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Articles

BY CATHERINE SHELDRIK ROSS, ROBERT H. MACDONALD,
GEORGE RHYNS GARNETT, DENNIS DUFFY, LAURENCE R. RICOU

Poems

BY ERNEST HEKKANEN, ANNE SZUMIGALSKI, CYRIL DABYDEEN,
ALEXANDRE L. AMPRIMOZ, RON MILES, DOUGLAS LE PAN

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BY DAVID L. JEFFREY, GEORGE WOODCOCK, HENRY KREISEL, MAX
DORSINVILLE, T. D. MACLULICH, GEORGE L. PARKER, GARY A. BOIRE,
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR:
H. J. Rosengarten

BUSINESS MANAGER:
Shurli T. Channe

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT:
Henry Winterton

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WILDERNESS AND OTHER HIDDEN FACES

SOME WEEKS AGO, looking through a stack of books that came to *Canadian Literature* for review, I chanced upon one that from a quick glance at its cover — fairytale prince and conventional green frog — I took to be a children's tale. But an equally quick glance inside caught this passage:

Then you place your left hand on their right knee, and ask them "What is your experience of the *opposite* of that?" They will access whatever is the opposite, for them. As the changes occur, again you increase the pressure as you see the changes until they plateau, and then lift your hand off.

Then you have two anchors. What we want you to do is use one. . . . It works even better if you distract your partner's consciousness with something neutral. . . .

Seeking clarification, I looked at the cover again: *Frogs Into Princes* (Hurtig). But then the tell-tale subtitle: *Neuro Linguistic Programming* — and I put the book down, reflecting petulantly on the swift corruption that computer science has spread through the language, and on the disparity between a cover and the book that is hidden inside.

And yet something still nagged. Was there a connection after all between the world of fairytale and the world of programmed response: response even of the sorts being condemned (yet in a different way also cultivated) by this book, a tape from a psychotherapy workshop? How does the language we learn dictate the faces we put on? How do we transform words into talismans and invest them with magic? Why do we attribute a power to words, when the power to associate and understand lies within ourselves? Words generate responses, we say — such as my own animosity toward the programmer's verb *to access* — but clearly words do not generate out of themselves: *we* are the ones whose minds generate meaning. The responses are associational. And the attribution of a magical power to language declares as much as anything the human desire to give a name and an image to the equally human capacity to imagine the unknown and to make connections between the hidden and the seen.

The trouble with thinking about the nature of association, however, is that all things begin to associate. Another review book, for example, offered scarcely a challenge in this regard: Anthony Hopkins' *Songs from the Front and Rear* (Hurtig) came complete with a (clear) plastic wrapper and the publisher's bold disclaimer NOT MEANT FOR CHILDREN. The seal, of course, has the effect of associationally raising an item's presumed quality ("Everything in a glass case is valuable," thinks one of Janet Frame's characters, restrictively), and the disclaimer that of heightening curiosity. This time, at least, the subject is obvious: Hopkins' book contains 192 pages of unexpurgated Canadian servicemen's songs from World War II. Depending on the "programme" one brings to such words as they use, these songs are funny, bawdy, coarse, offensive, degrading, or all of the above; certainly they offer different readers a slice of history, a nostalgic journey, a short course in musical exaggeration. And it would be easy to make either too much or too little of them. Too much, if one ignores their surface existence: they are soldiers' songs, mostly bawdy, which were sung as rituals, elaborate jokes, and for entertainment. But too little, if one ignores altogether the element of ritual they enact, the fact that bawdiness was often a group's only acceptable outlet for the expression of longing and need, and that bravado and bravura often hide (transparently here) many surprising moments of tenderness and quiet emotion.

Several books of photographs offer yet another glimpse of the character hidden behind public images. Two in a handsome regional series from Oxford — called *British Columbia* and *Montreal and Its Countryside* — offer an interesting contrast with each other. Robert Harlow's text about B.C. stresses the constancy of wilderness, which he finds both in the place and in the (rare) people Paul von Baich has photographed against a wilderness setting; Luc d'Iberville-Moreau stresses the village roots of the Montreal that Michel Drummond evokes visually. But the images that recur in each book cumulatively suggest more than such direct themes; they constitute ways of perceiving the world outside, which in turn articulate different senses of communal attitude and communal image. Von Baich's images are all natural masks: fog rising against an "impenetrable" forest, fog in a city park, high cloud, low cloud, snowbank, sunset squall, and steam. Drummond's enact an iconography of flesh and stone: children on streets; women in churches, in windows, on posters; men over coffee cups, in factories, on bicycles, selling vegetables, working the land; and whenever no people appear to be present, one finds in these Montreal photographs a statue of the virgin, reminding the onlooker of the human and daily dimensions of moral aspiration. In either case, surfaces are illusory. One book asserts, perhaps, the godliness of aspiration in human beings, the other the humanity of God. One suggests that its idiom is elliptical, the other that the communal language is symbolic. (Consider Jack Hodgins' comment: "if symbols don't work, . . . [t]hen eternity can only be expressed by implication. . . ." Both books make meaning out of location.

By contrast, a work like Anthony Hocking's *New Brunswick* (McGraw-Hill Ryerson) exists for a different purpose. It is an elementary illustrated text; its meaning — like an encyclopedia entry's — lies on the surface; its value consists in its accuracy. Providing little sense of the author or the psychology of the place, however, it also exists for the moment only, and before long its pictures will seem curiously dated. But not yet so dated that in a different context they will seem gloriously evocative of their time. Consider works like Graham Metson's *The Halifax Explosion* (McGraw-Hill Ryerson) or Edward Cavell's *Journeys to the Far West* (Lorimer). Cavell's collection of photographs from three decades (1860's-1880's), happily dovetailed with excerpts from travellers' writings, displays the art of photography at a time when it was grappling with moments of movement. Repeatedly we see images — of roads, Indians, troops, forces, masks — and repeatedly we catch glimpses of human eyes peering out of the masks, of faces that turn when the camera shutter opens: declaring the vitality of the subject, and at the same time blurring our perception of external details. The book's closing image of grave totems, open-eyed and open-mouthed, becomes an enormously evocative symbol, then. The masks live; they see and speak. But of what reality? And to what end?

Metson's Halifax miscellany also gathers photos, journals (the complete text of Archibald MacMechan's official report, "The Halifax Disaster," among them), and public government data, but here, though the photographs document tangible, painful episodes of human experience, the fascination is as much with the almost oral history — the nearness to sources, to voices — as with the frozen images. As in Bruce West's revised *Toronto* (Doubleday), a popular history devoted to showing how the city grew into "one of the most exciting . . . of the continent while living down various rather embarrassing circumstances concerning its birth and rise to great stature," the merit lies in its evocation of persons. In *Toronto*, much direct quotation from newspapers and other documents gives life once again to the city's actual inhabitants: the Simcoes, the runaway slaves, the people in local theatricals, the Americans, the rebels, the famous visitors on lecture circuits, and the not-so-famous who faced the cholera epidemics and carved the laconic grave-stones. Curiously, the closer West gets to the present — to the merchandisers, the mayors, and the freeway planners — the more bureaucracy overtakes person. Quotations from life give way to assertions about stature. Frogs into princes. But we never learn how the princes really live.

When Tony Cashman (*A Picture History of Alberta*, Hurtig) shows us yet another picture of a poster, we get a parallel insight into the growth of a culture; it says: "YOUR INCOME would be MIGHTY SMALL if everybody sent away MONEY that could be SPENT HERE. Buy goods MADE IN EDMONTON." Economics aside, we perhaps don't really understand this declaration until we read another of the books that are beginning to unroll from the presses to celebrate Alberta's (Saskat-

chewan's is quieter, so far) 75th anniversary: Tom Radford's splendid anthology of Rudy Wiebe's stories and Harry Savage's blue-filtered photographs, *Alberta A Celebration* (Hurtig). However mercantile the poster is, its character derives from its voice, its laconic passion for place. And this is precisely what Wiebe, at his anecdotal best here, tries to evoke: the "innumerable stories" that happen every day; stories of the land, from which the people derive their gritty strength; "liar-talk," "chinook stories," "bear stories," that mask the strangeness of the imagination with the colloquiality of the tale-telling voice; "quality stories," as one character puts it, "when there's nothing but the usual scenery sliding past" (compare *that* with Harlow's quest for the spirit of wilderness); stories that connect human lives with pleasure and the past ("to enjoy life is no crime") as well as with change and emptiness — because "there's still the land." And what the land represents is a certain constancy of human existence, human story.

"How to tell the Story" is the repeated subject in Dick Harrison's lively and interesting set of conference proceedings, *Crossing Frontiers* (University of Alberta), with contributions from Kroetsch, Mandel, and several others — the *process* of story-telling differing, several writers say, on opposite sides of the U.S./Canadian border. Harrison himself, in another set of proceedings — Merrill Lewis and L. L. Lee's *The Westering Experience in American Literature* (Western Washington Univ.) — differentiates the American literary pattern, of seeking through Western myths to find historical fact, from the Canadian, of going back for the myth in order to find the present. (In one of the best essays in the Lewis and Lee volume, incidentally, Kenneth Innis attributes to Pratt what American literature attributes to Parkman, the creative discovery of Brébeuf and the "heroic origins of the country" — Pratt, "by a radical act of imagination, reconciling the Jesuit's vision 'for all of Canada.'") The contrast between the *process* of telling a people's story and the *theme* of the stories the people tell could not be more clearly revealed than by comparing the Harrison volume with Richard Chadbourne and Hallvard Dahlie's *The New Land* (Wilfrid Laurier University). The latter book contains the papers from yet another conference; these are full of information, but expositions rather than enactments of narrative gesture. Still, it is artificial utterly to separate these two critical stances. We cannot perceive or articulate a subject except by some sort of process. And the process connects us with a tradition, possibly our own. As Henry Kreisel observes, in an autobiographical essay in the *Annals* of the 2nd Montreal Symposium of the German-Canadian Studies Association, taking on a language means taking on a world; struggling with a language is part of the individual process of coming to terms with the world; failing with a language is less important than trying it out; and for himself, "what mattered ultimately was the attempt, now and again, to break the silence."

Such "silence," symbolic and imaginative as much as substantive and rational, impedes the mind's eye as much as the ear. Unless the mind of the maker, the

dancer, the watcher, animates them, masks do not speak or see. Animated, they enact somehow some aspect of the hidden creator. Which brings me to two further books: *The Art of Norval Morriseau* (Methuen), with an uneven text by Lister Sinclair and Jack Pollock, and *Coast of Many Faces* (Douglas & McIntyre), photographs by Ulli Stelzer with a lucid text by Catherine Kerr. *Morriseau* transcends its text and becomes Norval Morriseau's own book simply by the boldness of his acrylic designs and the vividness of the colour reproductions of them. They are billed as shamanistic visions, but in this context the epithet strikes me as romantic faddishness. It is possible neither to praise nor to dismiss the paintings simply because they are Indian. They are not traditional, though they show a clear appreciation of traditional Indian linear design. They are not imbued somehow by Natural Sophistication with an inexplicable grace. They are not religious artifacts. They do, however, show an acute sense of self-awareness; repeated self-portraiture, side-by-side with the designs from nature, constitutes a means of expressing a *sense* of self; inextricable here from the acknowledgment of an Indian heritage is an acknowledgment of a Christian education and a phallic consciousness. The resulting designs as much question as celebrate individuality in the context of the organized culture they emerge from, and the boldness of execution is perhaps a more subtle gesture than hard-edged acrylic at first suggests.

Catherine Kerr happily draws her text for *Coast of Many Faces* from the words of the inhabitants of the fifty small West Coast communities she and Ulli Stelzer visited and recorded here — communities like Kincolith, Klemtu, Bella Bella, Kyuquot, Sointula, and Telegraph Cove. The inhabitants themselves are carvers, fallers, camp cooks, sawyers, skippers, churchmen, oolichan fishermen, paper mill workers, and pinball players; Stelzer's magnificent photographs catch their faces and the sheer pace of their lives, and Kerr has listened creatively for the phrases to match them. "This is a twenty-four hour town," says one person; "I get along good here." Another: "My mom used to get me up at dawn to see our people's fish boats going out. Looked like a city going out, with all the lights." And yet another: "What have we been doing for the last hundred years? We have been drifting away from our culture, our beautiful culture. Many times I have gone to Skedans and gone back in the hills and looked down on the village and considered what happened there hundreds of years ago. Was I born a hundred years too late? Now we see the mixing of two cultures. We Haidas have adapted both, and we live very comfortably here in the village of Skidegate." We are beyond oral history with words like these, and listening to voices with a story-teller's ear. We also find ourselves piercing the public images of a self-conscious world because the photographer's art has allowed us to see through them to the wilderness and other hidden faces.

W.H.N.

NANCY DREW AS SHAMAN

Atwood's Surfacing

Catherine Sheldrick Ross

It has always been the prime function of mythology and rite to supply the symbols that carry the human spirit forward, in counteraction to those other constant human fantasies that tend to tie it back. In fact, it may well be that the very high incidence of neuroticism among ourselves follows from the decline among us of such effective spiritual aid. . . . Apparently, there is something in these initiatory images so necessary to the psyche that if they are not supplied from without, through myth and ritual, they will have to be announced again, through dream, from within — lest our energies should remain locked in a banal, long-outmoded toy-room, at the bottom of the sea. — Joseph Campbell, *Hero With a Thousand Faces*

THE SPEAKER IN “Procedures for Underground (Northwest Coast)” advises that from the spirit in the underland “you can learn / wisdom and great power, / if you can descend and return safely.” The narrator of *Surfacing* follows this ritual pattern of the descent into a watery underworld and the return, as she puts it, “with secrets.” The setting is a semi-submerged paradisaical island, and the characters — the brother, the father, the lost baby, the narrator herself — are literally or metaphorically underwater. Conventionally, of course, the fallen world is perceived as flooded, as it is in “After the Flood, we.” In *Surfacing*, the power dam has raised the lake level twenty feet and has literally drowned the island, the trees, and the Indian pictographs (“My country, sold or drowned, a reservoir”). The narrator, already underwater, dives down into even more water in a shamanistic ritual of descent and return. She is searching for what she calls “the power.” “For this gift, as for all gifts, [she] must suffer.”

