers to society that Helwig explores are not those of Foreign Invasion and Atomic Holocaust, but the invasions of the sanctity of the individual mind. Cast as a variety of spy story, it follows the political awakening of a character named Jake Martens as he grows tired of the attitudinizing of simple Canadian protest groups, becomes involved in London locating his career dip-

lomat brother John (who has committed treason out of desperate disaffection with government policy), and tunes in at last on the moment in history in which he lives and must act.

The two meanings of the word "act" contribute to the tensions of the book, for if its ultimate commitment is to *action* as a way of confirming one's individuality, it distinguishes constantly between that and *acting*—*seeming, appearing to do*. The protest groups signified for Jake just such a lack of substance, and for all the flamboyance of his brother's disappearance, so does the exchange of affinities that his treason represents. Instead of coming closer to reality, John enters an unstable realm of "nightmare sequence" in which an anonymous "They" that had sought his aid now fails to identify or help him. Thrown back upon himself, he discovers he has forsaken himself, that to have once said "I have given myself to the future, I must put myself in their hands" is to render oneself completely powerless. Somehow Jake intuits that understanding, and realizes that NOW is the only point where action and individuality can coalesce. And NOW, being "real", is imperfect and therefore frustrating for those who serve an ideal in it. Too often such service imprisons rather than enfranchises people, for in *appearing to act* they embrace the perfect future or the perfect past. The one has the insubstantiality of dream, the other the artificiality of history; both have their impact on Helwig's present moment of active existence, but neither takes its place, and to distinguish among them becomes the task of all who live.

In another way it is also the task of the writer, whose contrived literary techniques must convey these disparate ap-

prehensions of the nature of truth. In the chapters evoking John Martens' discovery of his life's continuing emptiness, therefore, Helwig's style breaks into fragmentary sentences; he distorts observations and dislocates time. Jake, contrarily, operates within a strict linear, moment-by-moment frame of resistance, and Helwig records the conversations he takes part in almost without apparatus, in order to allow readers—as Callaghan had attempted to do in the 1920's—to overhear them directly and so become involved in the character's/author's moment. Counterpointing these two styles is a third, a compulsion to speak in aphorisms ("The future is perfect because it does not exist", "An aphorism says everything and means nothing") which seems to epitomize the characters' experience. The "*seem*", however, is important. As Alice Munro spells out in *Lives of Girls and Women*, art can only approximate (for all that it can intensify and distil) a life that is lived. To accept the aphorism rather than the substance would be to equate the intellectual and emotional distillation with the empirical event. For Helwig's characters it means a blurring of life and theory; for Helwig himself, the challenge was concurrently to demonstrate the blurring and enunciate the distinction, and despite its somewhat unvarying tone—which works against his stylistic differentiations—his book manages intelligently to grapple with the art and experience of life.

The same cannot be said either for Joan Haggerty's *Daughters of the Moon* (for all its sensitivity to explicitly female experience) or for Graeme Gibson's fantasy about the "sexual, . . . lyrical and . . . nightmarish" possibilities of one's life, *Communion*. Both books take rhythmic

pattern as their best stylistic technique, which carries particularly strong sexual overtones in Haggerty's novel. *Daughters of the Moon* concerns the emotional links between two women, Anna and Sarah, who each marry, recall family experiences, suffer marital breakup, and come to bear children. In the process they discover their love and their separateness, the concurrence of their experience and the identity of death, and as the prose patterns recur and the story steps in and out of dreams, signs, and daily events, we approach an understanding of the pressures that affect their lives. Yet so consciously is the language made into a sexual rhetoric that the novel ultimately seems arch, a defective Woolf-Lessing-Drabble set-piece that contains illusions but cannot seed them. The style manages to catch at the heat and doldrums of the Mediterranean setting, and to capture some of the emptiness of the lives being lived, but none of the characters ever proves very interesting.

Presumably the rhythms — as Gibson's bookjacket advises about *Communion* — are meant to be "haunting" and "mesmerizing" and "rise to a harrowing and purgative intensity"; in them lie the "truth" of the identities to which the characters lay claim. Certainly for Gibson's Felix Oswald, a veterinarian's assistant identifying with a dying husky — feeling violent, beautiful, angry, animal, caged, controlled, uncontrollable, and superior to authority — the recurrent but interrupted visions of passion blend conquest and defeat into an ambivalent portrait of an ordinary man. Both avatar and servitor in his own imagination, Felix consumes himself with each new "communion"; his identity is lost, therefore, with each fulfilment — reminiscent of

Cohen's *Beautiful Losers*. The trouble is, his imagination is too tiresome to arouse much sympathy; as an advance on the barren "realities" of the "veterinary" world, his visionary glimpses seem curiously negative; and seen as an absurd dilemma, his predicament neither engages nor dismays.

Much livelier and wittier — though sometimes overwritten and far too long — is Chris Scott's *Bartleby*, and in it, we take the next step out of fictional realism. A shaggy Shandyan funhouse, *Bartleby* recognizes as "real" not the life presumably devised on the page but in the process of devising artifice itself. In life, life is real, but in a book, only the book is. Within such a framework, anything is therefore possible, and Scott contrives to write about the Writing of Book in such a way as to reveal the impositions of an author upon his characters, the independent vitality they manage nonetheless to acquire in readers' minds, and the control they (subsequently, paradoxically) exert upon the creative abilities of their author. Taking the form of a burlesque quest story, the characters' search for their creator and for creativity takes them into bouncing bawdy adventures, into conflict with a Protean figure named De'Ath, and into innumerable quarrels with the author at his typewriter over what they may or may not do, and when. If he consigns events to the wastebasket on occasion, they steal his chapters and only release them long after they're needed. And when he needs all his characters at one point and they disappear, he is forced into writing THE END abruptly, in the middle of his book — only to turn about on a fresh page, equally as abruptly and artificially, with a continuation:

— THE END of Book One, that is, because I have just hit on the explanation — forget about the end, reader — and amazingly simple it is: the fog, the *fog* from the last chapter has filtered through to this chapter!

'There is no fog,' said Damon Gottesgabe.

'Extraordinary,' said I. 'That's extraordinary, Damon, but I have just read your words' — I will not allow myself to be drawn into that trap, reader. Nevertheless, I read what he said and read it aloud: "'There is no fog,' said Damon Gottesgabe," but there is, there *is* a fog!

'It seems very clear to me,' he continued while I searched the MS, 'that the fault is yours... you have forgotten what day of the week it is, see fogs where there are none, and now to cap it all you have lost not just one or two of the persons in the book, but all of them.'

'Enough, enough, Damon,' I conceded, 'the narration has not been without fault.'

The ironies and exaggerations of this admitted Cock and Bull story demonstrate a shrewd sense of comic timing, and introduce the finest parodist Canadian literature has for a long time seen. Scott's style keeps pace with a huge cast of characters, some his own and some borrowed, all speaking in the syntax their original author gave them and grumbling at it, and his knowledge of literary archetypes and analogues allows him to move

gamely through a range of allusive techniques.