To structure the narrator’s quest for “the power,” Atwood draws upon popular romance conventions as well as upon related patterns of ritual and myth. On one

My acknowledgements and thanks are due to the other members of the 138 teaching team at the University of Western Ontario — Don Hair, James Reaney, Richard Stingle — who have lectured on *Surfacing* and whose insights I have freely used in preparing this paper.

level, *Surfacing* is a detective story like Anna's *The Mystery at Sturbridge*, with the Nancy Drew narrator a parody of those intrepid "girls with jackknives and flashlights." *Surfacing* is also, as Atwood has pointed out in interviews, a ghost story. The activities of the narrator are exercises that heighten the chances of the ghost's revealing himself: the journey to a sacred place, isolation, waiting, and spiritual preparation. The ghosts, when they do appear, turn out to be fragments of the narrator's own psyche that she must reintegrate: her mother as a bird ("I squint up at [the jays], trying to see her, trying to see which one she is") and her father as wolf-shaman ("it gazes at me for a long time with its yellow eyes, wolf's eyes"). *True Romance* magazines, the fairy tale patterns of *Quebec Folk Tales*, and the grail legends are variously invoked to provide ironic parallels with the lives of the central characters. And finally the structure that subsumes all these others is the narrator's quest for a ritual that will give meaning to her life and restore her to health and power.

The opening sentence, "I can't believe I'm on this road again," announces the journey motif and the beginning of the quest. The narrator starts off in the diseased southern city and travels north to the wilderness and to health. Her condition at the beginning she describes using the following terms: "anaesthesia"; a "strangling feeling, paralysis of the throat"; "feeling no emotion"; "amnesia"; amputation ("A divorce is like an amputation"); "like being in a vase"; being "frozen"; a cancellation of the flesh ("A section of my own life, sliced off from me like a siamese twin"); and dismemberment ("we . . . don't know how to love, there is something essential missing in us . . . Madame at the store with one hand, atrophy of the heart"). The narrator regards herself as dismembered:

after that I'd allowed myself to be cut in two. Woman sawn apart in a wooden crate. . . . The other half, the one locked away, was the only one that could live; I was the wrong half, detached, terminal. I was nothing but a head, or no, something minor like a severed thumb; numb.

She is "cut in two," split between head and heart, logic and intuition, contemplation and action, between her father's legacy of reason and her mother's legacy of feeling.

The rhyme "severed thumb; numb" links the motifs of dismemberment and anaesthesia and seems to echo Marshall McLuhan's work on the numbing and dismembering effects of technology. McLuhan argues in *Understanding Media* that each of our technologies is an extension of ourselves, a self-amputation of some particular part of our own bodies. Like Narcissus, whose name means *narcosis* or numbness, we respond to the shock of self-amputation by a generalized numbness that prevents self-recognition.¹ In *War and Peace in the Global Village*, McLuhan quotes from *Finnegan's Wake*, "Who gave you that numb?"² and states, "We are all robots when uncritically involved with our technologies."³ Atwood is as concerned as McLuhan with the narcotic effects of our unconscious

involvement with technology. She aligns her narrator's personal crisis of identity with Canada's crisis, as this nation is deluged with technology and Americanization. *Surfacing* is, among other things, a political book by a writer who has read her George Grant ("When one contemplates the conquest of nature by technology one must remember that that conquest had to include our own bodies"),⁴ her Harold Innis ("We are indeed fighting for our lives. . . . We can only survive by taking persistent action at strategic points against American imperialism in all its attractive guises")⁵ and her Marshall McLuhan ("Submerging natives with floods of concepts for which nothing has prepared them is the normal action of all our technologies").⁶ In *Surfacing*, health and "the power" are sought as much for Canada as for the narrator.

The narrator's quest can convincingly represent the larger national quest because the narrator is the artist figure. The artist, says McLuhan, is the one who can wake us up from our somnambulism: "The serious artist is the only person able to encounter technology with impunity, just because he is an expert aware of the changes in sense perception."⁷ At the beginning, admittedly, the narrator is a false artist, an imitator of borrowed styles who has been dissuaded by her "fake husband" from being "a real artist" because "there have never been any important woman artists." She recognizes, however, that from the vantage point of the real Quebec wilderness the *Quebec Folk Tales* seem inauthentic, alien, and lifeless: "The stories aren't what I expected; they're like German fairy tales"; "this isn't a country of princesses, The Fountain of Youth and The Castle of Seven Splendours don't belong here"; "there should be a *loup-garou* story in *Quebec Folk Tales*." She cannot use red for her illustrations of these borrowed legends because "they have to keep the cost down." But in the indigenous (and for Canada, it is suggested, the authentic) art of Indian pictographs, "the predominant colour is red," which is a "sacred colour." By the end, when the narrator burns her drawings of princesses and the Golden Phoenix and rejects "civilized" food, she turns to "red foods, heart colour, they are the best kind, they are sacred."

THE STRUCTURE OF THE REJECTED European folk tales is similar to that of Indian mythology, just as Christian patterns of baptism, ritual descent and spiritual rebirth are similar to the initiation rituals of Indian shamanism that the narrator eventually follows — sickness, descent to the water underworld, resurrection. But the point is that the Christian rituals and the imported European fairy tales and romance patterns no longer work for the narrator. In the course of the narrator's quest, the novel examines three different rituals: Christianity, Americanization, and Indian shamanism. As in any fairy tale, the first two attempts are failures, the third one a success.

Chapter One ends with a reference to the "redemption" that is still to be achieved through suffering and purgation. But it will not be a Christian redemption, and the "wooden Christ, ribs sticking out" on the roadside crucifix is "the alien god, mysterious as ever." Even in the French-Canadian village, Christianity is losing its force: "the old priest must be gone. What I mean is dead." David, the most unregenerate and Americanized character in the book, sold Bibles door-to-door in the fifties to put himself through theological seminary. For the narrator and, it would seem, for modern society in general, Christianity has become a dead ritual: "no power remained in their bland oleotinted Jesus prints or in the statues of the other ones, rigid and stylized, holy triple name shrunken to swearwords." The narrator desperately needs a meaningful ritual of the sort that Christianity used to provide that would give significance to everyday life. The word that the narrator uses most consistently for this need is "the power." As a child, she was fascinated by Madame (at the store) with one hand — "a great mystery, almost as puzzling as Jesus" — and speculated that "her main source of power was that she had only one hand." She was also attracted to "Jack and the Beanstalk" and felt that if she could get some scarlet runner beans from her father's garden she "would be all-powerful," although she "had no idea what [she] would do with the power once [she] got it."

The figure that initially blocks the narrator's quest for "the power" is her father, whose god is logic and reason and who teaches his children arithmetic and geometry. The pattern involving death and resurrection is crucial in the novel, but her father has affirmed that "You died when your brain died"; "people are not onions, as he so reasonably pointed out, they stay under." Whereas her father explained everything, her mother explained nothing, "which only convinced me that she had the answers but wouldn't tell." The mother's last words to the narrator do constitute a cryptic answer of sorts. The narrator has said, "I'm not going to your funeral." A funeral should function as a rite of passage to allow the living to come to terms with death. But this ritual has degenerated into an empty social form:

"I never enjoyed them," she said to me, one word at a time. "You have to wear a hat. I don't like liquor." She must have been talking about Church or cocktail parties. She lifted her hand, slowly as if through water.

The mother then makes a further statement, which goes back beyond the Christian ceremony to an earlier vegetation ritual of winter death and spring rebirth: "I didn't get the bulbs in. Is there snow outside?" Significantly, the father does get his garden in before he dies, and when the narrator pulls up an onion, "sliding the loose brown outer skin off from the bulb," the onion appears "white and eye-like."

The father's preoccupation with reason is destructive, but his love for his garden

associates him with the life force. His "ritual" exchange of vegetables with Paul is an annual celebration of fertility. The parents' original creation of this garden in the bush was a labour of love, of civilizing in the best sense — "the product of skill and of compost spaded in, black muck dredged from swamps, horse dung ferried by boat from the winter logging camps."

A structure of contrasting images opposes the life force of the garden to the destructive power of modern technology. Composting and manure and outhouses eventually produce gardens but "what used to bother [the narrator] most about the cities [was] the white zero-mouthed toilets in their clean tiled cubicles. . . . they roared and made things vanish." The narrator has read her father's books — *Edible Plants and Shoots*, *The Common Mushroom*, *A Field Guide to Birds*, and *Animal Tracks and Signs* — and has a precise knowledge about plants and animals: "Wintergreen, wild mint, Indian cucumber; at one time I could list every plant here that could be used or eaten"; but as for the "Americans" with their powerboats, "raygun fishing rods . . . sniper eyes," "the only relation they could have to a thing . . . was to destroy it."

"Americanization" is the second ritual the novel explores. Its power is "the power to kill." The narrator associates Americanization with the power lines that run into underground concrete bunkers filled with rockets and with the power company that sixty years ago raised the lake level and might do so again: "Twenty feet up. . . . The garden would go but the cabin would survive; the hill would become an eroding sand island surrounded by dead trees." Americans do not necessarily live south of the forty-ninth parallel, of course. The Americans in the novel who kill the heron are from Sarnia and Toronto. Americans are those who believe they can solve the problems of existence by engineering and technology and have consequently offended against the deepest sources of life itself: they have "turned against the gods." The abortion is the narrator's personal experience with technology as applied to sex, and she associates it with other scientific ways to interrupt the natural cycle of life: the pill, artificial womb, stirrups, forceps.

So to what has Americanization brought the narrator? It has brought her to "an evil grail" — the complete destruction of all human life, as represented for her by the abortion:

It was there when I woke up, suspended in the air above me like a chalice, an evil grail and I thought, Whatever it is, part of myself or a separate creature, I killed it. It wasn't a child but it could have been one, I didn't allow it.

Here Atwood is alluding to the familiar pattern of the grail legends: a questing knight, in order to restore his own sick society, goes on a journey; after preliminary trials he comes at last to a chapel perilous where he confronts death; if he proves himself worthy, he is granted a vision of the Holy Grail which symbolizes power, energy, fertility, and electric community with others; his life-enhancing return to

society culminates in marriage and universal renewal. The narrator herself is just such a questing figure, and her journey, at first physical but soon psychological, brings her at last to an underwater version of the chapel perilous.

Her dive into the watery world below the surface is the key event in the book. She is descending into her subconscious, into her own past, and into the unredeemed world. The horror that she confronts there is death:

It was below me, drifting towards me from the furthest level where there was no life, a dark oval trailing limbs. . . . a dead thing, it was dead. . . . the lake was horrible, it was filled with death.

She has seen her dead father. But it is also her dead baby and her own spiritual death that at last she can recognize: "I couldn't accept it, that mutilation, ruin I'd made, I needed a different version." Ritual death is the necessary preliminary to rebirth and the reintegration of the severed pieces of herself. Earlier Anna has asked, "Do you have a twin? . . . because some of your lines are double." And now the narrator, preparing to dive, says, "My other shape was in the water, not my reflection but my shadow." In the dive she recovers her lost twin, her shadow. Now she can re-unite heart and head, feeling and rationality. The vision that she sees is at once her father, her lost baby, her own past, and the Indian past — the rock paintings which represent the past of this country, submerged by American technology but still down there waiting to be rediscovered.

Surfacing turns out to resemble the detective stories that Anna so avidly reads. A body is missing and believed dead. The detective-narrator sets off to sift the clues: "Whatever I find inside [the cabin] will be a clue." The map of the district tacked to the wall and the stack of papers are a "treasure map" with accompanying legend. "I finally spotted the key," she says. At first she thinks her father is "Crazy, loony. Bushed" — "total derangement." But when she reads the article "Rock Paintings of the Central Shield," she is like Hercule Poirot, green eyes aglow, pouncing on a clue and rearranging the evidence into a new pattern: "The secret had come clear. . . . My eyes came open, I began to arrange." The re-ordering of the evidence involves, as so often in detective fiction, a re-identification of the corpse: "It was no longer his death but my own that concerned me . . . alive up to a year, a day, then frozen." She is sure now; but as early as the beginning of Part Two she has begun to suspect that the murderer in the case is American technology with its power to fragment, separate body from head, and turn people into "robots or puppets":

I'm not sure when I began to suspect the truth, about myself and about them, what I was and what they were turning into. . . . it was there in me, the evidence, only needing to be deciphered. . . . I hold inside it [time compressed like a fist] the clues and solutions and the power for what I must do now.

The compressed time that she must examine for clues and solutions is her own

past. Earlier she has said about Anna's hand-reading, "I just wanted to know how long I was going to live, she could skip the rest." She learns that she must remember the past in order to predict the future. This is the paradox of her father's epigram: "The future is in the North, that was a political slogan once; when my father heard it he said there was nothing in the North but the past. . . ." The narrator goes north to her childhood home to accept the legacy of the past as a gift from each of her parents:

I had a talisman, my father had left me the guides, the man-animals and the maze of numbers.

It would be right for my mother to have left something for me also, a legacy. His was complicated, tangled, but hers would be simple as a hand, it would be final. I was not completed yet; there had to be a gift from each of them.

Her father's gift gives her the power to see:

The power flowed into my eyes, I could see into him, he [David] was an imposter, a pastiche . . .

. . . More than ever I needed to find it, the thing she had hidden; the power from my father's intercession wasn't enough to protect me, it gave only knowledge and there were more gods than his, his were the gods of the head, antlers rooted in the brain. Not only how to see but how to act.

Her mother's gift is also a pictograph, not an Indian pictograph but a childhood drawing she had done of herself as a baby in her mother's womb:

That was what the picture had meant then but their first meaning was lost now like the meanings of the rock paintings. They were my guides, she had saved them for me, pictographs, I had to read their new meaning with the help of the power.

Now that she had these two legacies, time, which was compressed like a fist, opens, and she can read past, present, and future in her palm:

I uncloset my fist, releasing, it becomes a hand again, palm a network of trails, lifeline, past and future, the break in it closing together as I purse my fingers. When the heartline and the headline are one, Anna told us, you are either a criminal, an idiot or a saint. How to act.

The "funny break" that Anna has noted in the narrator's lifeline is healed. Heartline and headline, intuition and logic, action and contemplation are now one. And now she sees not death but life and she celebrates vital energy flowing through all nature: "But nothing has died, everything is alive, everything is waiting to become alive."

THE GRATITUDE THE NARRATOR NOW FEELS is not for the Americans, whose ritual of death leads to an evil grail. Nor is it for Christianity which gave her "so little in return": "no power remained in their bland oleotinted Jesus prints. . . ." Her gratitude is all for the Indian gods who, "unacknowledged

or forgotten, were the only ones who had ever given me anything I needed, and freely." She now discovers that her father has gone before her on this same quest, looking for deeper sources of power. The sites he has marked on the map are "sacred places, the places where you could learn the truth":

There was no painting at White Birch Lake and none here, because his later drawings weren't copied from things on the rocks. He had discovered new places, new oracles, they were things he was seeing the way I had seen, true vision; at the end, after the failure of logic.

The father had begun perhaps by making a scientific inquiry into the rock paintings but by the end he has become a shaman himself, seeing and recording new visions. The shaman typically withdraws to a sacred abode of the *manitous* such as a rocky cliff and, by fasting and drumming, induces a trance during which he can speak with the spirits, journey to the upper or lower worlds, and see visions. These visions he later paints upon the rock. Atwood includes within the novel itself the essential information that the reader needs to know about shamanism and pictographs. The three paragraphs, ostensibly quoted from Dr. Robin M. Grove's article on rock paintings, condense material from Selwyn Dewdney's *Indian Rock Paintings of the Great Lakes*.⁸

Shamanism is the source for many details of the novel. The central incident of diving and surfacing is an initiation ritual in which the shaman discovers his vocation. In *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, Mircea Eliade discusses the sickness-initiation:

More or less pathological sicknesses, dreams, and ecstasies are . . . so many means of reaching the condition of shaman. . . . that is, they transform the profane, pre-"choice" individual into a technician of the sacred. . . .

[A]ll the ecstatic experiences that determine the future shaman's vocation involve the traditional schema of an initiation ceremony: suffering, death, resurrection. . . .

The content of these first ecstatic experiences . . . almost always includes one or more of the following themes: dismemberment of the body, followed by a renewal of the internal organs and viscera; ascent to the sky and dialogue with the gods or spirits; descent to the underworld and conversations with spirits and the souls of dead shamans; various revelations, both religious and shamanic (secrets of the profession).⁹

As well as dismemberment ("I was emptied, amputated") and the underwater journey, Atwood uses the shamanic identification of man with animals, the multi-layered shamanic universe, the shamanic boat, and the learning of the secret animal language. Throughout, the narrator is associated with water creatures — fish, heron, and frog. During her dive, she is "like a frog," the amphibious animal that earlier has symbolized unity of body and head. The dive itself is a journey to the underworld that is made possible because the shamanic universe has three levels — sky, earth, and underworld — connected by a central axis. According to Eliade,

"The pre-eminently shamanic technique is the passage from one cosmic region to another — from earth to the sky or from earth to the underworld. The shaman knows the mystery of the break-through in plane."¹⁰ The narrator describes what this breakthrough must have been like for her father:

When it happened the first time he must have been terrified, it would be like stepping through a usual door and finding yourself in a different galaxy, purple trees and red moons and a green sun.

Compare the first stanza of "Procedures for Underground":

The country beneath
the earth has a green sun
and the rivers flow backwards.

Atwood typically perceives things in levels. In her poetry, she is interested in underground and above ground and in the boundaries between these levels of water, ground, and air. The multilayered shamanic universe is therefore already congenial to Atwood before she adopts it in *Surfacing*.

A related motif is the boat which carries the gods, the spirits, or the shaman himself on journeys to these other worlds. The narrator has noticed among her father's stack of drawings a half-moon with four knobbed sticks coming out of it: "it became a boat with people, the knobs were their heads." Later when she is underwater, she sees her canoe above her floating "split between water and air, mediator and liferaft." Here, the canoe is both a mediator between cosmic levels and an enclosed space of protection. It is related to the ark image of the "floating house" and the narrator's recollection of, as a child, being with her parents in the canoe: "what stayed in my head was only the mist whiteness, the hush of moving water and the rocking motion, total safety." The contrast, of course, is with the murderous powerboat. When, on the third dive, the narrator again sees the canoe, it has become a solar boat. Its vital energy contrasts with the death that she finds in the lake: "The green canoe was far above me, sunlight radiating around it, a beacon, safety." In *Sacred Art of the Algonkians: A Study of the Peterborough Petroglyphs*, Joan and Romas Vastokas discuss in some detail the significance of the boat:

The soul-boat becomes also a vehicle of the sun. In Scandinavian rock art . . . the solar-boat . . . came "to symbolize everything that arose from the triumphant return of spring: the renewal of vegetation and the revival of fertility in all its forms."¹¹

Accordingly the narrator has penetrated to the deepest sources of power and is now ready to share the sun's energy and renewal. "Feeling was beginning to seep back into me," she says. The renewal is completed with the conception of the new child which she feels surfacing within her, forgiving her, redeeming the lost child.

The narrator completes her shamanic initiation by learning the new secret language. Our damaged language of technological death ("If you look like them

and talk like them and think like them then you are them . . . a language is everything you do") — this language, she says, "divides us into fragments, I wanted to be whole." Technological America with its machinery and its hydroelectric towers and its skyscrapers is a vast Tower of Babel which will collapse in a confusion of tongues. The narrator realizes that she must "immerse [herself] in the other language." Eliade, in his chapter on "Obtaining Shamanic Powers," discusses this secret language:

In the course of his initiation the future shaman has to learn the secret language that he will use during his seances to communicate with the spirits and animal spirits. . . .

Very often this secret language is actually the "animal language" or originates in animal cries. . . .

Animal cries proclaim the presence of the spirits, also proclaimed by animal-like behaviour. . . .

All over the world learning the language of animals, especially of birds, is equivalent to knowing the secrets of nature and hence to being able to prophesy. . . .

Imitating animal voices, using this secret language during the seance, is yet another sign that the shaman can move freely through the three cosmic zones: underworld, earth, sky. . . .

But this is not all. In numerous traditions friendship with animals and understanding their language represent paradisaal syndromes. . . . Friendship with animals, knowledge of their language, transformation into an animal are so many signs that the shaman has re-established the "paradisaal" situation lost at the dawn of time.¹²

In the last chapters the narrator achieves her animal form. A loon "accepts [her] as part of the land." She leaves her "false body" in the lake. Logic, geometry, borders of all kinds are forbidden. Finally she is ready for the mystical experience for which all her previous initiatory trials have prepared her. She sees herself in skeleton form: "I'm ice-clear, transparent, my bones and the child inside me showing through the green webs of my flesh." Eliade comments that to "reduce oneself to the skeleton condition is equivalent to re-entering the womb of this primordial life, that is, to a complete renewal, a mystical rebirth." Similarly the narrator has penetrated to the very sources of power and life and is fused with the energy of nature. She is now one with the sacred place of the gods:

the trees are like this too, they shimmer, their cores glow through the wood and bark. . . .

I lean against a tree, I am a tree leaning

. . . .

I am not an animal or a tree, I am the thing in which the trees and animals move and grow, I am a place.

During her ecstatic trance, the narrator can abolish the present fallen human condition and recover the original paradise in which man and animals and nature are at one.

The only stage left in the quest is the return to society. Joseph Campbell out-

lines the pattern of the heroic quest as "a separation from the world, a penetration to some source of power, and a life-enhancing return." He notes, "The return and reintegration with society, which is indispensable to the continuous circulation of spiritual energy into the world, and which, from the standpoint of the community, is the justification of the long retreat, the hero may find the most difficult of all."¹⁴ The narrator's anticipated return to society is structurally necessary to complete the two quests of the book — the narrator's personal quest and Canada's quest. The narrator will return to the city to confront "the pervasive menace, the Americans. They exist, they're advancing, they must be dealt with, but possibly they can be watched and predicted and stopped without being copied." Uncritical involvement with our technologies will turn us into zombies and robots. But with the help of the power, the narrator has brought the "evil grail" of technological America to the surface of her consciousness where she can take steps to cope with it. Withdrawal, flight, and invisibility are no longer possible. Therefore her return to the city will not be a return to the old situation and to the old patterns of victimization. She will remember "the power" and live now in the fallen world, her energies released through ritual from what Joseph Campbell calls "a banal long-outmoded toy-room, at the bottom of the sea."

NOTES

- ¹ "The Gadget Lover: Narcissus as Narcosis," *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Toronto: Signet, 1964), pp. 51-56.
- ² *War and Peace in the Global Village* (New York: Bantam, 1968), p. 97.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- ⁴ *Technology and Empire*, quoted in Atwood's *Survival* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972), p. 48.
- ⁵ "The Strategy of Culture" in *Contexts of Canadian Criticism*, ed. Eli Mandel (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 91.
- ⁶ *Understanding Media*, p. 31.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- ⁸ Selwyn Dewdney and Kenneth E. Kidd, *Indian Rock Paintings of the Great Lakes*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1967).
- ⁹ Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism*, trans. by Willard Trask (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1964), pp. 33-34.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 259.
- ¹¹ Joan and Romas Vastokas, *Sacred Art of the Algonkians* (Peterborough: Mansard Press, 1973), p. 126.
- ¹² *Shamanism*, pp. 96-99.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 63.
- ¹⁴ *Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1949; rpt. New York: Meridian, 1970), pp. 35-36.

THE REVOLT AGAINST INSTINCT

The Animal Stories of Seton and Roberts

Robert H. MacDonald

IN HIS INTRODUCTION TO *Kindred of the Wild* — a chapter that stands as a succinct apologia for the animal story — Sir Charles Roberts in 1902 explained the particular inspiration of the new genre practised by Ernest Thompson Seton and himself. Animals and men, he said, were not so separate as had been supposed, for animals, far from being mere creatures of instinct, could and did reason, and what is more, frequently displayed to the discerning observer signs not only of their psychologies, but also of something which might appeal to man's spiritual self. "We have come face to face with personality, where we were blindly wont to predicate mere instinct and automatism." The animal story, Roberts concluded, was thus a "potent emancipator," freeing us from "shop-worn utilities" and restoring to us the "old kinship of earth," a spiritual and uplifting union with nature.¹

These statements can be labelled "romantic," or "transcendental," and dismissed as a rather sentimental defence of the "inarticulate kindred" of the wild, who are distinguished from Black Beauty and Beautiful Joe only by the fact that they live in the woods. I propose, however, to take Roberts at his word, and to examine his and Seton's stories in the light of his crucial distinction between instinct and reason. The animal story, I shall show, is part of a popular revolt against Darwinian determinism, and is an affirmation of man's need for moral and spiritual values. The animal world provides models of virtue, and exemplifies the order of nature. The works of Seton and Roberts are thus celebrations of rational, ethical animals, who, as they rise above instinct, reach towards the spiritual. This theme, inspired as it is by a vision of a better world, provides a mythic structure for what is at first sight, realistic fiction.

At the popular level, the chief implication of Darwin's theories of evolution and the principle of natural selection had been to diminish the distinction between man and the animals. We were descended from the apes, and if the apes were mere brutes, could we be very much different? All creatures, it seemed, owed their present form to certain inherited characteristics, which together with environ-

mental influences, dictated their ability to survive. Nature was amoral; life was a power-struggle in which only the fittest survived. Instinct, to a large extent, seemed to govern animal behaviour; there was little place in nature for ethics or spirituality. Though man traditionally had been separated from the animals by his unique power of reason, could it not now be that man himself was little more than a brute beast?

By 1900 one of the most important controversies in the biological sciences was the question of animal behaviour: did animals act instinctively, or were they capable of learning? What was the nature of an animal's knowledge: was it inherited, or was it acquired? Were animals capable of reason? Did they learn from experience, did they teach each other? The weight of opinion, at least from the biologists, seemed to favour instinct and inheritance.² In their reaction to this controversy (and in a larger sense to the whole impetus of Darwinism), Seton, Roberts and their fellow nature writers rescued their public from the awful amorality of Darwinian nature. They reassured their readers, not so much that man was superior to animals, but that animals were superior in themselves, that they could reason, that they could and did educate their young, and that they possessed and obeyed laws of their own. Judging by the commercial success of their stories, this was a popular and much-needed antidote to Darwinian pessimism.

"The life of a wild animal," said Seton in *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1899), "*always has a tragic end.*" By that he meant that all animals die, and since most of them prey upon each other, they frequently die violently. Both Seton and Roberts refused to evade this unpleasant fact: kill or be killed is the natural law. To this extent they were both Darwinians: nature was indeed red in tooth and claw, and only the best escaped for a time. Thus "Kneepads," the mountain ewe who took to kneeling as she grazed, was an easy prey for the mountain lion, and Red Fox's weaker and stupider siblings met an early death.³ Survival does indeed go to the fittest.

In their biographies of animal heroes, both men repeatedly illustrate this central fact of the evolutionary theory. Their animals are not ordinary animals, but superior animals, distinguished by their size, skill, wisdom and moral sense. These animals have all learned to cope with a hostile environment; they endure. They are the leaders of their kind. Thus Wahb is the largest and most intelligent grizzly, Krag the noblest mountain sheep, Lobo a giant among wolves, Raggylogs a most sagacious rabbit, and so on. From the first Red Fox is the pick of his litter, larger, livelier, more intelligent, and, curiously, redder. Seton's comment on the old crow, Silverspot, will serve to characterize all these heroes: "once in awhile there arises an animal who is stronger or wiser than his fellow, who becomes a great leader, who is, as we would say, a genius, and if he is bigger, or has some mark by which men can know him, he soon becomes famous in his country, and shows us that the

life of a wild animal may be far more interesting and exciting than that of many human beings."

Both Seton and Roberts took pains to establish that everything they wrote was within the bounds of truth. Their animal biographies were frequently "composite" biographies; that is, they included everything that had been done, or might have been done, by a crow, or a wolf, or a fox, but they contained nothing that was not possible. Thus Seton, in his preface to *Wild Animals I Have Known*, acknowledges having "pieced together some of the characters," but claims that there was, in at least three of the lives, "almost no deviation from the truth." Roberts, introducing Red Fox, makes the same point saying that in the life of his hero, "every one of these experiences has befallen some red fox in the past, and may befall other red foxes in the future." He has been, he assures his readers, "careful to keep well within the boundaries of fact." We may take these statements at face value: by and large, both men were astute and careful observers of nature, and in most of their writing give realistic, though fictionalized, descriptions of animal life.⁴ Both also claim that though they have given their animals language and emotions, these are, within the demands of the genre, realistic, and not anthropomorphized.

However it is not realism that entirely inspires the art of Seton and Roberts, whatever strength that lends to their work, but certain ideas which frame and condition the realism, and which give to it symbolic form. The animal heroes may live and die in the wild, being only interesting specimens of their race, but their biographies, as literature, belong in the world of myth.⁵ What matters is not that everything that is told *could* have happened to a fox, or a grizzly, but that it *did* happen, and that, for the author, the life of the animal was organized according to certain basic ideas, and that in its living it demonstrated certain fundamental truths. At the heart of the myth that gives structure to the work of both Seton and Roberts is their belief that animals are rational and ethical beings, and that they rise above instinct. This is demonstrated most clearly in the ways the animals train their young to survive, and the ways in which their young respond to the challenge.⁶

Seton's story of the cottontail rabbit, Raggybugs, will serve to illustrate. The young rabbit Raggybugs is "unusually quick and bright as well as strong," and he has in his mother Molly an extremely intelligent and valiant tutor, a "true heroine," a devoted mother who finally gives her life so that her son may survive. Here, as we might expect, are the superior animals, models of intelligence and mother love. Molly's first duty is to train her son, to educate him in the skills of life. His first duty, as a successful and superior animal, is to obey. "Molly was a good little mother and gave him a careful bringing up . . . he did as he was told." Rag learns the essential rabbit lessons, to "lay low," to "freeze," and to regard the briarbrush as his best friend. "All the season she kept him busy learning the tricks of the trail,

and what to eat and drink and what not to touch. Day by day she worked to train him; little by little she taught him. . . ." In some of his lessons he shows himself "a veritable genius," and he even goes on to take a "post-graduate course" in how to use water. On the one occasion he is disobedient — he sits up to watch his mother lose a dog — he is severely punished, being cuffed and knocked over by Molly.