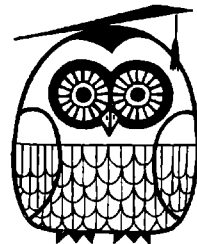
The end of all this flamboyance is not merely to bewail the rigidity of the straightforward narrative process of modern realistic fiction but also to affirm the joyful, invigorating spontaneity of the spoken/written word — and not merely to berate the categorizing impulses of the modern society that are epitomized by the realistic novel, but also to insist on the continuing human capacity to utter the idiosyncrasies, potentialities, aspirations, and unpredictable forays of the creative mind. "Upon the very principle of beggary" does "The Narrative Age founder", Scott writes. It was June Bhatia's and Ian Adams' intention simply to use the language of narrative; it is Scott's intention (like Robert Kroetsch's or Abraham Klein's) to revitalize it. In the process of attempting to do so, he explores a principle that Malcolm Lowry had absorbed from Ortega: that an author is created by the works he writes as much as he creates them and that they, therefore, have an independent "reality". He also rediscovers what Stephen Leacock averred in "Fiction and Reality" as early as 1916:

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'That accusation is,' repeated Mr. Pickwick, 'that *we are not real, that we are caricatures*, that not one of us, and I beg the company to mark my words, not a single one of us, ever existed, or ever could exist; in short, my friends, that we are mere monstrous exaggerations, each of us drawn in a crude and comic fashion from a few imaginary characteristics!'

... the truth was that from the time of the Romans onward Art had of necessity proceeded by the method of selected particulars and conspicuous qualities: that this

was the nature and meaning of art itself: that exaggeration (meaning the heightening of the colour to be conveyed) was the very life of it...: that by this means and by this means alone could the real truth — the reality greater than life be conveyed.

Such praise of the artist's craft describes a willingness to render experience innovatively rather than photographically, and to hold faith in imaginative truths rather than strictly empirical ones.

SECOND IMAGE, FIRST TRY

Donald Cameron

RONALD SUTHERLAND, *Second Image: Comparative Studies in Quebec/Canadian Literature*. New Press. \$7.50.

I EXPECTED to admire *Second Image*. The topic is vitally important, the critic distinguished. The chapter titles — "The Calvinist-Jansenist Pantomime", "The Fourth Kind of Separatism" — suggest that the right questions are about to be raised. I opened the book with excitement.

I closed it with puzzlement. Sutherland does tackle large questions, and many of his points are stimulating. But the points never come together, and the dominant impression is one of fuzziness, of important insights crying to be released but somehow never quite being granted exit permits.

In part the problem is simply loose argument and verbosity, as though Sutherland is not quite sure what he wants to say, and consequently does not quite say it:

How significant this apparently distinctive tendency of Canadian literature may be in terms of national habits, parental behaviour,

memory patterns and artistic qualities, is difficult to say. It is, however, definitely significant that the tendency should be shared by writers of the different ethnic groups of Canada, providing one more indication of the existence of a common Canadian mystique.

If that means what I take it to mean, it could be cut by about half. But I am not certain just what it is intended to mean, and I doubt that Sutherland is, either.

Such inexactness pervades the book, hinting at a significance it never quite expresses. Like a fainter Northrop Frye, Sutherland isolates themes in order to draw large conclusions about the state of our culture. Like Frye too, Sutherland sets up large conceptual systems which make the sceptical reader wonder whether anything so unruly as a literature does actually occur in such neat categories. We desperately need comprehensive, generalizing criticism in Canada, but it demands a rare subtlety and discrimination. The conviction Frye some-

times inspires is a consequence of precisely the nuanced expression Sutherland seems unable to provide.

Sutherland argues that "to be in the emerging mainstream of Canadian literature . . . a writer must have some awareness of fundamental aspects and attitudes of both language groups in Canada." By this novel and provocative thesis, Margaret Laurence, Morley Callaghan and Sheila Watson are not Canadians; rather they are "in the tributaries of American literature". Comparable Québécois writers, however are "in the various Québec tributaries of Canadian literature". By implication, no English-Canadian community exists except by the grace of psychological proximity to the Québec community, and Sutherland argues that outside central Canada, the international border ceases to be meaningful. In that case, though, how can there be comparative Canadian studies, which *Second Image* is ostensibly presenting? At best there can be Québec/American comparative studies.

If Sutherland cannot see that such a sweeping dismissal of English Canada is fatal to the assumptions of his study, what are we to make of his powers of logical analysis? Elsewhere in the book he claims that Canadian literature is peculiarly marked by its attitude to childhood, and compares Réjean Ducharme with W. O. Mitchell. Another essay maintains that "Canadian Puritanism has evolved in much the same way and has taken much the same form of expression in Protestant English Canada as in Roman Catholic Québec", and Sutherland spends pages distinguishing our Puritanism from that of the United States. As evidence he cites Roch Carrier, Anne Hébert, Roger Lemelin — as well as

Grove and Sinclair Ross. Sixty pages later he is telling us that "the border does not really exist for the prairie sphere of consciousness." Then what in tunket were the earlier chapters about?

But the notion of a Canadian mainstream preoccupied with English/French relations can stand alone. For Sutherland, Hugh MacLennan is at its centre, and "likely to occupy a position much like that of Mark Twain in the United States, as the prime mover in the emergence of a distinctive Canadian literature." The notion has considerable merit, but Sutherland's defence of it leaves a great deal to be desired. Sutherland argues persuasively that in the dark places of our lives in which the imagination blossoms, English and French Canadians are very similar people. In that case, the "emerging Canadian mainstream" probably has little to do with French/English relations, and a great deal to do with the obsessions we share: the overt concern with the ethnic is simply a superficial recognition of an essentially political reality, not the *sine qua non* of Canadian experience. The genuine mainstream will have to do with puritanism, sexuality, family relations, moral outlook, metaphysics, sense of history, and so forth. The important knowledge is of the things we have in common, not the knowledge that we *do* have them in common.

That Sutherland is at least as interested in politics as in literature is made plain by his outright plea, more or less gratuitously inserted and occupying two and a half pages, for a unilingual Québec. I hasten to add that I do not myself believe that literature can be divorced from politics, and that with many of Sutherland's political attitudes I am in hearty agreement. But distinctions need to be made

between admirable politics and literary merit, and though the most satisfying works do fuse the political, the moral, the philosophical and the aesthetic passions, the same qualities may exist separately, too, as any number of unreadable leftist journals will reveal.

Confusion about these larger questions added to the impulse toward rigidity characteristic of system-builders leads Sutherland to commit a number of howlers. His reading of *The Watch That Ends The Night*, for instance, is shot through with outright error. The mis-spelling of Jerome Martell's name is no doubt the fault of the same proofreader who reversed one of Edmund Wilson's judgments by adding a "not". But it is Sutherland, not the proofreader, who claims Catherine's baby is delivered "without great strain", a view which contrasts interestingly with the novel, which says that "Sally's birth came close to killing Catherine."

Again, here is Sutherland:

Catherine finally accepts George as her husband. By that time she is helpless, but George, despite the fact that he knows she still loves Jerome, takes it upon himself to care for her and her daughter Sally.

Evidently Sutherland believes that Catherine does not love George, and does love Jerome in the same old way. But MacLennan tells us that George and Catherine went away for a weekend together and then inserts — as he is wont to do at moments of high personal emotion — a vibrant description of the autumn landscape. Then, without transition:

"Yes, George," she said, "yes!"
Three weeks later we were married.

To underline the point, MacLennan has George say this:

Together we grew intimate with the seasons, and we planted our lives in one another without trying to annul the past. She, who had said 'yes' with all her might to Jerome, now said 'yes' to me.