Throughout this story Seton's emphasis is on the intelligence and skill of the successful animal, the "tricks" it uses to outwit its enemies, and the way in which it is able to educate its young. Molly shows her son how to run a dog into a barbed-wire fence, how to avoid snares, and how to use water as a last resource. Animals are not mere creatures of instinct, behaving according to a set of inherited responses, but capable, within their own terms, of intelligent reasoning, of teaching and learning, and of knowing right from wrong. Rabbits, for instance, have their own language: they "have no speech . . . but they have a way of conveying ideas by a system of sounds, signs, scents, whisker-touches, movements, and example that answers the purpose of speech. . . ."

IT IS WORTH PAUSING HERE to answer some questions: is Seton not right — do animals not have some very definite ability to communicate in a language of their own, and are they not capable of some kind of inductive reasoning? Do they not, in fact, educate their young, and is there not more to animal behaviour than a set of instinctive reactions?

The modern ethologist would almost certainly approach these problems with caution, for the whole question of animal behaviour has become one of immense complexity. In 1900 there seemed to be a straightforward contrast to be made between instinctive and learned behaviour; now the first point to be made is that rigid alternatives are simplistic.⁷ Even the terms have changed. The "nature or nurture" controversy has been replaced by a discussion of innate or acquired characteristics, and behaviour is now classified as "environmentally stable" or "environmentally labile." The discovery of imprinting, the process by which certain animals when young respond as a species to certain stimulæ, has been contrasted to "adaptive" learning. The mental processes of animals are not simple, but they are clearly not always automatic, or mechanical, or, in the old sense, simply instinctive. Apes have been taught to communicate with humans using the American Sign Language: the higher mammals, it has been argued, have mental experiences and probably even a conscious awareness.⁸

In spite of the complexity of the problems, certain generalizations may be made. Many animals are able to learn from experience. Many animals do teach their young, chiefly by example.⁹ Some animals are capable of inductive reasoning.

Some other animals may be able to adapt their behaviour, by a process of trial and error, and though it might appear that they act rationally, they do not always seem to comprehend what they are doing. Considered in general terms, however, the observations and speculations of the nature writers are closer in many ways to current scientific thinking than those of their more sceptical, behaviourist contemporaries. Animals have complex means of communicating with one another: Seton's description of rabbit language, a "system of sounds, signs, scents, whisker-touches" and so on, is not fanciful, though modern naturalists might argue with the details. What matters is not the scientific accuracy of Seton's nature stories — although that itself is an interesting question — but the ideas which give his work symbolic form. By the lights of his day he played down instinct; his animals are rational creatures who educate their offspring to be obedient and successful. As such, they are intended to be models for human edification, and nature, though full of sudden and "tragic" death, is an ordered and in many ways superior world.

Seton, as a careful naturalist, frequently describes instinctive (or innate) behaviour in animals. In most cases, he regards it as an inherited substratum, a built-in defence against the early dangers of life. He speaks of an animal's "native instincts," which are supplemented by the twin teachers of life, experience and the example of fellow animals.¹⁰ The little mountain lambs in *Lives of the Hunted*, surprised and chased by a hunter just after birth, are able to dodge and escape, for "Nature had equipped them with a set of valuable instincts." Instinct, however, takes an animal only just so far. Its role in survival is subsidiary to reason. In the story of the Don Valley partridge, for instance, Seton tells us that the partridge chicks soon graduate from instinctive to rational behaviour: "their start in life was a good mother, good legs, a few reliable instincts, and a germ of reason. It was instinct, that is, inherited habit, which taught them to hide at the word from their mother; it was instinct that taught them to follow her, but it was reason which made them keep under the shadow of her tail when the sun was smiting down. . . ." And, Seton concludes, "from that day reason entered more and more into their expanding lives."¹¹

Roberts treats instinct in much the same way, as a valuable though necessarily limited body of inherited knowledge. Thus Red Fox, as befits a superior animal, has an extra amount: "he seemed to inherit with special fulness and effectiveness that endowment of ancestral knowledge which goes by the name of instinct." At the same time, of course, we are told that he is more intelligent, that he can reason, and that he is "peculiarly apt in learning from his mother." Instinct is, too, a latent skill, which can surface when necessary: in the story of "Lone Wolf" (*Neighbours Unknown*), the tame circus wolf who escapes to the wilds, Roberts shows us its hero rediscovering "long buried memories" of how a wolf kills. "It was as if all his life Lone Wolf had been killing bulls, so unerring was that terrible chopping snap at the great beast's throat." These are perhaps unexceptionable ideas, yet else-

where in Roberts' work there is the definite implication that instinct is a primitive force which must be controlled and subdued by reason. This is especially true when applied to man himself (though as the highest of the "kindred" what is true for man is also true for animals). In "The Moonlight Trails" (*Kindred of the Wild*), we are told of a boy who loves animals and is sensitive to their feelings, who accompanies the hired man on an expedition to the woods to snare rabbits. As they set the snares the boy is moved by the primitive lust of the hunter; he feels "stirrings of a wild, predatory instinct." When they return in the morning to see what they have caught the boy is still at first in the grip of the hunting passion, but when he sees the cruel tragedy of death his more civilized feelings come to the surface. "We won't snare any more rabbits, Andy," he tells the hired man.

The gap between man and the animals, Roberts insists, is very narrow. Animals "can and do reason."¹² *Red Fox* illustrates this thesis: the whole novel is a celebration of one animal's cunning and sagacity. We are repeatedly told of Red Fox's cunning, his "nimble wits," his ingenious and deliberate schemes for evading his enemies, his prodigious memory, his ability to study a situation, to make plans, to reason. We hear how he outwits "the Boy," how he leads the hounds to their destruction, how he fools his enemy Jabe Smith. His qualities are quite obvious: "look at that cool and cunning eye," says one of his American captors. "He's got brains."

In his early education, Red Fox shows that instinct is subservient to reason. Red Fox must learn both from his mother and from experience. "It is possible (though some say otherwise!) to expect too much of instinct," Roberts tells us, and explains how a successful fox will learn his lessons, "partly by example and partly no doubt by a simple language whose subtleties evade human observation." Yet we notice that when instinct gets Red Fox into trouble, it is instinct that rescues him. His nose tells him to dig in a bees' nest for honey, and when they sting him, he runs blindly for a thicket, and automatically cools his smarting nose in the mud. These are inconsistencies: Roberts' dominant theme is the supremacy and efficacy of his hero's reason. The vixen's instructions to leave men alone have "their effect on [Red Fox's] sagacious brain," whereas his stupider brother thinks he knows better, and pays the price with his life. This incident, one should note, is at the same time an apt illustration of Darwinian theory, for it is the better animal that survives.

The intelligent young animal is also the obedient young animal. In the School of the Woods, obedience is a primary virtue. The child must obey the parent. "For a young animal," Seton said, "there is no better gift than obedience,"¹³ and he demonstrated this again and again by showing us the fate of the disobedient, the young lambs who do not come when they are called, and are caught and killed, or the foolish partridge chicks who refuse to stay close to mother. The fate of Red

Fox's siblings again makes the point: the weak and the foolish will not survive, but the disobedient bring trouble upon all.

The essential argument of this article should be clear by now: the fiction of both Seton and Roberts is inspired by their desire to present a moral and coherent order in the life of the wild, which is part of the greater order of the cosmos. That many of their observations of animal life are accurate is undeniable — animals do learn, they are intelligent in their way, and they are probably even capable of reason. Yet what is important in Seton and Roberts is the way the details are presented. Animals, we are told, are very much like ourselves. They obey certain laws, they demonstrate qualities we would do well to admire, they are our own kin. They inhabit what is often clearly a mythic world; they are symbols in our own ontological system. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the context of morality.

Each animal, first of all, must learn to obey the laws of its kind. Morality is not a human invention, but an integral part of all nature. "It is quite common," says Seton in *Lives of the Hunted*, "to hear conventionality and social rules derided as though they were silly man-made tyrannies. They are really important laws that, like gravitation, were here before human society began, and shaped it when it came. In all wild animals we see them grown with the mental growth of the species." The higher the animal, the more clearly developed the moral system. The better the animal — the more successful, or superior specimen — the more moral the animal. Thus superior animals fight fair, but the weak, the cowards, and the mean may well resort to dirty tricks. Krag the mountain sheep, whose strength, and size, and curling horns make him appear like a "demi-god" to his ewes, has to beat off two other rams to defend his rights to his harem. One ram fights fair and meets Krag horn to horn; the other fights foul, and attacks from the side. It is important that in this moral world the immoral ram "works his own destruction," running himself over a two hundred foot cliff to his death.

These animal laws would appear to be somewhat flexible, coloured as they are by the vision of the human observer, since occasionally even a "good" animal will break the rule of his kind to preserve himself or another. This is always done for a reason: the law may be broken in the name of the higher good. We are told, in "Raggylugs," that "all good rabbits forget their feuds when their common enemy appears." Rag's rival, the stranger, ignores this basic rule of rabbit society, trying to drive Rag into the reach of a goshawk. This is bad. Yet one sentence later we find Rag playing the same game to save himself and his mother, as he successfully lures old Thunder the hound into the nest of "the stranger." This, we infer, is good.

It is at moments like this that it is most evident that the animal story belongs not to the world of natural science, but to the world of literature. There are good animals and bad animals, and we, as readers, are always expected to be on the side of morality. Seton, however, is usually careful not to denigrate a species: each

animal, of whatever kind, has some quality that a man might admire. Even the hated rat is courageous.¹⁴ Roberts, on the other hand, lets his sympathies show: there are some species who exhibit only the worst. Such are lynx. In "Grey Lynx's Last Hunting" we are shown a portrait of animal cruelty, selfishness and marital hatred, whose appropriate outcome is the sordid death of the male, killed by his savage and mad mate. Both writers, in their desire to make a moral point, cross from realism into romance. Seton has a story of wolves who lynch an apparent cheat and liar,¹⁵ and Roberts the fanciful tale of a society of animals who voluntarily resolve not to kill "within eyeshot" of a sensitive and disapproving child.¹⁶

Throughout Roberts' work there is an insistence on the meaning, the vitality, the harmony and the morality of the struggle of life, and in Seton, of the fairness and ultimate order of nature. Perhaps the most dramatic illustration of their essentially similar moral philosophy is Seton's short *The Natural History of the Ten Commandments* (1907), in which he finds that the Mosaic laws are not "arbitrary laws given to man, but are fundamental laws of all highly developed animals." Animals, in their own way, observe the last six of the ten commandments, and in their occasional willingness to "throw themselves on the mercy of some other power," manifest the beginnings of a spiritual life. Man, obeying the first four commandments, acknowledges the Deity; the higher animals acknowledge man.

THIS IS AN IDEA which, in its implications of a natural cosmic order, testifies to the true symbolic role of the animals. There is an obvious correspondence here to the writing of Seton's contemporary, Kipling, and especially to the society of *The Jungle Books* (1917). Roberts, in his preface to *The Kindred of the Wild*, praised the Mowgli stories, though, noting that the animals were "frankly humanized," distinguished them as a different and a separate kind of fiction from Seton's and his own. Yet the difference is one of degree, rather than kind: Kipling's jungle animals are also rational creatures, who live in a balanced and reasonably harmonious society, provided they obey the rules of their kind. There are good and superior animals such as Bagheera the panther and Baloo the bear, and evil animals such as Shere Khan the tiger and the whole tribe of monkeys. The evil are punished and the good survive. The laws of the jungle must be obeyed. Man, in the shape of Mowgli himself, is superior to all the other animals.¹⁷

In their insistence on certain social principles — for instance the all-important rule that the young must obey the old, and that obedience is both a necessity and a duty — Seton, Roberts and Kipling all use their animal stories to exemplify clear and precise morality. The first law an animal learns, Seton tells us, is obedience, and it is with the Fifth Commandment, "Against Disobedience," that he begins his examination of the Mosaic code of nature. This is the law "which imposes

unreasoning acceptance of the benefits derivable from the experience of those over us."¹⁸ We remember from *Red Fox* "how sternly Nature exacts a rigid observance of her rules," and how Red Fox himself is always obedient to his mother, for "it was no small part of his intelligence that he knew how much better his mother knew than he." Obedience for Kipling is the first law of the jungle; every cub of the wolf pack must learn it:

"Now these are the Laws of the Jungle, and many and mighty are they;
But the head and the hoof of the Law and the haunch and the hump is — Obey!"

It could be argued that the evidence for the success of this moral philosophy, and the public acceptance of an anti-Darwinian optimism, can be found in the popularity of the nature writers. Both Seton's and Roberts' nature stories went through edition after edition at the beginning of the century, and one would suspect that Kipling's *Jungle Books* were read to generations of young listeners. All three writers supported the status quo; a child, if he paid attention to the moral lessons, would surely be improved. There is, however, one other means of estimating the popular encouragement given the nature writers, and that in a surprising though socially significant place — the Boy Scouts. The Scouts were also trained to be superior animals, to be brave, helpful, and especially, obedient. The third and most important part of the Scout Promise was obedience to the Scout Law. Curiously, their founder, General Robert Baden-Powell, used the work of the nature writers, and of Kipling, when he came to write the manual for his movement, *Scouting For Boys*.