Sutherland tells us that:

George can endure the experience of witnessing how his wife has never stopped loving the husband who abandoned her. For George . . . it is more important to love than to be loved.

But MacLennan reports Jerome's meeting with Catherine in very different terms:

Each seeing the other saw in a flash that what they had believed was their past no longer existed. For a few moments they were almost like husband and wife meeting after death in the next world.

And when Jerome tells Catherine that he still longs to make love to her at least once again, she says simply, "It's too late for that, Jerome."

Finally — and I confess to a certain vested interest here, because we are talking of an episode which is for me one of the most remarkable in all of Canadian fiction — Sutherland tells us that on one early occasion, Catherine

attempts to make George a gift of her naked young body; ironically, her attempt at seduction fails, not because of a lack of desire and affection on George's part but because his affection is so strong that he cannot take the risk of putting the girl's health in danger [i.e. by making her pregnant, as the context makes clear].

But MacLennan actually says this:

But I trembled and was afraid not merely as a boy is who fears to make a girl pregnant, but because I was not yet a man.

She waited for me, she held me, she was as quietly restless as a quiet sea.

Finally I sat up and heard myself say, "No, I can't."

And when I said this I felt a kind of

virtue go out of me and became an utterly defeated boy and less of a man than I had been for months.

I am virtually certain that millions of boys have had parallel experiences, and I know of no other male writer than MacLennan — certainly none in Canada — sufficiently confident in his own sexual identity to be able to portray it. Of this delicate and candid scene Sutherland's summary is a grotesque travesty. But indeed, he so thoroughly misreads the novel as to cast doubt on his entire enterprise. *The Watch That Ends The Night* is,

finally, a religious book — but in his discussion of it, Sutherland not only fails to mention religion, but indeed makes it clear that he regards the novel as directed towards rebuilding "a structure of social and moral values" on a principle of "realistic involvement" with others in an essentially godless, value-free world.

Unquestionably we need books which attempt what *Second Image* attempts. But they ought to be considerably more rigorous than this. *Second Image* is important, finally, just because it is a first try.

COD, SEALS AND HERRINGS

Sandra Djwa

MAUD KARPELES, *Folk Songs from Newfoundland*. Oxford. \$24.00.

THE BALLAD REVIVAL of the last fifteen years has dealt very favourably with the Newfoundland folk song. After an academic silence of almost 40 years, there have been three publications within a decade. (The lack of attention, it should be noticed, was strictly academic; in Newfoundland since 1927 successive generations of schoolchildren have been entitled almost by birthright to free copies of Gerald S. Doyle's *Old-Time Songs of Newfoundland* where patriotic standards such as "The Squid Jiggin' Ground" and "The Ryans and the Pittman's" are presented for the general good of the constitution along with Andrew's Liver Salts and Doyle's Pure Newfoundland Cod Liver Oil.)

The three new volumes of folk songs are Kenneth Peacock's *Songs of the Newfoundland Outports*, a second edition of

Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland, edited by Elizabeth Greenleaf and Grace Mansfield, and finally, from the Faber and Faber folk song series, a very handsome new edition of Maud Karpeles' *Folk Songs from Newfoundland*. Miss Karpeles is one of the best known collectors of the folk song in Newfoundland and this enlarged new edition will be appreciated by the general reader as well as the folk music specialist. She accompanied Cecil Sharp in his famous ballad collecting expedition to the southern Appalachians in 1916 and 1918. The two had originally planned an expedition to Newfoundland, but following Sharp's death in 1924, Karpeles determined to carry on the work alone. In two expeditions to Newfoundland made in September and October 1929, and July and August 1930, she collected 191 tunes, 150 of which (90 songs

with variants) are published in this volume.

Karpeles had little experience in "noting tunes" and as this was before the day of the tape recorder, she admits "some trepidation". Although Sharp hoped that Newfoundland would prove a treasure trove equal to that of the isolated Appalachian region, Miss Karpeles was not at all sure that the barren shores of Newfoundland would provide very much more than rock, fish, and sea. She quotes from the then contemporary historian Rogers (*A Historical Geography of the British Colonies*, 1911):

There is no civilized nation in the world which is so marine in its character as Newfoundland. The sea has asserted its sway over Newfoundlanders; they are wedded with the sea and "their children's eyes change colour with the sea". Cod, seals, herrings and the clownish lobsters mould their destiny.

As her introduction goes on to reveal, there were not only cod, seals and herrings in Newfoundland; there were also folk songs to be collected and for that matter, other collectors busy about the task of classification. In fact, Karpeles was preceded by two months by the Vassar College Folklore Expedition of Elizabeth Greenleaf and Grace Mansfield. A consequence of this was the publication of their collection, *Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland* in 1933, a year earlier than that of Karpeles' *Folk Songs from Newfoundland*.

A comparison of the two volumes emphasizes the distinctive qualities of Karpeles' book. Initially, both expeditions were overwhelmed by the bleakness and isolation of the island, the hospitality of the Newfoundlanders who received them and the amazing vitality of the folk song tradition. Greenleaf and Mansfield tran-

scribed all the songs they heard, making no distinction between variants on traditional songs and ballads and those ballads, chantys or "Come-all-ye's" that were locally composed. Karpeles, in distinction, following the collections of Francis Child and Cecil Sharp, is interested primarily in the ballad or folk song of traditional origin. She explains:

The proportion of authentic folk songs is small compared with the general repertory. In addition to the composed songs of an earlier generation, songs are constantly being made up about contemporary events such as exploits at sea, shipwrecks, etc. These are often set to a well-known "Come-all-ye" type of tune. They usually have but little aesthetic value and since my interest lay in songs that represent an older tradition I did not note any of them.

This distinction will be a disappointment to those general readers who might want to differ with Miss Karpeles' aesthetic standards and to add that we come to the folk song not just to observe continuity of tradition, but also for the sense of a people which can only be found in the folk song that is native to that place. Further, as the recent Peacock collection very ably demonstrates, there are many Newfoundland folk songs of great beauty.

Yet there is some justice to Miss Karpeles' argument that the characteristic "Come-all-ye" form of the Newfoundland tunes indicates "a certain lack of invention". I suspect it might be possible to accommodate a great many Newfoundland songs simply by setting up the beat for "Jack Was Every Inch a Sailor" as slowly or as briskly as any new lyrics might require. But the primary difficulty with Miss Karpeles' aesthetic is that in Newfoundland in 1929 the folk song was not, as it might have been in the more cultivated drawing rooms of England, a

matter of pianoforte and tea. Even today in the Newfoundland outports, the canons are those of use rather than those of art. The folk song is the chronicle of local place and tragedy as in "The Wreck of the Steamship Florizel"; it is the community celebration of "The Kelligrew's Soiree" or the work party of "The Squid Jiggin' Ground". The folk song is that brew which knits the community together when sister Mary comes down from St. John's to get married or John-Joe is up from the fishing with a good catch. It aims for the cove and not for the drawing room. For this reason, any attempt to impose standards upon it which are other than those of custom and use are spurious. Those general readers, lured by the title, *Folk Songs from Newfoundland* and expecting to find here the pungent lyrics and riotous immediacy which marks the native Newfoundland folk song, will be disappointed. Instead they will find "Fair Margaret and Sweet William", "Spanish Ladies", "The Outlandish Knight" and "Bound Down to Derry". For such readers, a somewhat different title of, say, *Folk Songs of the British Isles From Newfoundland*, might be more immediately descriptive of the book's contents.