"Any naturalist," Baden-Powell told his scouts, "will tell you that animals largely owe their cleverness to their mothers."¹⁹ Older animals taught younger animals, and they taught them to obey. Instinct was not half as important as training. Seton was closely associated with the scouting movement from the first, having in fact organized a "woodcraft" group for the boys of America, and in *Scouting For Boys*, Baden-Powell used many of his ideas. Baden-Powell also recommended several of Seton's books to his readers, but when it came to the crucial questions of education, of training and obedience, and the naturalists' models of good conduct, he turned not to Seton or Roberts but to the American writer, William Long. Long's work has now sunk without trace; reading him one can see why he would appeal to a straightforward moralist like Baden-Powell. Much more sentimental and didactic than his contemporaries, and, one would guess, a less careful observer of animal life, Long made no pretense at Darwinism, but preferred to see in the school of the woods "no tragedies or footlight effects of woes and struggles, but rather a wholesome, cheerful life to make one glad and send him back to his own school with deeper wisdom and renewed courage."²⁰ He was quite clear on the unimportance of instinct, and he had no doubt at all

about the necessity for obedience: "when one turns to animals, it is often with the wholesome, refreshing sense that here is a realm where the law of life is known and obeyed. To the wild creature obedience is everything. It is the deep, unconscious tribute of ignorance to wisdom, of weakness to power."

In *Scouting For Boys* Baden-Powell quoted Long at some length. "The Old Wolf" himself was a military man, and he believed in old-fashioned virtues; the scouting movement, though encouraging individual initiative, was authoritarian, its aim to turn out patriots and model citizens. It was important that boys be well trained, and if, in the stories of the nature writers, they had models of good behaviour, these were models that would naturally appeal to boys. Even the scout patrols were named after animals. When it came time to form the junior organization, Baden-Powell went to Kipling, and with his permission took his inspiration from *The Jungle Book*. Significantly, the first "law" of the Wolf Cubs was "the Cub gives in to the old Wolf."²¹

We have in this last detail the clue to the stories of animal heroes. Animals are not so much animals as emblems, symbols of a more perfect world. Baden-Powell called himself the "Old Wolf," and Seton used the wolf paw mark as his signature. To each, the wolf was a superior creature, a star in an ordered and moral universe. The animal stories thus are best considered mythopoeically: Old Silverspot, Seton's crow, drilling his troops and training his youngsters, could well be a model for General Baden-Powell. Red Fox, in his bravery and intelligence, might stand as a shining example to any young scout.

Seen in this light, the lives of the animals resemble, in their structure, the life of the mythic hero: they are born, go through early trials, win their kingdom and die. Some, like Seton's Krag, who returns after death to haunt his murderer, even have an apotheosis. Fate in the shape of a Darwinian catastrophe ensures in the evitable death of the hero a technical tragedy, though the prevailing note in both Seton and Roberts is one of life ever renewed. Man, especially in Seton's stories, may be part of a corrupt and decadent postlapsarian world. In Roberts, man's ignorance and callousness are crimes against nature, though innocence and goodness are often represented by a child or youth, the sensitive girl or boy who knows and loves the creatures of the woods. In Roberts also, the landscape is often magical or enchanted.

In all these details it is clear that the animal tales of both Seton and Roberts take their inspiration and structure as much from literature as from life. In their use of the conventions of the romance, in their echoing of a mythic pattern, and in their quite definite symbolic treatment of animal character, both men translate the indiscriminate facts of nature into the ordered patterns of art. At the centre of their fiction is their belief in moral and rational animals, which in its extensiveness and pervasive force, takes on the quality of an organizing myth. It is ironic that at a time when the forces of instinct, intuition and the unconscious were being redis-

covered in man, the power of the Logos was found in the kingdoms of the brute beasts.

NOTES

- ¹ *The Kindred of the Wild* (1902; rpt. Boston: Page, 1921), pp. 15-29.
- ² For a summary of the history of the concept of instinct see W. H. Thorpe, *Animal Nature and Human Nature* (New York: Doubleday, 1974), pp. 134 ff.
- ³ "Kneepads" appears in Seton's *Lives of the Hunted* (1901), "Red Fox" in Roberts' *Red Fox* (1905). Roberts wrote over two hundred stories: I have chosen to refer only to those that are (1) best known, and (2) written from the animal's point of view, or (3) contain some statement on or illustration of the instinct problem.
- ⁴ Both Seton and Roberts were embroiled in a controversy on the realism of their stories, having, in 1903, come under attack from the naturalist, John Burroughs. W. J. Keith argues that the problem of realism is important: "the stories are convincing only in so far as they can be accepted as at least possible within the world of nature" (*Charles G. D. Roberts* [Toronto: Copp Clark, 1969], p. 93). This is a reasonable view, to which it is worth adding that it depends on the genre — if the author's intention is realism, and not romance. A difficult case is presented by, for example, *The Heart of the Ancient Wood*, which, to use Northrop Frye's terms, falls into the mode of romance. In this tale a loving, intelligent, maternal bear named Kroof protects the child Miranda, and eventually rescues Miranda and her mother from a pair of wicked men. Did Roberts expect his readers to take this fairytale as "realistic" fiction?
- ⁵ See Joseph Gold, "The Precious Speck of Life," *Canadian Literature*, No. 26 (Autumn 1965), pp. 22-32. In this important and provocative article, Gold argues for an archetypal and mythic interpretation of Roberts' animal stories. He sees the essential myth in Roberts as that of the vitality and persistence of life in its cycles. Roberts, he states, left a body of work "consistently arranged about a clear idea of the order of life itself."
- ⁶ These were the very points on which Seton and Roberts were challenged by John Burroughs, when he returned to the attack in 1905, in his book *Ways of Nature*. See Keith, pp. 91-92.
- ⁷ See Thorpe, pp. 151 ff. For more extensive discussion, see R. F. Ewer, *Ethology of Mammals* (London: Elek, 1973).
- ⁸ See Donald R. Griffen, *The Question of Animal Awareness* (New York: Rockefeller Univ. Press, 1976).
- ⁹ See Ewer, pp. 277-78.
- ¹⁰ "Badlands Billy," in *Animal Heroes* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, n.d.), pp. 124-25.
- ¹¹ Twenty-three years later Seton retreated from this position, and declared that "although an animal is much helped by its mother's teaching, it owes still more to the racial teaching, which is instinct. . . ." See his foreword to *Bannertail* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1922).
- ¹² *Kindred*, p. 23.
- ¹³ *Lives of the Hunted*, p. 43.
- ¹⁴ See "The Rat and the Rattlers," *Mainly About Wolves* (London: Methuen, 1937), pp. 171-79.

- ¹⁵ "The Wolf and the Primal Law," *Mainly About Wolves*, pp. 121-31. Here, as so often in Seton, it is man himself who is the villain.
- ¹⁶ *The Heart of the Ancient Wood*, p. 128.
- ¹⁷ For a discussion of the educational and moral didacticism of *The Jungle Books* see Shamsul Islam, *Kipling's "Law"* (London: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 122-31.
- ¹⁸ *Natural History*, p. 7.
- ¹⁹ R. S. S. Baden-Powell, *Scouting For Boys* (London: Cox, 1908), p. 124.
- ²⁰ *School of the Woods: Some Life Studies of Animal Instincts and Animal Training* (Boston: Ginn, 1902), p. 21.
- ²¹ *The Wolf-Cub's Handbook* (1916; rpt. London: Pearson, 1923), p. 39.

LAUGHTER OF CROWS

Ernest Hekkanen

When my time came around
the sky filled with crows,
all gesturing in unison
and beckoning me on.

So I went the beating route,
escorted by my nightmare
and the howling tongues
of feathered phantomrey.

I went into the bird black
unknown, hugging my fear
and disdaining the maker
of my inadequate flesh.

I went with a swoon of wings,
plummeting into the wide terrain
where flight became the law
and I lost myself in motion.

I went with the beckoning
and found myself in the dark
enormity, wingless and depleted,
laughter of crows consuming me.

A GAME OF ANGELS

Anne Szumigalski

“look at me” I say
to your face on the pillow
to your eyes with their straight glossy stare

and I move my arms up and down to remind you
that I am that woman who once came
with armfuls of ferns, with armfuls
of branches, bunched them and
pinned them to the shoulders
of your tunic, trying to persuade you
to flap and fly upwards
out of this cup of earth
between the mountains

“remember” I say
“those sundays we spent
in a tent of sheets
testing our hold on each other
caressing with silky pinions
one another’s flesh
 how our mouth’s soft beaks
gave off cries like battling doves
or other fierce creatures”

the eagle for instance
flying upwards
until the sun ached our watching eyes
as it flashed between
those specks of wings

when the bird fell
on gopher or prairie mouse
we could hear the air
whistling through its claws
and you smiled

as you do now
grasping the blankets
with old talons

UNDER THE VOLCANO

The Myth of the Hero

George Rhys Garnett

IN CHAPTER SEVEN OF *Under the Volcano*, Laruelle challenges the basic validity of the Consul's quest. The Consul first defends himself by stating that:

'You are interfering with my great battle . . . Against death . . . My battle for the survival of the human consciousness.'

"[I]t never occurred to me," wrote Lowry, in a letter published several years after *Under the Volcano*, "that consciousness itself could be of any aid, quite the contrary, and let alone a goal. . . ."

For a moment, the Consul is able to see this goal — the integration of unconscious contents into consciousness. Yet Laruelle, although essentially advising abandonment of this struggle, nevertheless points to what is lacking in the Consul's method of conducting his "great battle." It is, argues Laruelle, "precisely your inability to see . . . the things so important to us despised sober people, on which the balance of any human situation depends . . . that turns them into instruments of the disaster you have created yourself."

The Consul has indeed lost — or failed to find — "balance," and puts fatally at risk consciousness of any sort. The case Laruelle puts is for *normalcy*, a condition that is the equivalent of defeat for the Consul (as demonstrated by Laruelle himself, living in a state of permanent exile from his creative-destructive self). "But had they ever led a normal happy life," the Consul has asked himself, has it "ever been possible for them?" Laruelle's argument is not likely to convince one who in the darkness of the shadow has glimpsed a "brightness" infinitely more alluring than the pusillanimous compromise of Laruelle's normalcy.

'And you forget' [Laruelle adds] 'what you exclude from this, shall we say, feeling of omniscience. And at night, I imagine, or between drink and drink, which is a sort of night, what you have excluded, as if it resented that exclusion, returns — ' 'I'll say it returns', the Consul said, listening at this point. . . .

What you have excluded, as if it resented that exclusion, returns — but what Laruelle fails to understand is that he is suggesting only an alternative and inferior form of exclusion. What the Consul would have to exclude from an attempt at "normal" life with Yvonne would *also* "as if it resented that exclusion" return.

Laruelle's escape-route from conflict is inferior because it holds out no hope for growth — growth towards individuation — of the personality, merely the sealing off (in a dubiously secure persona) of what are for the Consul the sources of potential growth. The fascination and terror of the Farolito is that it may offer not only death but also rebirth for "the human consciousness."

"*'Facilis est descensus Averno,'*" argues Laruelle, "*'it's too easy.'*" "*'You deny the greatness of my battle? Even if I win. And I shall certainly win if I want to,'* the Consul added. . . ." A real danger to the Consul is revealed here in this too glib and vainglorious assertion. The danger — described by Jung as "inflation" — is the Consul's presumptuous if intermittent belief that he can at any point control *by an act of will* those fundamental sources of human motivation and behaviour of which he has obtained such confused and uncertain yet vital knowledge. The danger is emphasized by a quotation that springs into his mind as he makes this statement:

'Je crois que le vautour est doux à Prométhée et que les Ixion se plaisent en Enfers.'

"*'I love hell,'*" he declares later, "*'I can't wait to get back there. . . .'*" But between Prometheus and Ixion there appears to be a crucial distinction in achievement.

Prometheus stole fire from the gods and gave it to man; Ixion attempted to seduce the goddess Hera, Jove's wife, but was outwitted by Jove who "shaped a cloud into a false Hera with whom Ixion, being too far gone in drink to notice the deception, duly took his pleasure." He was scourged and bound "to a fiery wheel which rolled without cease through the sky."¹ Both were punished for their presumptuousness, but whereas Prometheus' terrible punishment did not discredit that symbolic advance in *consciousness* for man that he achieved, Ixion's was a consequence both of presumptuousness and incapacity. He presumed to *know* the anima in her highest form, yet lacked the wisdom and alertness not to be deceived by the false anima that Jove created for him.

The Consul claims, in effect, to have Promethean ambitions ("My battle for the survival of human consciousness"). C. G. Jung provides his interpretation of the significance of the Prometheus myth — of the achievement of this "hero" and of his punishment:

every step towards greater consciousness is a kind of Promethean guilt: through knowledge, the gods are as it were robbed of their fire, that is, something that was the property of the unconscious powers is torn out of its natural context and subordinated to the whims of the conscious mind. The man who has usurped the new knowledge suffers, however, a transformation or enlargement of consciousness, which no longer resembles that of his fellow men . . . but in doing so has alienated himself from humanity. The pain of this loneliness is the vengeance of the gods, for never again can he return to mankind. He is, as the myth says, chained to the lonely cliffs of the Caucasus, forsaken of God and man.²

Elsewhere, he adds: "The crucifixion evidently betokens a state of agonizing bondage and suspension, fit punishment for one foolhardy enough to venture like a Prometheus into the orbit of the opposing principle."³

Here, clearly enough, the punishment fits the crime; and both crime and punishment are undoubtedly heroic in stature. The Consul may, by implication, claim such heroic stature for *his* "battle." But is this claim entirely convincing? In some respects, he is perhaps closer to Ixion:

The Consul was gazing upward dreamily at the Ferris wheel . . . tonight it would be lit up . . . the *wheel of the law* rolling. . . .

He, like Ixion, is drunkenly *un-heroic* when he penetrates *his* "false" anima, the Maria/Yvonne of the Farolito; and he too, like Ixion, is — albeit briefly — whirled helplessly round on the giant wheel of the "Infernal Machine" at the Quauahuac Carnival.

In a curious passage, he appears to become aware of this possibility — that his "battle" may be both presumptuous and futile (the passage is curious, because it is unclear whether it is spoken by Laruelle, by the Consul, or is a combination of both, merging within the Consul's mind) :

'To say nothing of what you lose, lose, lose, are losing, man. You fool, you stupid fool . . . You've even been insulated from the responsibility of genuine suffering . . . Even the suffering you do endure is largely un-necessary. Actually spurious. It lacks the very basis you require of it for its tragic nature. You deceive yourself. . . .'

He then sees a sign being nailed to a tree: "*Le gusta este jardin. . . .*" It is a sign which recurrently reproaches his neglect of the garden of the self, and sounds an ominous warning of his final incapacity to wrest the knowledge that he confusedly seeks from "the gods" who, whether he succeeds or fails, will exact their vengeance for the attempt. But how should he respond to this suggestion that his "suffering" is both self-indulgent and self-destructive? That the Consul's quest may well be presumptuous is a warning he ought to heed; and that it is being undertaken with unbalanced and flawed equipment he must — for survival's sake — recognize. Yet these signs and suggestions may be acting as do those voices and illusions which attempt to convince the Grail-seeking knight of his unworthiness or of the futility of his quest. And if he is, still, potentially *either* Ixion or Prometheus, only one consequence is at this stage certain — he has invited and will suffer the vengeance of the "gods."

Prometheus, although "crucified" in punishment, first returned with the gift of fire for mankind. But what of a would-be thief of fire who is consumed by the prize that he seeks? Is his whole endeavour thereby rendered worthless, shown to be both "spurious" and futile? If so, it would be difficult to explain why, and how, such myths still persist and still fascinate. "Man started from an unconscious state," wrote Jung, "and has ever strived for greater consciousness. The develop-

ment of consciousness is the burden, the suffering, and the blessing of mankind," and: "Every advance in culture is, psychologically, an extension of consciousness," and the role of the individual, the "hero," is to cut "a new path through hitherto untrodden territory. . . ." Additionally, he states that: "The goal is important only as an idea: the essential thing is the *opus* which leads to the goal: *that* is the goal of a lifetime."⁴

It is arguable, therefore, that the question of whether or not the Consul's heroic-tragic pretensions are justifiable need not be answered only in terms of his success or failure in achieving a "goal" that he is, indeed, never able to identify (yet which is imposed most vividly in his dream-vision of "the mighty mountain Himavat"). It can be answered also in terms of the *nature* and *quality* of his "opus." In these respects, perhaps, he can be shown to be triumphant — not in his "fall," but in the nature and persistence of his quest, in the "extension of consciousness" *towards* enabling "Modern man . . . to know how he is to reconcile himself with his own nature — how he is to love the enemy in his own heart and call the wolf his brother."⁵

"The myth of the hero," wrote Jung, ". . . is first and foremost a self-representation of the longing of the unconscious, of its unquenched and unquenchable desire for the light of consciousness."⁶ *Under the Volcano* embodies such a myth, and the Consul is such a hero. But, as I have already indicated in contrasting Ixion and Prometheus, there are many such heroes, many stages, many paths. Joseph Campbell demonstrates this in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. The full cycle, as outlined by Campbell, takes the hero through three main stages: (1) separation or departure; (2) trials and victories of initiation; (3) return and reintegration. However, as he points out, many tales isolate or concentrate on "one or two of the typical elements of the full cycle."⁷

THESE THREE MAIN STAGES CAN, broadly, be traced through Lowry's fiction: *Ultramarine* can be seen to correspond to the "separation or departure," *Under the Volcano* to "the Stage of the Trials," and "The Forest Path to the Spring," however ambiguously, to "return and re-integration." Campbell describes the process in more detail:

The mythological hero, setting forth from his commonday hut or castle, is lured, carried away, or else voluntarily proceeds, to the threshold of adventure. There he encounters a shadow presence that guards the passage. The hero may defeat or conciliate this power and go alive into the kingdom of the dark. . . .

If, as can be argued, Dana Hilliot has proceeded thus far, it is clearly by means of (at best) conciliation rather than "defeat" of "this power" that he is able to go

down with Nikolai into the "firebright" darkness of the stokehold, at the novel's end. Campbell continues:

The hero may . . . go alive into the kingdom of the dark (brother-battle, dragon-battle . . .) or be slain by the opponent and descend in death (dismemberment, crucifixion). Beyond the threshold . . . the hero journeys through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces, some of which severely threaten him (tests), some of which give magical aids (helpers). . . .

The Consul's very situation is being described here — the nature of the world through which he now travels, throughout his final hours of the Day of the Dead, and of those forces which now threaten, terrify (in the ruined garden of Chapter Five, in Jacques' house, most powerfully and overwhelmingly at the Farolito in the final chapter), now offer aid, advice, comfort — or escape (the old woman from Tarasco, Señora Gregorio, Laruelle, Dr. Vigil, Cervantes, the old fiddler).

When he arrives at the nadir of the mythological round [writes Campbell], he undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his reward. The triumph may be represented as the hero's sexual union with the goddess-mother of the world (sacred marriage), his recognition by the father-creator (father atonement), his own divinization (apotheosis), or again — if the powers have remained unfriendly to him — his theft of the boon he came to gain (bride-theft, fire-theft); *intrinsically it is an expansion of consciousness* and therewith of being (illumination, transfiguration, freedom). The final work is that of the return. [My italics.]

The "Road of Trials" may therefore include "The Meeting with the Goddess" (*Magna Mater*); or the bliss of infancy regained" — a stage reached, at least, by the Consul in the darkness of Señora Gregorio's womb-and-tomb-like cantina — and it may also include a meeting with "'Woman as the Temptress,' the realization and the agony of Oedipus" — the Consul's devastating penetration of Maria in the innermost recesses of the Farolito, after which no "Atonement with the Father" can take place — as Sanabria's sternly implacable hostility so strongly emphasizes — perhaps because the Consul does not so much perceive and possess the anima, in this embrace, as succumb, surrender to her, surrender to his ignorance and terror of her, and is thereby possessed by her.

Even if the hero survives such tests and eventually "re-emerges from the kingdom of the dead (return, resurrection)" with the "boon" that could restore the world, he may be seriously damaged by his experiences and may, in any case, be so changed by them that he cannot reintegrate adequately into the "commonday" world.⁸ Similarly, the very nature of his gift — as something "unknown," forbidden, which threatens (and if accepted necessitates) *change* — may cause it to be ignored, misunderstood, mistreated, in the world of surface consciousness to which it has been brought.

Thus the continuous struggle of the protagonist in "The Forest Path to the Spring" — who at certain points believes himself to be living in the near-paradisal

aftermath of just such a struggle as Dana may find himself forced to confront, and as the Consul engages in and is overwhelmed by — emphasizes that, in psychological terms, the “battle” is never definitively won; or, alternatively, that retreat or escape from the “battle” (to a “Blessed Isle,” a “Land Without Fear”) can never be entirely secure.

“‘You are interfering with my great battle . . . for the survival of the human consciousness,’” the Consul tells Laruelle, who, in turn appears to suggest that this battle is essentially “spurious” and “lacks” the very “basis” required of it “for its tragic nature.” Insofar as the Consul fails to distinguish “spurious” from “genuine” elements in his “battle,” he weakens that basis; insofar as he seeks escape from rather than confrontation with symbols of transformation, as in his desire to create and remain within *his* “Land Without Evil” and without conflict — the white city of “Tlaxcala” envisioned in Chapter Ten — he reverts to a relatively preliminary stage that Campbell names the “Refusal of the Call.” In this condition, to use Campbell’s words, “All he can do is create problems for himself and await the gradual approach of his disintegration”; or, as Jung puts it: “If the demand for self-knowledge is willed by fate and is refused, this negative attitude may end in real death . . . he is caught in a blind alley from which only self-knowledge can extricate him. If he refuses this then no other is open to him. Usually he is not conscious of his situation, either, and the more unconscious he is the more he is at the mercy of unforeseen dangers. . . .”¹⁰

“[T]he essential thing is the *opus* which leads to the goal”; Lowry’s achievement in *Under the Volcano* is in the *opus* which explores and so vividly records *this* modern version of the myth of the hero. Yet the Consul fails, falls — and Laruelle survives, to live on his half-life of compromise and exile from his own creative-destructive inner-self. What then does *Under the Volcano* achieve? Is it merely a cautionary tale, fatalistic in implication, and offering only the alternatives embodied in Laruelle’s self-denying “normalcy” or the Consul’s ultimately self-destructive and compulsive rejection of “normalcy”?

If, as Jung asserts, “The hero’s main feat is to *overcome* the monster of darkness: it is the long-hoped-for and expected triumph of consciousness over the unconscious”¹¹ [my italics], what value can we discover in a “hero” who so spectacularly fails in this main task?

As I have already noted, a particular version of the myth may “isolate or concentrate on one or two of the typical elements of the full tale”; *Under the Volcano* concentrates upon the second main stage in Campbell’s cycle. The Consul, part deliberately, or wilfully, part compulsively, has essentially achieved the first stage — “a separation from the world,” and moves, during the twelve hours of the novel’s main action, definitely into — though not out of — the second: “a penetration to some source of power,” the stage of trials, and of crucial encounters with symbols of this source of power. And, as I have suggested, it is arguable that what

"The Forest Path to the Spring" deals with, essentially, is the condition of one who has returned or *retreated* from this second stage.

The value of *Under the Volcano* does not depend on the success of its hero in carrying the myth through its full cycle, but in *revitalizing* the myth in its crucial central stage. I quoted Jung as stating that "Every advance in culture, is psychologically an extension of consciousness," the role of the individual being to cut "a new path through hitherto untrodden territory." Paradoxically, this "new" path may be a very old path; the path pursued by the Consul has, in a sense, been trodden before — by those medieval alchemists whose parables and formulae Jung demonstrates to be, at best, profound explorations of the process of individuation; and by writers such as Melville, Poe, Baudelaire, Goethe, to whom Lowry pays more than occasional tribute; and, in innumerable myths and legends, by "the hero with a thousand faces."

The important achievement, Jung argues, is "not to *know* the truth, but to experience it."¹² In this instance, "knowledge" appears to mean intellectual understanding, and "experience" to be equivalent to the *combination* of intellectual understanding with emotional — with the "feeling value" of the experience.¹³ To read Campbell's synopses of myths, to understand his analyses and categorizations of stages in the hero myth — this is a valuable process, but one that operates primarily at the level of acquiring "knowledge"; to read *Under the Volcano* and to absorb its imaginative revitalization of the aspects of the myth with which it is centrally concerned, this is to move very much further towards "experience." And the value of this experience depends, crucially, upon the imaginative vitality and profundity with which the myth is explored. A playing with myth, as a kind of decorative embellishment to art, or as a more or less pretentious assertion of the universality and (therefore!) profundity of the theme that is treated, is likely to have the effect not of revitalizing the myth and its symbols, but of trivializing and thereby devaluing them (a process that is frequently at work in the "consciousness" of Dana Hilliot, and which can arguably be seen to operate, for example, in the drama of Jean Anouilh, and the fiction of John Fowles or John Barth).

Jung states:

Eternal truth needs a human language that alters with the spirit of the times. The primordial images undergo ceaseless transformation and yet remain ever the same, but only in a new form can they be understood anew.¹⁴

This statement contains the key to Lowry's achievement in *Under the Volcano*. "Not for a moment," declares Jung, "dare we succumb to the illusion that an archetype can be finally explained and disposed of. Even the best attempts at explanation are only more or less successful translations into another metaphorical language. (Indeed, language itself, is only an image.) *The most we can do is to dream the myth onwards* and give it a modern dress."¹⁵ In *Under the Volcano* Lowry attempted not to explain the myth ("knowledge") but both to explore

and to reformulate it, and by doing so to enable the reader to *experience* it — indeed, to enable *himself* to experience it. This attempt, to “dream the myth onwards and give it a modern dress” is triumphantly successful.

In this sense, Lowry is the hero who wrests meaning from the chaos of his life. In *Under the Volcano* he brings back into “common-day life” a complex yet integrated symbol of the powers of consciousness to penetrate and discover vital meanings within the ever-threatening darkness of the unconscious. That this achievement gave meaning to a life otherwise characterized by a most painful and pathetic *inability* to come to terms with a (therefore) most hostile and destructive libido, is all too evident in his biography. That the achievement simultaneously exhausted his potential for any further sustained struggle towards conscious-unconscious integration, is similarly demonstrated both in the life and the work of his last ten years.¹⁶

What Lowry confronts us with in *Under the Volcano*, if we seriously attempt to enter its world and to “dream the myth onwards,” is what Jung regards as a crucial moral problem:

The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no-one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as *present* and *real*. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge.¹⁷
[My italics.]

“Knowledge” of this problem is of strictly limited value; “experience” is essential if the problem is to be regarded as “real” rather than (merely) theoretical or suppositional. In so far as such experience can be provided by art — specifically, by literature — it must be discovered for us, and by us, through the symbol — not, as Jung emphasizes, a symbol reduced to sign and “finally explained and disposed of,” but a symbol which finds “a human language” that has altered “with the spirit of the times,” a “new form” in which it can be “understood anew.” “Wholeness,” writes Jung, “is realized for a moment only — the moment that Faust was seeking all his life.”¹⁸ The Consul fails to resolve the moral problem of the shadow, yet Lowry convinces us that his striving for “greater consciousness,” both in spite of and because of its all too human confusion and limitation, is potentially the “blessing,” as well as actually the “burden, the suffering . . . of mankind”;¹⁹ and he does so by finding a “human language” that is able to symbolize not only “the dark aspects of the personality as present and real,” but also to realize convincingly and “for a moment only” in the Consul’s psyche such a moment as “Faust was seeking all his life,” the glimpse of the beauty and intensity of “Wholeness” so briefly and poignantly achieved in the Consul’s dream-vision of “the mighty mountain Himavat.”

Jung writes that “One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious.”²⁰ In an essay “On the Relation of

Analytical Psychology to Poetry," he explains how he believes the writer can contribute to this Promethean task:

The creative process, so far as we are able to follow it at all, consists in the unconscious activation of an archetypal image, and in elaborating and shaping this image into the finished work. By giving it shape, the artist translates it into the language of the present, and so makes it possible for us to find our way back to the deepest springs of life. Therein lies the social significance of art: it is constantly at work educating the spirit of the age, conjuring up the forms in which the age is most lacking. The unsatisfied yearning of the artist reaches back to the primordial image in the unconscious which is best fitted to compensate the inadequacy and one-sidedness of the present. The artist seizes on this image, and in raising it from deepest unconscious he bring it into relation with conscious values, thereby transforming it until it can be accepted by the minds of his contemporaries according to their powers.²¹

That Lowry is such an artist as Jung describes here could be established by the identification of archetypal images that become activated in his key works and, by a detailed examination of the elaboration and shaping of these images, their translation into "the language of the present." Such an examination would show *how* this artist, having seized upon these images — or, rather, having found these images thrust upon him — brings them "into relation with conscious values," how through language, the medium of his art, he makes visible to us the inner vitality of those forces that live in "darkness" and their "unquenched and unquenchable desire for the light of consciousness."²²

NOTES

- ¹ Robert Graves, *Greek Myths* (London: Penguin, 1966), Vol. I, p. 208.
- ² *The Basic Writings of C. G. Jung*, ed. V. de Laszlo (New York, 1959), p. 137.
- ³ *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*. In *Collected Works* (1959), Vol. 9, Part I, p. 236.
- ⁴ *Psychological Reflections*, ed. Jolande Jacobi (London, 1971), pp. 308, 31, 305.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 92.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 303.
- ⁷ (New York, 1949), pp. 30, 36 ff, 246. See also Otto Rank: *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*, ed. Philip Freud (New York, 1964).
- ⁸ Campbell, pp. 36-37.
- ⁹ Mircea Eliade, *The Quest* (Chicago, 1969), p. 105.
- ¹⁰ *Psychological Reflections*, p. 333.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 299.
- ¹³ "[A]ll consciousness is manifestly founded on unconsciousness, is rooted in it, and every night is extinguished in it . . . psychopathology knows with tolerable certainty what the unconscious can do to the conscious. . . . This knowledge is an essential

pre-requisite for any integration — that is to say, a content can only be integrated when its double aspect has become conscious and when it is grasped not merely intellectually but understood according to its feeling value. Intellect and feeling, however, are difficult to put into one harness — they conflict with one another by definition." *Psyche and Symbol*, ed. V. de Laszlo (New York, 1958), pp. 29, 30.