What then, can we expect to find? Primarily there is a very fine and varied collection of the songs of the British Isles still extant in Newfoundland in 1929 and 1930. In this new edition, Karpeles provides 60 new songs that were not included in the earlier volume. She also categorizes the songs, giving pride of place to the "Child" ballads (those catalogued by Phillip Child in his *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 1882), followed by further "Ballads" and "Sea-Songs". The successive groups of cate-

gories are largely thematic, gathering several songs under general topics such as "The Drowned Lover", "Female Sailor Boy" and "Wooing and Courtship". If we are to gather anything from this miscellany it might seem, from the number of songs dealing with the topic, that Newfoundlanders are most attracted to the traditional songs of wooing and courtship.

As we do not find here songs conceived in North America, our interest is often caught by speculations as to why particular songs survived over hundreds of years, by Newfoundland variations in the text and by melodies of particular distinction. The lovely song "She's Like the Swallow" has always been a favourite:

She's like the swallow that flies so high,
She's like the river that never runs dry,
She's like the sunshine on the lee shore.
I love my love and love is no more.

'Twas out in the garden this fair maid did
go,
Picking the beautiful prim-e-rose;
The more she plucked the more she pulled
Until she got her whole a-per-on full.

It's out of those roses she made a bed,
A stony pillow for her head,
Now this fair maid she lay down, no word
did she say
Until this fair maid's heart was broke.

There are a man on yonder hill,
He got a heart as hard as stone.
He have two hearts instead of one.
How foolish must that girl be
For to think I love no other but she.

For the world was not meant for one alone,
The world was meant for every one.

In damp windy Newfoundland where the only warmth is that of the sun and only then in sheltered corners of the foreshore cliffs, the words of the chorus with its plaintiff identification of lost love and lost warmth have particular resonance: "She's like the sunshine on the lee shore/ I love my love and love is no more".

The editorial policy in this new edition clearly differs from that of the first volume, where Karpeles corrected or "amended" the songs sung to her in Newfoundland. The 1934 version of "She's Like the Swallow" gives as the fourth line of the third and final stanza: "Until this fair maid's heart did break." "Did break" is the usual form of the verb in the standard collections from which Karpeles derives her authority, but "broke" is the past and present form of the verb "to break" in most Newfoundland dialects. This usage has its justification in the historical language of the people as in these lines from the song "A Great Big Sea Hove in Long Beach": "Me boot is broke, me frock is tore, But Georgie Snooks I do adore, To me right fol didy fol de". Happily, in this new edition, Miss Karpeles' emendations are relegated to an appendix and the new transcript of "She's Like the Swallow" indicates that her Newfoundland respondent, a Mr. John Hunt of Dunville, actually sang "was broke", and, in fact, added the two variant verses at the end of the song. This change will be greatly appreciated by the folk singer who wants to sing the song as it is actually known in Newfoundland, and not some tidied-up version from the drawing rooms of the 19th century collectors.

One final point; when reading through *Folk Songs from Newfoundland* I found that my eye was caught by the attribution of "The Cruel Ship's Carpenter" to

a Miss Jemina Hinceck of King's Cove, Bonavista Bay. I do not know of any Hincecks in Bonavista Bay but there have always been Hancocks in King's Cove, so I found myself wondering if this was a mechanical error or an error in transcription. The odds are for the latter: in local dialects, the initial *h* of a word is dropped and a Miss or Mrs. Hancock is almost invariably a "Miz Incock", sometimes with no juncture between the *z* and the *i*. The immediate temptation to a transcriber unfamiliar with the vowel change which can accompany the dropped *h* would be to substitute the *i* for the *a* and to render Hancock as Hinceck. This is a small matter but it does illustrate one of many difficulties Miss Karpeles must have faced in putting together her Newfoundland collection.

In the folk song, as in the language in general, there is almost always change between the verbal forms and their written codifications; this process is continuous and perhaps the primary sign of life and vitality. Miss Karpeles in her preface marvels that there is so little change between the English original of "Lord Bateman" and the version sung to her in Newfoundland; I think I would be prepared to marvel at the change. For this reason, I am so glad that in this new version of *Folk Songs from Newfoundland* Miss Karpeles has seen fit to abandon editorial correction and special musical arrangement to give us the songs as they are actually sung in Newfoundland.

TEXTS AND CONTEXTS

ELI MANDEL, ed., *Contexts of Canadian Criticism*. University of Toronto Press. Cloth \$11.75; paper \$3.45.

ONE OF THE MORE UNUSUAL and useful anthologies to appear recently (despite its exorbitant cloth price) is Eli Mandel's *Contexts of Canadian Criticism*. Though its basic premise — that there does not exist a history of Canadian critical thought — has often been averred, Professor Mandel has gone on to chart a way of filling the gap. He brings together essays involving practical and theoretical criticism and essays on Canadian historiography, in order that he might (explicitly, in his introduction, and implicitly, by the arrangement of essays) probe the multiple relationships between fact and fiction, idea and action, attitude and utterance, that such a juxtaposition establishes.

The literary essays by Frye, Wilson, West, McDougall, and Tallman, however, are readily available elsewhere. Dorothy Livesay's work on the documentary poem does make a welcome appearance, and Henry Kreisel's excellent and evocative essay "The Prairie: A State of Mind" is brought to the larger audience it deserves. But for literary students, it is paradoxically the historical and social essays that prove the most arresting and the most useful. "Whereas," Mandel points out in his introduction, following

William Kilbourn and Carl Berger, "the critic seeks to find informing or structural principles for his art in history, the historian seeks out his structures in story, Canadian history proving itself finally just another 'art of narration'." But there are differing vantage points from which to view the "structural principles" of that historic story: J. M. S. Careless' frontierism and metropolitanism, Underhill's continentalism, Kilbourn's observation of a "Laurentian" school. At one level these encourage — even determine — a literature that merely describes the environment; at another they describe the tensions between man and landscape that have fostered the often contradictory efforts of many writers to isolate and animate the national conscience.

Mandel does not quote the New Zealander Allen Curnow's poem "The Unhistoric Story", with its recurring discovery of "something different/ Something nobody counted on", but his response to history takes its ambivalent attitude to ordered (linear, historic) time into account. History exists not just as a defined past, but also in the eye of the present moment. The inheritance, record, and immediate processes for the communication of culture all therefore come under scrutiny — from Mandel himself, and in essays by Innis, McLuhan, Francis Sparshott, and George Grant. One end of their several arguments is to identify the media as a man-made "landscape" as psychically engaging as the geographic frontier, equally large before the imagination, at once stimulating and enervating, constricting and attractive. Another is to contemplate the two-way relationship between cultural identity and political nationality. A third is to re-examine the nature of the so-called "primitive"

and to discover, as Mandel does in an unresolved passage, not only its difference from the conscious historical world of written literary artifice but also its extraordinary contemporaneity. One asks of an anthology only that it provoke reflective questions. One scarcely needs reflection, however, also to ask that Professor Mandel one day explore further the contextual map he has drawn here and complete the Canadian Literary Criticism he has admirably begun.

W. H. NEW

VISION ENVELOPED IN NIGHT

GWENDOLYN MACEWEN, *King of Egypt, King of Dreams*. Macmillan. \$7.95.