¹⁴ *Psychological Reflections*, p. 50.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁶ Even Lowry's last major achievement, "The Forest Path to the Spring," can be seen as an attempt to reconcile a sense of defeat in this struggle, with an inability entirely to repress recurrent impulses to re-engage it.

¹⁷ *Psychological Reflections*, p. 219.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

²¹ *The Spirit in Man, Art and Literature. Collected Works* (1966), Vol. 15, p. 82.

²² *Psychological Reflections*, p. 303.

TWO THINGS FOUGHT

Cyril Dabydeen

They held the day to a topsy-turvy
They gathered dust and hurled it around
With a passion; they gritted teeth and swirled
Eyes with them — contempt for the world-watchers.

One called upon the rodent-underground
To safeguard territory; the other hissed
The reptile's sense of genesis —
There was no retreat now.

They bruised each other in a frenzy.
They let out blood and chipped bone.
They grimaced and made the sun blink.
In the darkness they pulverized each other —

Men on a horse came, men from a dream
Spectral but real, overshadowing the pulp.
A hoof stood over, a body leaned across.
Life dragged along where reptile and rodent

Fought — in an amphitheatre, spectators' loss.

MEMORY = PAIN

The Haunted World of Philip Child's Fiction

Dennis Duffy

I wandering down the Road,
... I wandering in and out
Of memory and pain.¹

THE LATE DESMOND PAGEY's single-paragraph dismissal of the fiction of Philip Child (1898-1978) in the Second Edition of the *Literary History of Canada* remains unchanged from its appearance in the original edition. No one can quarrel with its contention that Child's "skill as a novelist is not quite commensurate with the splendour of his ideals," that "he tends to be too didactic in his fiction" and shows himself "unwilling to rely upon indirection and implication." The trouble with the judgment is that it ignores an entire aspect of Child's fiction of considerable interest to students of the affective and psychological aspects of Canadian literature. An academic often involved in mediating labour-management disputes recently remarked to a group that in his job he was sometimes told the truth, once in a while the whole truth, but never nothing but the truth. So with the *Literary History's* judgment, in that its statement of a single indisputable truth shunts the reader away from some far more interesting ones.

Beyond an occasional review, an M.A. thesis which ignores 20 per cent of the canon,² and a brief treatment of *Village of Souls* (whose setting is New France in the 1640s) in D. G. Jones' *Butterfly on Rock*, Child's fiction has received no extended critical attention.³ Yet Jones' remarks — stressing as they do the mythic, dream-like, Jungian qualities of Child's first novel — indicate the kind of interest his work could generate within a literary ambience marked by *The Manticore* and *Surfacing*. My purpose in this article is neither revisionist nor rehabilitative. I seek only to point out the presence and significance of certain themes running throughout Child's novels⁴ and to demonstrate the degree to which the works' preoccupation with such matters as guilt and suffering, psychic fragmentation and sexual disturbance, provides a literary experience that does not always buttress the Christian humanist message of the books. The optimism and rationalism of Christian humanism is in fact bypassed in favour of a painful reconciliation of warring

elements through the symbolic devices of dreams. Child's is a fiction replete with the stuff of dreams, and by exploration attempts to chart a nighttime of confusion, horror and attempted restoration of calm which lies below the daytime serenity of the novels' overt messages.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS in which guilt shapes the characters and their dilemmas in Child's fiction. His crime novel, *Mr. Ames Against Time*, gives us Mike Ames, son of the title character, who has (wrongly) been found guilty by a jury of the murder of Sol Mower, a racketeer of Satanic *hybris*, himself guilty of all kinds of crimes. Mr. Ames in turn feels guilty because he feels his passive behaviour has been responsible for the poverty that may have driven his son into associating with criminals. Moulton Avery actually is guilty of attempting to murder Mower, though unaware that he didn't succeed, while Smoke, an out-cast and small-time crook, begins to feel guilty not so much for the murder he committed as for his willingness to let the son of a benefactor swing for a crime Smoke committed himself. Of course, the reader expects to find objective guilt (responsibility for misdeeds) in a detective story, but what impresses him here is the extent to which characters experience not only that "true" guilt, but also the guilt of the psychoanalysts: a neurotic acceptance of responsibility for the harm befalling others.

Mr. Ames blames himself for not having been enough of a "success" to have steered Mike away from hanging out with crooks; Mike's sweetheart, Bernie, suffers agonies of conscience because she uses a sexual come-on to try to worm out of Smoke the admission of guilt that may save her lover's life. Smoke in the meantime has been thrown into agonies of shame not only by his memory of the lynching of his father (for an unspecified crime), but through his discovery that he is descended from a notorious family of degenerates like the Jukes or Kallikaks whose miseries gained the harsh attention of social scientists. If this all appears too elaborate for the bare necessities of plot and too sophisticated for the character of a criminal degenerate, then its presence demonstrates all the more the story's absorption in the sense of ineradicable guilt and dishonour. Like Bill Sykes, Smoke is pursued by his dog (whom he has unintentionally maimed) as a reminder of his guilt; he entices the dog into a death by drowning, and almost throws himself off a bridge.

The world in this novel is one of radical corruption. Even though Sol Mower remains a brute of Hitlerian will-to-power, all the major characters enmesh themselves in guilt over his richly-deserved murder. Mr. Ames, we are assured frequently, eventually triumphs through a Ghandi-like force of personal righteousness; though he is old, frail and poor, his faith in Faith enables him to win

through to the truth in a fallen world. Yet that faith, whatever its efficacy, clearly has little basis for existence in view of the facts of this guilt-ridden world.

Guilt permeates Child's best works, *Village of Souls* and *God's Sparrows*, too. For now, recall that Daniel Thatcher, in the latter book, is burdened with sufficient guilt over an accident involving his sister to run away from home; and Jornay, in the former, is so overcome by the knowledge of his cruelty toward one of the women in his life as to accompany a missionary on his travels. Both are members of fictional worlds reflecting in a less obsessive manner the guiltiness of *Mr. Ames*. But to recall these other novels gives rise to the question: Can one rid these characters of their body of guilt?

Though Pacey has described the ideology of Child's fiction as that of Christian humanism, the frailty of that belief (even if it actually exists in the novels) becomes manifest once we consider the means by which guilt can be purged. For the author deals with a post-Christian world in which neither religious liturgies nor private prayers serve any longer as modes of purgation. A culture's attempts to come to grips with this problem lie at the very roots of Western literature. (The question of Aeschylus' *The Libation Bearers* concerns how Orestes can emerge from the rack of the obsessive sense of sin represented by the cosmology of the Eumenides and find a rational, public means for purging guilt.) Child's characters have to make do according to the tenets of secular humanism for their means of release. As anyone can observe from watching Dickens engrafting *John XI*: 25 on to Sydney Carton's final costume-change, these secularist rituals may derive their real punch from their resemblances to the religious ones they have displaced, though they are not presented in that fashion. Thus Smoke, after delivering his confession to a newspaper reporter, finds a burning building and saves a child from it, perishing in the attempt. Lys in *Village of Souls* expiates her former arrogance by tending smallpox-ridden Indians; John Wentworth in *Blow Wind, Come Wrack* atones for a period of academic ease by getting himself involved in counter-spy activities that result in his torture and near-death. While Pratt's *Brébeuf and His Brethren* offers us the ultimate version of the Great-Sufferings-Make-Great-Nations myth, a typical pattern in Child's fiction is to move from a motif of suffering-as-expiation-for-crimes-and-guilt to a practice, as in *Blow Wind*, of suffering-for-its-own-sake ("the smouldering look of one who has a moral ascendancy through having suffered more"). A brief glance at an incident in *God's Sparrows* and a lengthier one at the overall patterns of guilt and expiation in *Day of Wrath* will show the ease with which suffering comes to be its own justification.

At a World War I recruiting rally depicted in *God's Sparrows*, a jelly-bellied-flag-flapper delivers a tissue of clichés topped off by a gem of the colonial mentality. He rattles off the set piece from Shakespeare's *King John* about England being true to itself, and to the passage adds the word "Canada" as *prima facie* evidence of the rightness of boys from Hamilton, Ontario, signing up to fight

Germans in Flanders. A Victoria Cross holder follows this speech with an honest one about the nastiness and brutality of the conflict, but his argument then proceeds to the strange conclusion that the hellish sufferings he describes demand that men endure them in order to discover their capacities for enduring them. The circular movement of the logic, which sweeps the hero of the novel off his feet, reveals that beneath the rhetoric of secular heroism lies a primitive urge to affirm one's identity through suffering and annihilation. In many ways, it resembles all those post-Great-War ideologies of the European Right, demanding toughness, heroism and an eagerness to die from their followers.

To examine the fate of the principal characters in *Day of Wrath* (which is about Nazi Germany and a death-embracing ideology) is to find this pattern repeated on a larger scale. The novel is parabolic at best, set in a never-never Nazi-land where Jews escape singly from concentration camps and make their way back to their home towns.⁵ The story concerns the doomed love of a Jewish couple. Its use of familiar romantic conventions includes an ailing heroine who later goes mad and kills herself, a gruff, kindly doctor and finally an amiable prostitute. Just as *Mr. Ames* showed the wretched Smoke uplifted by his love for the good woman, Bernie Avery, so here the SS thug Froelich ceases for a moment in Anna's presence to be a brute. However, where Smoke later redeemed himself by trading his life for a baby's, Froelich is killed by the hero, Simon. He expiates his inevitable guilt — though it appears quite far-fetched, since the Nazi had been persecuting and torturing him — in a manner reminiscent of Smoke. Simon rescues a child from a bombed orphanage and is later shot as a looter since he has been skulking about the ruins. To bring the child back to life, he must crawl through a long dangerous tunnel formed by the wreckage to emerge finally upon a riverbank. But these images of childbirth yield to a final graveside scene of the acceptance of death and a trust in the emergence of some meaning from what has happened.

Simon comforts himself by saying his own *kaddish* beside the grave he has dug; the reader is told that his sacrifice has truly delivered from death the little girl he has rescued. Yet the story has also shown an operatic pattern of the wreckage of human hopes, with the whole cast littered about the stage. Some quality of meaning is asserted, but only after Simon's death. To the reader all the suffering may be irreducible to any explanation or rationalization, and the novel possesses a grimmer moral than it explicitly asserts.

Thus we have seen in the novels a pattern of widespread guilt; attempts to expiate it lead to gestures either pathetic (the boy in *God's Sparrows* trying to run off with the gypsies), desperate (running into a burning building in *Mr. Ames*) or schoolboy-heroic (becoming a counterspy in *Blow Wind*). My object is not to ridicule the gestures, but to indicate the might of the forces producing those gestures, as well as the absence of any more convincing or sophisticated ritual by

which guilt might be purged and the spirit restored to health. Even where the gesture is genuinely heroic (the rescue in *Day of Wrath*, the nursing of the sick in *Village of Souls*), it appears to be performed as much to soothe a needlessly angry conscience as to affirm life in the midst of death. We are, it seems, in the presence of great powers indeed, which shiver the individual with extraordinary ease.

God's Sparrows offers a classic instance of literary form conveying a theme more striking and profound than what the overt message states. Child's best novel next to *Village of Souls*, an excerpt from it formed the subject of a 1970 TV drama. Significantly, the TV play depicted an over-the-top moment in a Canadian squad on the Western Front, and it is the novel's treatment of the Great War that remains its most arresting feature. But, as J. R. McGillivray pointed out in an early review of the novel, the work offers an uneasy synthesis of family chronicle and war novel.⁶ As the hero, Daniel Burnet Thatcher, grows up and goes to war the family material devolves into a series of obituary notices and time-outs while the battle machinery gobbles up everything else in sight. The conclusion focusses upon the near-dead, shattered body of the hero (every companion he has ever had is now dead, and his last friend just tossed into a common trench), and Wellington (Hamilton) might as well be on the other side of the moon.

A family-based culture marked by tenderness and gentility ("gentleman" and "gentle folk" are frequently used terms; they do not appear snobbish or unconvincing) has been turned into an irrelevant sideshow by a culture now bent on self-destruction. As the recruiter's speech showed, that culture has come to accept violence and suffering as a moral means test. But the strains of a culture torn to pieces by its contradictory impulses — Upper Canadian civilization and its discontents — are best exemplified in the splits apparent in the hero and in the patterns of psychic division occurring among the other characters of the novel.

Daniel Burnet Thatcher's very name introduces us to the first tension within his personality, the Cavalier Burnets (Upper Canada) and the Roundhead Thatchers (New England). Much is made of this in the novel; the Yankee idealism and quest for righteousness of the hero's father provide a constant foil to the easy-going, respectable hedonism of Uncle Charles. Of course, neither response to experience gets one through a crisis: the morality of Pen Thatcher, the father, culminates in the heart attack he suffers as a result of his harrassment as critic of the War, while the cakes and ale, the Burnet style and flash of Uncle Charles drive him to blow himself up along with a bridge in order to deny it to an enemy who will find a way across the river anyway.

The familial divisions within Daniel's personality are intensified by the cultural barriers between respectability and the roving life. In other words, our concern shifts from in-laws to outlaws. To be sure, what constitutes a lapse from respectability on the part of an Upper Canadian might be taken as a proof of it in a less-restrained culture, but Daniel delights in his conviction that he bears gypsy blood. It is all a Bliss Carman, open-collared sort of genteel bohemianism, but Daniel does run away to the gypsies as a young boy in an effort to escape from the guilt he feels over an injury he inadvertently inflicted upon his sister. The gypsies bring him back (no one in a Child novel gets away that easily), though he encounters one of them again as his wartime batman (officer's servant). Since Daniel associates the gypsies with the Borrovin' life, the image of an artillery unit on the march as a gypsy caravan can only strike the reader as an odd one. More to the point is the fact that Jobey, the last person killed, dies protecting Daniel from a grenade, so that even his lifelong devotion to the pleasure principle must yield to a spirit of wartime self-sacrifice. Not even bohemians are safe.