IN 1893 Sir William Flinders Petrie discovered, by the Nile at Tel-El-Amarna, more than three hundred and fifty cuneiform letter-tablets, most of which were appeals for aid addressed to the youthful Pharaoh Akhenaton by the Eastern outposts of the Egyptian empire. No aid had been forthcoming, for Akhenaton, whose brief reign from 1380 to 1362 B.C. forms one of the most remarkable episodes in Ancient History, was a pacifist who devoted his life to the propagation of a new religion, Atonism, based upon the worship of a single God whose divinity lay in the vital and omnipresent energy of the sun. He pitted his historically precocious monotheism against the superstitious polytheism embedded in the minds of the Egyptian people, and against the power of the priests. Under the rule of a Pharaoh preoccupied with religious reform and reluctant to use military force,

the once great Egyptian empire collapsed; the appeals for aid went unanswered, the dependencies fell into other hands, and when Akhenaton died in 1362 B.C. at the age of thirty, not only had Atonism aroused the opposition of almost every level of Egyptian society, but that society itself was in chaos as a result of the loss of foreign tribute. The massive empire created by the military exploits of Akhenaton's grandfather Thutmose III and father Amenhotep II had shrunk to little more than a nation-state.

Gwendolyn MacEwen's novel *King of Egypt, King of Dreams* is a chronicle of Akhenaton's reign which draws upon the known facts of his life, particularly his battle to establish Aton as the only God of Egypt by erasing all trace of other Gods from the land (thus arousing the implacable hatred of the priests of the God Amon). But in dealing with this remote period the "facts" available to the historical novelist are meagre, and Miss MacEwen has had to make informed guesses about the many obscure aspects of Akhenaton's reign. How did the young Pharaoh die? Why did he banish his beloved Queen Nefertiti? What were his relations with his mother Tiye? What kind of man was Akhenaton?

For Akhenaton himself, rather than the empire he lost, is at the centre of the novel, and Miss MacEwen's provision of a character for him is its principal success: his extraordinary clairvoyance in matters which interest him, and dulness in affairs which bore him; his passionate intuition of the glorious nature of Aton, and his frustrated attempts to convey it intellectually; the strangeness of his horse-like dolichocephalic head and narrow-chested, thick-thighed body, which Miss MacEwen manages to convey as alter-

nately vibrantly beautiful and heavily repulsive, borrowing beauty from his verve and authority, or sinking into grossness as his hopes and confidence are assailed.

The book is in fact built on contrasts, of which the most obvious is that of Akhenaton's progress, as he "created a religion but lost an empire through neglect", but this is accompanied by others: the nourishing energy of the sun, and the bitter desert nights; the radiance of Nefertiti and the brooding destructive darkness of Akhenaton's mother Ti; the contrast between the fanatically religious Pharaoh and his hesitant sceptical uncle Ay; the glory of Aton, omnipresent, but to the populace insubstantial and remote. This contrasting darkness and light, and the ambiguous nature of Akhenaton's body, is brought out in the starkly brilliant opening pages, where the Pharaoh as a sickly child lies in darkness assaulted by a piercing shaft of light:

As a child in the palace of his father he spent a great deal of his time in a dark room, lying naked between thin sheets, and there was a narrow sliver of light from a niche in the wall which at certain times of the day drew a band of fire across his belly, dividing him in two. . . .

He used to actually *smell* the sun in that dark room; Ra in his absence was wholly present, and that painful sliver of light was a dividing knife of fire across his flesh (cutting him up, he claimed, for sacrifice).

But there is a further contrast which emerges as one reads through the whole novel: between the energy of the writing when the author's interest is completely engaged, and those slacker passages where the action seems "manufactured". My impression is that what fascinates Miss MacEwen about Akhenaton's spiritual vision is the way it saturates his life, and the way it relates to the polytheism of his

people (which is far from despicable) and the tired scepticism of Ay; and this she conveys to us with remarkable intensity. But there is a corresponding slightness in the evocation of the civilization in which Akhenaton found himself — one of the greatest civilizations the world has seen — and which he threw into confusion.

Akhenaton acts out his Reformation against a background of minor characters who are not sufficiently realized, or convincing, representatives of the civilization they are meant to embody: the questing sculptor, the languorous aesthete, the apologetic clerk, the resentful priest, the ineffectual Vizier. And this detracts perhaps from our sense of the magnitude of Akhenaton's failure, as well as of the courage of his enterprise.

This might explain why certain scenes lack the energy of the better parts of the book; why, for example, one is hardly affected when a sculptor hangs himself after the consummation of an adulterous affair with Nefertiti, whispering the Queen's name: "Nefer Nefruaton, I have attained the unattainable." It seems, despite its flamboyance, marginal to the author's main interests. Likewise, the scenes where Akhenaton's imperial and spiritual duties coincide are explored in a surprisingly uninteresting fashion. A messenger from beleaguered Palestine, begging for troops, simply stimulates Akhenaton to enquire "Have you ever seen the summer flowers nodding their heads in the warmth of the sun?"

It is when Miss MacEwen centres upon the vulnerable intensity of Akhenaton's quest that *King of Egypt, King of Dreams* impresses one as a genuinely striking achievement. In his hymn to Aton, which appears to have influenced the writer of

the Psalms, and which Miss MacEwen has translated beautifully within the novel, Akhenaton addresses his God ecstatically:

The wings of birds lift prayers to your spirit
And all things fly and walk when you shine!
Fish in the rivers leap towards your face,
The highways of the world are open; ships
sail free
And your rays illumine the very surface of
the sea.

By the end of the novel we come to register it as genuinely tragic that this tenderly glorious vision of God should be enveloped in night.

CHRISTOPHER XERXES RINGROSE

CAREFUL AND CARELESS

LAURENCE SOULE, *The Eye of the Cedar*. Klanak, \$2.00.

SUSAN MUSGRAVE, *Songs of the Sea-Witch*. Sono Nis, \$5.00.

JOAN FINNIGAN, *It was warm and sunny when we set out*. Ryerson, \$3.95.

LAURENCE SOULE is a careful poet of careful verse. His book, *The Eye of the Cedar*, like his opening poem, is set in a moderate key and his scope in this volume is a modest one, 10 poems in all.

"A Moderate Man", sets the tone for the volume as a whole. People pass in the lees and gullies of the moderate man's life. He sees suffering, injustice, brutality, but the doorman lets him out. He either cannot act or feels paralyzed by the futility of action. The final poem, "The Chess Game", echoes the same theme; other minds move, but the "I" of the poem is a pawn in a chequered nation. In between we have "The Haida", perhaps the strongest and most arresting

poem in this volume where, "A culture of totem ghosts utters no sound". Here is a lyrical evocation of a lost culture, a poignant elegy that conveys a certain tautness of language and a muted intensity of feeling that I find lacking in Mr. Soule's other poems. If I have a complaint about Mr. Soule it is that in his unpretentiousness he succumbs to the anti-climactic where loneliness is fed with coffee bars. However, Mr. Soule avoids both sensationalism and sentimentality, and he has his moments of celebration where students and people stand singing in the streets of the world, and where dancing occasionally emancipates birth. Laurence Soule's verse, while free, is conscientiously structured. He employs a variety of stanza patterns; his language, like his tone, is quiet, on occasion vivid;

the orange waves of sound
scramble the waterfall of seconds.

In his final poem the chess metaphor is effective. Evidently, Mr. Soule is meditative and detached by temperament and thus, while he emerges as thoughtful and concerned, his poems suffer from a lack of immediacy and urgency. They were no doubt felt, but not so much upon the pulse as in the retrospective mind.

If Mr. Soule is detached, Susan Musgrave is vibrantly self-engrossed. She is not careful; she is often careless, but spontaneously, valiantly, vividly so. Miss Musgrave is a young poet and this is a young woman's book, but there is no mistaking the authentic voice of an emerging poet. Precision of observation, concreteness of language, vitality of imagery, imaginative power, all these Susan Musgrave abundantly displays.

My ribs are torn
like old whores' petticoats.

she writes in "Exposure"; and in "Jan. 6th":

The long days mate with
the nude on the calendar.
I have packed time like a suitcase
and now there is nothing left to do
but organize my boredom.

Miss Musgrave's is a narrow canvas, but while highly personal it is no mere embroidery frame. She has the ability to evoke landscapes, but she is no nature pantheist. Her landscapes become a metaphor for a personal vision which mirrors an emotional, moral and intellectual state.

Not all Miss Musgrave's poems are equally successful. Parts of the title poem, "Songs of a Sea-Witch" are uneven. She might have been more selective; the confessional tone becomes occasionally repetitive; "North Sea Poem" repeats much of what "Mackenzie River North" says. However, Miss Musgrave's is a young talent and I am inclined in her case to agree with Blake that this road of excess may yet lead to the palace of wisdom.

It Was Warm and Sunny When We Set Out is a 96-page book of long, meditative poems interspersed with shorter lyrics. Miss Finnigan has managed to cover love, death, nature, childhood, despair and affirmation. One is aware, while reading these verses, that here is a woman of considerable sensitivity of feeling, with warmth, intelligence and humanity of character, but critical opinion to the contrary, I do not find in Joan Finnigan a compelling poet. These poems strike me as the sensitive journalism of the commonplace. Undoubtedly, they are meant to illuminate the pedestrian, show us the poetry inherent in the ordinary as well as the extraordinary moments. Too often, however, they fail to move beyond

recorded observations into any significant statement. Poems that begin to grow towards something more than mere observation collapse into a kind of poetic truism;

a child with a fluttering butterfly
caught between his hands
making a decision for love.

I may well be in error, and it may be upon me proved, but while I find abundant evidence of all the right emotions, emotions of themselves do not make poetry, nor do detailed acute observations, nor even painful or exuberant retrospections.

Miss Finnigan employs phrases like, "the cultivated pastures of consciousness", which are empty abstractions that vitiate the vital life of poetry. The danger inherent in Miss Finnigan's style is that when it does not work it is perilously, if not actually, sentimental and clichéd:

Oh, my spun silken children:
I wish you better luck
than we both had
at the country fair.

A kindly human sentiment simply and directly expressed, this most certainly is, but an imaginative use of language, or significant statement, it is not.

MARYA FIAMENGO

UNCERTAIN EXPERIENCE

DAVID KNIGHT, *Farquharson's Physique*. Musson Book Co. \$8.50.

DAVID KNIGHT's first novel, *Farquharson's Physique: and What It Did to His Mind*, concerns Henry Farquharson's passage

from innocence to experience — from “what one *might* do” to “what one *did* do.” Farq (as he’s known), a happy, unthinking, thirty-seven year old Canadian English professor, together with his wife Joan and his son Jamie, moves to Ibadan University in Nigeria in September 1965 to take up a one year appointment. Within a week of their arrival, the Farquharsons establish as “shallow and complete” a way of life as they’ve had in Canada.

Farq is sexually incompatible with his wife because of his size — a fact in which he takes some pride (“after all he *was* big”). For some reason (never really made clear) Farq had never been as aware as he is in Africa of “the plain success of his own body.” At tennis, he admires the fact that his arm has a mind of its own. When two men break into his home, his arm seizes a frying pan and clubs them to death in a scene as brutal as Raskolnikov’s killing of the old woman. The killing changes Farquharson’s life. After it, for the first time, he sees “fractions of lives, opening, like doors blocked, just so far.” He begins an affair with a former student, Gail Johnston; in his lovemaking with her (unlike that with Joan) his whole body has a mind of its own.

His physical experiences affect him intellectually and emotionally and ultimately lead to his death. He tells his Shakespeare students, “The fuss has been about tragic flaw. Flaws one can run into everywhere: . . . Life has them everywhere. But where does life have the logic?” He begins to see the tragedies he teaches in political terms, with Cordelia, for example, an Ibo. He experiences a fear of death for the first time and he develops a “hunger in his balls” that has nothing to do with sex. At one point, he

wills his feet to stop but they take him through a hostile crowd to save the life of a man he dislikes. By the end of the novel, Farq has become a “whole self”, a “wretchedly unhappy person” eager to go home, aware of how little he knows about Nigeria (or anything else). Before he can leave, however, he dies, trying to save an Ibo.

Although politics plays an important part in his metamorphosis, Farq, and we, are never certain what is going on. There are only fragments. He rents a house in which a political opponent of Nigeria’s premier lived; the car he drives was used by the premier to call on his mistresses. He learns that there are changing alliances, that at least four political parties are vying for power, that census figures have probably been rigged. There is trouble in Dahomey and in Uganda; four cabinet ministers are hanged in the Congo; Nigeria abolishes political parties; the killing of Ibos begins. All Farq comes to know is that somehow he *is* political.

Knight’s greatest strength is his ability to capture the absurdly comic — a priest who saves the balls from roll-on deodorant bottles; Farq’s decision not to put the corpses of the men he’s killed on his chairman’s lawn because, after all, “he was a professor as well as a killer”; his masturbating before he goes off to teach Spenser’s *Epithalamion*; his bursting in on Dr. Bill Garnett (in bed with Gail Johnston) to show him Joan’s pink urine; Garnett’s giving up sex for a time because a sore toe won’t permit the male superior position and he will use no other.

The portrait of life at Ibadan University reveals that only the geography changes; the academic mindscape everywhere has become the same. Nonetheless,

there's a delightful freshness about Knight's descriptions of marking "spontaneously identical" essays; of administrators who can only talk at cross purposes; of the student who asks, "If the professor please, will we be questioned upon this on the examination?"; of the questions that no one would ever ask (or answer) outside an examination room.

When *Farquharson's Physique: And What It Did to His Mind* is good, it's very good. This is true all the time that Knight is showing us (as the novel says) "two civilizations bashed against each other" with both looking "pretentious, ridiculous and delightful". During this time, one feels that perhaps he's reading a comic counterpart to Dave Godfrey's *The New Ancestors*.

Unfortunately, as innocence becomes experience, Knight's control of *Farquharson's Physique* becomes less certain; instead of being a controlled descent into blackness, the second half of the novel degenerates into a kind of tediousness. Even the comic touches seem forced and out of place. The last line of the novel doesn't work and, other than superficially, one realizes, neither does the title; both these things merely reinforce the feeling that what began so well has ended disappointingly.

MORRIS WOLFE

KEEP THE MIRACLE SECULAR!

MIRIAM WADDINGTON, *A. M. Klein*. Toronto: Copp Clark. \$2.15.

THE SMALL PAMPHLETS in the critical series put out by McClelland & Stewart

and by Forum House have justified themselves repeatedly as suggestive introductions to the younger poets. The larger *Studies in Canadian Literature* have been able to assimilate earlier criticism, to develop in new directions and to synthesize to an impressive degree. Still, they are not quite full-length books, and one notices in them a tendency to short-change some topics in order to develop a pet theory or exploit original materials.

This is the case with Miriam Waddington's *A. M. Klein*. Tom Marshall noted in his *Klein* anthology that Mrs. Waddington was attempting to revive interest in Klein's social verse of the 'thirties, and her book illustrates the point. She makes her second chapter, "The Radical Poems", the organizing centre in order to set up the thesis that Gentile critics, carelessly associating a Jew with Orthodoxy, ignore the secular tradition.

The trick is to show that the language is more secular than religious, and this is not easy. Following a respectable line of critics from W. E. Collin on, Mrs. Waddington's first chapter emphasizes the richness of Klein's multilingual vocabulary and syntax, the double-barrelled effect of his puns and Joycean coinings. A close look at his word hoard is something every poet deserves, and Mrs. Waddington is well qualified to make the appraisal and to fashion her book around it. She reverts to Klein's language in her last chapter, and by then is in a position both to justify his early archaisms and to advance the view that language, poetry, is the "miracle" the poems and *The Second Scroll* all move towards.

That it should be a secular miracle is the thesis foreshadowed in the second chapter. Challenging Sutherland, Dudek,

Pacey, Matthews, Mrs. Waddington not only approves "Barricade Smith", "Velvet Kleinburger", "Abraham Segal" and the other social sequences of the Thirties as valid for their time but also defends them as poems. She traces the consistency of Klein's views from youthful Utopianism to the social complexities of *The Rocking Chair* and acknowledges that her own social bias is close to Klein's own communal and moral interest. The day of social justice Klein dreamed of never arrived but its hope "shines through the darkness of *Poems*, shows a new intellectual control in *The Hitleriad*, and subtly illuminates *The Rocking Chair*." The later illness is not probed, but perhaps there could be only one end for a poet committed both to social justice and to realism.

Klein's place in Canadian literature, long accepted as definitive, is maintained here, drawing support not only from the obviously Canadian poems but from "Portrait of the Poet" seen as "more than any other single poem, Klein's final statement of his faith" as well as "the most profound statement that has yet been made about the position of the artist in Canadian society. If we interpret the figure of the artist as someone who represents, not just a writer, but everything that strives for consciousness and self-realization in the individual, then Klein's poem becomes the autobiography of all Canadians."

Having made of "Portrait" the poet's credo, a faith in the miracle of creation through language, Mrs. Waddington concludes with her "Signs on a White Field" from *Canadian Literature* 25. I am tempted to say that this is regrettable, not because it isn't a good article, but because her approach is on the whole nega-

tive — "So, on all three counts, diction, theme, and structure, I found *The Second Scroll* a strange, unpleasing work" — and therefore her book ends anticlimactically. Having proceeded chronologically, she must come to *The Second Scroll* last, but her argument was largely concluded with *The Rocking Chair*.

I say "largely" because it is true that the *Second Scroll* essay does end with the now broadly interpreted word "miracle", and this is altogether appropriate. But the critical mind which treats Klein's language so authoritatively falters with the formal problems presented by *The Second Scroll*. Accepting Klein's use of the word "novel" as specific, Mrs. Waddington shows that this is not defensible as a novel. Curiously, neither she nor any other critic, even after acknowledging Klein's debt to Joyce's *Ulysses*, has done formal justice to *The Second Scroll*. Northrop Frye once observed that *Ulysses* is composed of four distinct forms and the same observation might apply to *The Second Scroll* if one were to look closely at the literary conventions embodied and parodied in it. Then, following Frye, one would recall that out of the compound of four forms might emerge a fifth encyclopedic form which would be that of sacred writ, the new "Scroll". Mrs. Waddington objects to the glosses which of course are inappropriate to a novel but are inseparable from sacred writings as the Commentaries. She recognizes that the first chapter is autobiographical, but does not see this as the confessional quarter of the compound book, nor does she see that the form which dominates is the anatomy or encyclopedic satire. Interpolated verse and drama are characteristics of the anatomy, as are the exuberant and hyperbolic experimentation with language and, final-

ly, as the term itself suggests, the fascination with the body. *The Second Scroll* incorporates not only the Roman womb, including the umbilical entrance to the Sistine Chapel, but the anatomical tour de force of the Casablanca episode, from the "teated domes and phalloi of minarets" to the intestinal streets and cloacal mellah. This could have been related to Spenser (The House of Alma) and the archaisms, which Mrs. Waddington handles so well, and so might have brought her study full circle. But no, because she rejects the term and the concept, "messianic", Melech's physical burial and resurrection, ultimate anointing and ascension all are overlooked in her concern to keep the miracle secular. She warns, wisely, against the use of terms which pre-direct the critical gaze; avoiding them, she leaves her study less complete than it might have been.

D. G. SPETTIGUE

THE MOBILITY OF ENGLISH

Four Hemispheres, an anthology of English short stories from around the world, edited by W. H. New, Copp Clark. \$4.95.

THIS ANTHOLOGY will be a most useful textbook for those involved in presenting courses in "Commonwealth Literature" or "World Literature in English". It brings together short stories by over thirty authors from such diverse countries as Australia, South Africa, Canada, New Zealand, the West Indies, Malaysia, India, Kenya, Nigeria, and Ceylon. To read the biographical notes on these authors is to realize how little nationality counts

in the contemporary world, how human mobility has increased. David Martin, for example, was born in Budapest, educated in Germany, has lived in Holland and India, fought in Spain, and now lives in Melbourne; Ruth Prawer Jhabvala was born in Germany of Polish parents, moved to the United Kingdom at the age of twelve, married an Indian architect and now lives in Delhi; Doris Lessing was born in Persia, spent her childhood in Rhodesia, but has lived in England since 1949. What do these people have in common? The English language and their humanity: to fit any of them into a national pigeon-hole would be absurd.

Clearly we do have, in this age of rapid transit, a new phenomenon, a literature in English but not of England, whatever title may eventually be attached to it. But how to approach it? Does one read it for its sociological interest, for what it tells us of the societies from which it springs, for its aesthetic values, as proof of the variety of which a literary form such as the short story is capable, or for its human interest, as proof of the differences but basic similarities between the responses of people to the crises of human life? Dr. New has clearly plumped for the last approach, for he has arranged his stories thematically, with a group on "Growing Up", another on "Love", a third on "Living" and a fourth on "Dying". I am not particularly fond of this arrangement myself, since I do not like to read a series of stories on the same general theme, but I confess I cannot suggest a more desirable alternative.

As might be expected, the stories in the anthology are uneven in quality, but the general level is high and the Canadian entries — by Sinclair Ross, Alice Munro,

Morley Callaghan, Mavis Gallant, Margaret Laurence, and Dave Godfrey — stand up very well to the international competition.

DESMOND PACEY

HOPE FOR A HAPPY ENDING

CAMERON LANGFORD, *The Winter of the Fisher*.
MacMillan, \$6.95.

ANIMAL STORIES share something in common with western novels and science fiction. Except for a limited number of staunch devotees, no one pays them much attention. Which is unfortunate, for in the right hands an animal story can move us to laughter, pity, tears, and an unsentimental recognition of our proper place in the world. How many man-centred novels can claim to do as much?

Charles G. D. Roberts once described the great animal story as a "psychological romance constructed on a framework of natural science". The genre, evolving through the ages from simple fable, "bring 'em back alive" narrative, and the anthropomorphism of such works as *Black Beauty* or even *The Jungle Book*, has reached new heights. The modern animal story seeks to capture the personalities and fathom the reasoning processes of its virtually unknown subjects. It is a voyage of exploration, painstakingly researched and ecologically sound. *The Winter of the Fisher* is a splendid example.

The fisher is a northern forest animal, a member of the weasel family ranging between the marten and the river otter in size, with a magnificent pelt similar to

that of the Russian sable. Chiefly nocturnal, it is an intelligent and efficient predator, able to charge full tilt and head first down a tree after its prey. The book describes the life of one such animal between its birth in spring and mating the following spring.

It is quite a year. As well as facing natural hazards such as fire and blizzard, the fisher carries on continual warfare with an ingenious, determined fur trapper. What might have been an unequal contest becomes a well-matched battle of wits when an old Indian hermit commits himself to the fisher's side. The helpless reader finds himself hurtling through the book in an agony of suspense, hoping against hope for a happy ending.

Beautifully paced, the story skates safely over the pitfalls of melodrama with the help of "round" characters, a wealth of detailed information, and a prose tinted the discreetest of mauves. The trapper, whom we long to hate, is honest and intelligent, and not without a sense of humour. The old Indian just squeaks past a state of sainthood by becoming tipsy on Christmas Eve (with unfortunate consequences).

In the contrast between the two men we are presented with two choices for man in his relationship with animals. Each we can respect, but there is no doubting which the author prefers. Cameron Langford, who died in 1970 at the untimely age of 42, was a spokesman for a silent minority which is dwindling apace. We need more stories of the quality of *The Winter of the Fisher*; not just to increase our respect for other species, but to show us how best to conduct ourselves as men.

PAT BARCLAY

TWEEDLEDUM AND TWEEDLEDEE

SIR,

In your "Swarming of Poets" (*Canadian Literature* 50), as on other occasions, you take a positive delight in badmouthing workshops for writers on Canadian campuses. I have not been able to decide what kind of threat these gatherings are to you, but threats they must be because you waste some of your best prose vilifying them, and the emotion you feel against them throws those remarks into curiously bold relief when comparing them to your usual even reportage. It seems so *fashionable* — and also too easy — unlike the list you selected to review. It must make even the converted among your subscribers wonder at such cheap shots from a man who otherwise seems objective enough.

In the face of this it is therefore interesting to note that of the list of poets you present as comers, a half dozen are people who have attended workshops over a period of years. Susan Musgrave with Robin Skelton in Victoria. Tom Wayman is his own man to be sure, but he attended workshops at UBC where he got his B.A. and graduated from the program Jim Hall used to run in California where he got his M.A. Dirk Wynand holds an M.A. from UBC's Writing Department. Andreas Schroeder has been with the department for five years and will take his M.A. at the end of this university year. Jan Skapski spent four years with us and also has our M.A. And of course, there is Bowering who was Birney's student. I may have missed some others who were on your list. I don't know who attended whose workshops in other parts of Canada.

You quote Skapski; so will I: "The analysts gather: hindsight/always upwind of events." One event that you seem to want to remain resolutely upwind of is the advent of work-

shops. They are here and it must be because they are in demand. They are part of the plethora which you say has overwhelmed your editorial desk. They are places to try out, and coupled with what you call "easy publication", the Canada Council, the CBC, dozens of little mags and myriad admirable individuals, they are helping a generation come to consciousness. Plethora, it seems to me, is part of birth. If some of its methods used to assist that birth strike some people as illegal use of high forceps, then I suppose the only answer is that parturition now looks as if it will be successful. I should perhaps remind you that in the black ghettos of the USA one of the things they do to find their voices is to establish writer's workshops. I can't help but think that at this time in Canada's history the importance of finding our own voices is no less urgent. The writing workshop is one tool. On the record it seems now *not* to be what the uncreative writers in Ottawa might call a "negative asset."

Surely the B.A. and the M.A. are of little consequence: dues paid by both the department and its students to a system in flux. Degrees never are important to the real contributors to any field. They are simply one way of buying time, of getting rid of juvenilia, of finding out more quickly (now when time has become a riptide) what's been done so one isn't faced with rediscovering the whole world over again, and of trying out many directions under, it is hoped, the steady gaze of eyes no less benevolent than yours. Of the two or three dozen M.A.s we've graduated, not more than six or eight are doing some kind of teaching. The rest are writing somewhere, somehow, and publishing in little mags and small presses. You are right in pointing out that at least some of the life-style of the Thirties is with us again. Certainly, the future looks as bleak, even bleaker. In times like these various personal and group searches intensify. The study groups of the Thirties (held under the aegis of that old guru Marx) have given way to many kinds of groups now, and among them are workshops at universities. Their students are committed early to their craft; not to continue on is a cop-out to many of them, a kind of death to the best of them. If the threat that you feel is that writers will be recognized by transcript, then I think you should rest assured that standing erect and on one's own behalf is still as vital to the art of writing as it is to that other great creative urge.

ROBERT HARLOW

THE EDITOR REPLIES:

What Mr. Harlow carefully omits from his choleric letter is that I have made the columns of Canadian Literature freely available to him and other partisans of creative writing schools; interested readers will find in Canadian Literature 27 a long and defensive article on the subject in which I gave him a dozen pages to put his point of view. But the fact that I am tolerant of the opinions of those with whom I disagree does not mean that I am ready to stifle my own opinions, though this appears to be precisely what Mr. Harlow, in the manner of all True Believers, would have me do.

I admit, indeed, to having spoken flippantly on a subject regarding which I have deep and reasoned opinions, but one cannot always preserve a grave seriousness towards the actions and arguments of those one disagrees with, and I submit that making fun of them is as legitimate a form of dialogue as any other, though I suggest that Mr. Harlow is letting his rage run away with him when he describes my mildly satiric remarks as "badmouthing" and "vilifying". However, since Mr. Harlow seems to prefer the scalpel to the pinprick — or the sword to the banderilla if one dare use the language of the corrida of which his taurian rushes remind one — he shall not be denied. I propose in the near future to present a close and careful examination of the writing school considered as a social curiosity, which

it is, rather than as a vehicle of creativity, which I believe it is not.

However, before leaving the present skirmish ground, I would comment on two of Mr. Harlow's points. First, I omitted to say that some of the young writers I praised (I did not — as Mr. Harlow asserts — praise Susan Musgrave) had attended workshops, for the simple reason that my article was not about creative writing courses, which I mentioned merely in the aside to which Mr. Harlow so humourlessly objects. Of course, good writers can overcome and utilize any experience, including that of a creative writing school, but one does not have to list all the hurdles they have leapt to explain or appreciate their achievements.

Finally, I can only be amused when Mr. Harlow suggests that writing workshops are some "kind of threat" to me; surely it is he who writes in the tone of a threatened man. I can see no way whatever in which creative writing schools or their alumni can possibly threaten me as a writer; I do not think they even threaten writing, for they cannot harm the true artist.

But pretensions and presumptions are fair game for the critic, and I suggest there is enough of both in the activities and denizens of creative writing schools to provide the satirist with material for a whole new Dunciad.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

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