If the idea of the gypsy represents a strain in Daniel's character at odds with the clannish comforts of Ardentinnny (the monumental family pile later celebrated in *The Victorian House*), a more convincing — though no less conventionalized — alternative comes in the person of Daniel's cousin, Quentin. Like his more famous modernist namesake from Jefferson, Mississippi, his leanings are aesthetical. An outsider at prep school, Quentin goes on to alienate himself further from respectability by writing poetry and later trying to pursue the vocation of a conscientious objector at the Front. Upset at the nasty, routine war crime of bayonetting battlefield prisoners, Quentin manages to survive his harsh treatment by the military authorities. Daniel continues to own and respect his cousin and at the end of an involved dream (more on this below) cries that Quentin is "my friend . . . part of me." This only confirms what the reader has already guessed.

After all, Quentin is a more intense and passionate version of Daniel, his literary bohemianism a more convincing evocation of Daniel's repressed side than Jobey's footlooseness. Both Daniel and Quentin are bullied at school, though Quentin's delight in his own intellectual powers ensures that his treatment will be worse than his cousin's. Quentin's trials as a CO are more intense and demanding than Daniel's reluctance — out of concern for his father's health — to enlist. Quentin's abuse for his peacemongering is paralleled by Daniel's receipt of a white feather from an hysterical girlfriend. Ultimately, both men go back upon their rebel principles, Daniel because he cannot resist the recruiter's call to idealized suffering, Quentin because he feels that to continue not to fight is to separate himself from life itself, from the pain and suffering he views as the universal marks of existence. For both characters, suffering serves as the bond holding human beings together. Thus the closest moment between Daniel and his sweetheart happens when she is almost deathly ill and he due up the line for a final offensive.

The life force in this novel is simply not very strong, which is why a cousin, after a yes-to-life outburst that "people ought to spend themselves on others even if it destroys them," dies having a baby the doctors warned her against.

Whatever stronger and more passionate an embodiment of Daniel that Quentin may represent, that lively force is never really embraced. The reconciliation that represents the attainment of some sort of psychic wholeness occurs only during Daniel's lengthy dream of Chapter XIX, which happens the night of his cousin's death. The romantic convention of reconciliation during either dream or death obtains, but the action continues and leaves Daniel at the end an utterly alone, wrecked figure hauled away by the stretcher bearers. We return to the familiar paradox that this attempt to reconcile the family chronicle with the war novel concludes with an alienated figure whose family life and structure have become irrelevant to the world he has to live in.

There is always something very tiresome in writing about the gaps in a hero's psyche. After all, what culture worthy of the name has ever produced men so complete in themselves as to feel perfectly at home in this world? Why single out these novels for special attention; why notice one person muttering to himself in an insane asylum full of them? My justification is that the incidence in Child's novels of torn seekers of better selves is almost universal. It isn't merely a case of St. Augustine's universal restlessness that can find no peace until it rests in God, but a case of widespread sundering and deprivation. Recall Jornay who is torn between France and the New France of the 1640's, the Paris of the Court of Miracles (the thieves' quarter immortalized in Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris*) and the Quebec of the *pays d'en haut*. Thus he must, through a device familiar in romantic fiction (*Ivanhoe*, *The Deerslayer*), choose between a dark heroine and a light one. The dark one, a semi-Christianized Indian who represents Canada, embodies the creole's dilemma in the incompatibility of the cultures within her. The fair one, a Parisian *demi-mondaine*, shares the hero's dilemma, though misfortune, disease and death resolve it for her. Mr. Ames' efforts to save his son propel him into the unaccustomed (and life-shortening) role of mover and doer, breeding in him a dissatisfaction with (and guilt about) his old self and a discomfort in the new. And so it goes in the other novels, though none of them contains the variety of substitute selves one finds in *God's Sparrows*.

Something about the war experience itself seems to have produced the intensity of the pattern of human relationships, for even the author's purported distance from his text is shortened. However autobiographical it may be in parts, *God's Sparrows* is told in the third person. Yet one of Quentin's poems from his notebook concludes the novel. The poem's message, the gloomy one that his words about death do not even assuage his own loneliness, so the reader should not expect anything different, suits the rest of the novel. Yet this poem, along with other songs from books, is reprinted in Child's collection of poetry,⁷ though no

hint is given as to its supposed status as the product of a literary persona. It is as if Conan Doyle had included in his history of the South African War, without quotation marks, the comments of Sherlock Holmes. Not only does Daniel's experience to some degree match the author's, he gives Quentin an aspect of his own self as well.

Further evidence of the enduring nature of the splitting of the hero in *God's Sparrows* comes from the author's 1965 blank verse long poem, *The Wood of the Nightingale*. It, too, concerns the Great War. Its hero, Hugh Kingdom (*Matthew* xix: 14 discloses the link between the author's name and his character's), looks to the people around him for reflections of himself. His brother, Ken (the anonymous narrator of *The Victorian House* mentions him as one of the War dead) plays Dr. Jekyll, while his demonic counterpart remains Spurge (the name of a weed). Ken, the *preux chevalier*, is hated by Spurge, who surprisingly likes Hugh, possibly because both had a hand (in Hugh's case, accidental) in the death of close relatives. Here it is useful to recall the guilt experienced by Daniel Thatcher over the hurt involuntarily given his sister. Daniel loses his girl to his own brother, Alastair, while Ken Kingdom loses his to Spurge. Daniel woos and then saves the life of Beatrice, sister of the girl who jilted him to marry his brother. Beatrice herself regrets her failure to consummate her relationship with a former lover. A similar taint of death, renunciation and sexual substitution hangs over the events of *The Wood of the Nightingale* when Hugh Kingdom falls in love with the sister of a German he has slain. This person he terms his alter ego, and he has perforce embraced the corpse during a bombardment, in a Gothic realization of Wilfred Owen's "Strange Meeting." Hugh cannot win the girl until he has been reconciled with her brother in a dream, and here we recall the similar dream reconciliation in *God's Sparrows*.

My list of shadowy relationships and motifs argues that a common matrix, a symbolic vocabulary of psychic displacement, produced both War works and produces to an extreme degree in *God's Sparrows* what can be found in milder forms in the other novels. In the same way, the ever-present theme of sexual disturbance will be best observed through a close examination of *Village of Souls*.

SEXUALITY BECOMES A PAINFUL BURDEN in the world of *Village of Souls*, a strange phenomenon in a novel whose message is embodied in a process of sexual selection. As noted, Jornay's acceptance of Canadian realities shows itself through his union with the Indian woman in preference to the French woman he first wed. Yet the acquaintance between Anne and Jornay has not been a lengthy one before he comes upon her castrating an Indian captive with a bone dagger. Oddly enough, Lys, the refined French woman, has sat watching the

entire play with considerable aplomb, which recalls Jornay's first glimpse of her. One of the newly-arrived *filles du roi* in Montreal, Jornay spots her as he turns his eyes away from the public torture of two Mohawk captives at the Place d'Armes. The grim scene has its place in history, the Jesuit *Relations* assure us, but Child's use of this horror as a device for introducing one of his heroines is an ambiguous one. On the one hand, Lys undergoes shock at the sight (though its newness to her may be overstated: one's chances of viewing official atrocities in the streets of Paris under *l'ancien régime* were considerable) and the author takes care to underline the incongruities of this love-at-first-sight amid such savagery. On the other hand, we have witnessed a bizarre but still effective presentation of the death-and-the-maiden motif. That the image presented of death is sadistic rather than melancholy only renders the moment gamier, more modernist in tone.

This linkage between Lys and death continues. For example, when we are given a flashback to the events which plucked her from Fontainebleau and washed her up on the shores of New France, the story is no ordinary one of financial and social disasters that might force someone to abandon the *douceur de vie* and strike out for the wilderness. Instead, we are told of a girl trained in the practices of the *demimonde* by her gentleman-at-large father. Her refusal of the advances of a wicked duke results not only in the stabbing of her husband by his bravoës, but in a scene almost grotesque in its sudden violence her father is tossed out of a high window. Lys is hustled to the Bastille, branded on the shoulder with the *fleur de lys* and finally packed off to New France.

If Jornay's youth in the Alsatia of the Court of Miracles recalls Hugo, the branded shoulder reminds us of *The Three Musketeers*, while the brutalities of the artistocrat denied sexual privilege have appeared before in *A Tale of Two Cities*. Clearly, the conventions of the historical romance are at work here. Interestingly enough, it is the works just noted that are most echoed, rather than such home-grown grand operas as William Kirby's *The Golden Dog* or Sir Gilbert Parker's *The Seats of the Mighty*. The attempts of the latter novels — however compromised by their operatic sweep — to get at the larger drives of greed and self-enhancement lying behind the imperial presence in North America are not repeated in *Village of Souls*. Rather this novel — so strange are the bedfellows made by literary history — recalls nothing so much as Cohen's *Beautiful Losers*. Both books concentrate on sexual conflicts; both books do so by showing how a number of characters attempt to come to grips with a colonial reality.

If Lys' appearances have been accompanied by violence and death when her sexual attractions are most apparent, the presence of death continues to enfold her as the story proceeds. Taken captive by the Indians, she passes much of the rest of her life attempting to nurse them through an outbreak of smallpox. Jornay finally catches up with her after their separation at a splendidly evoked waste land that could have sprung from *Childe Roland*, an Indian village destroyed by small-

pox. Her final appearance before her husband after she has taken poison to hasten an approaching death happens during a dream of Jornay's which D. G. Jones aptly terms "a night journey into the unconscious."

In view of the usual clear-cut distinction between light and dark heroines, and with the light one in this case associated with a morbid, decadent sexuality, the reader would expect to find Lys' rival linked with the forces of life and fertility. However, this isn't the case. We have seen that Anne's cruelty is evident from an early stage. In her wilderness she embodies the monstrous aspects of the wilderness which the novel frequently mentions. Her first sexual experience with Jornay is a rough, brutal one which she provokes. Jornay's final reconciliation with Anne happens after she has Christianized herself and grown closer to Lys, so that she too goes off to Indian villages to nurse smallpox victims. Thus Anne and Jornay, once Lys and her spirit have departed, form a kind of prototypical Canadian couple, able both to embrace and transcend the savagery of their environment. Jornay's final vision is one of man's insignificance amid the wild grandeur of nature. Sexuality is seen as having the power to make for man "a dust-speck world within the infinite wilderness," but for this to happen the demonic aspects of Anne have to be displaced on to another character.

Such a figure is the Métis Titange, drunken and violent, who tries to carry Lys off and whom Jornay finally half-blinds in a fight. Titange later drowns himself in despair at his approaching total blindness, but not before he has reinforced a number of the links the novel establishes between sexuality and the demonic. Easily the most sexually aggressive male in the novel — Jornay, except for his brief outburst with Anne, fills the passive role of the hero of historical romance that has been with us since Sir Walter Scott⁸ — Titange sets up his attempted kidnapping of Lys during a stormy night suited "for love and devilry!" (Jornay's taking of Anne, by the way, is accompanied by "tophet flames" from the fireplace.) We are given a sequence of demonic images of nature and the Indians and Titange's place in that motif links sexual aggression with the infernal. Sex, death and the devil dance together, and account for Jornay's spasmodic patterns of behaviour. His rough taking of Anne precedes a period of drunken stupor and social retreat, socially a less acceptable form of the passivity marking his early romantic idealization of Lys. Any expression of sexuality knots him in crippling guilt; a rare moment of mutual sexual attraction between Jornay and Lys happens when there is "something demoniacal in the night." Married to the absent Lys while loving the nearby Anne, he must be released from his captivity by Lys' ghost before he can break from his passivity and choose the woman who has demanded this dynamism of him.

Obviously, sexuality remains a mysterious power that can become socialized only with difficulty, by the sort of compromises Anne must make in her bows toward Christianity and through the extinction of such demonic rowdies as

Titange. Nature, even when no longer seen as Atwood's nature-the-monster, is either purged into a vast indifference (the novel's conclusion) or made palatable by an idealized experience of mystical union with it. Just as Lys becomes purer and better the more she disregards her life-drives and immerses herself in the deathly reality of the disease-ridden village, so do the characters in *God's Sparrows* thrive best on a regime of renunciation.

Thus Daniel Thatcher, after an incomplete encounter with an inoffensive prostitute, stumbles out of her room declaring: " 'Women! God Almighty, how I loathe them.' He felt as though he had been dragged through ordure." Shortly afterward, he receives a telegram informing him of his mother's death. Of course, Daniel loses his first girl to his brother and best shows his love for Beatrice within an atmosphere of impending death. So also the love between Simon and Anna in *Day of Wrath* ultimately causes her death, while sexual rivalries implicate Mike Ames in the murder of Mower. Finally, John Wentworth of *Blow Wind* allows himself to admit his love for Ione only after he has discovered that she, too, is a counterspy and that they must brave danger together. Even then he is ready to have her killed by the villain rather than accede to his Satanic request to bow down before him. Oddly enough, the threatened heroine supports this magical concept of symbolic gesture, affirming that, " 'If he made you kneel, then men everywhere would bow to evil and we'd be done for. . . .'"

Granted then that sexuality appears largely as a destructive force, something often appearing within a context of violence and death, the paradox remains that to embrace suffering and death purges guilt and legitimizes sex. Jornay then wins Anne after he has pursued her through a demonically hostile wilderness, a treacherous morass in which he is granted the vision of a reconciled, etherealized Lys, a pursuit which nearly costs him his life. And Daniel Thatcher, who refused to sleep with Beatrice even after she had offered herself to him, can feel the depth of his love for her when she appears to be dying and he is bound for the next military offensive. As I pointed out earlier, guilt is a pervasive force throughout Child's fiction, and the rituals by which it may be purged are many. One of its principal sources remains the very existence of sexuality, with its unruly kicks against the goods of civilization and its associations with the demonic. (It is the devilish Spurge in *The Wood of the Nightingale* who steals Ken Kingdom's girl through an almost magical device of telling a few lies.) This inability to accommodate themselves to their sexual natures provides one of the forces producing the frequent splits within Child's characters. It produces as well the necessity for having a number of figures, each of whom carries a detached portion of the hero's psyche. In short, the novels are replete with centrifugal forces, with unmediated energies threatening to tear apart the works' moral coherences. What pulls these forces into some sort of compatibility? That, in art as in life, comes about through dreams and visions which provide symbolic re-enactments of the real events of the novel,

and it is to the dreamworld that our attention must now turn, and (as *Day of Wrath* puts it) "The unconscious mind — where some say deity does his work with men."

DREAMS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE in all of Philip Child's fiction, foreshadowing disasters or providing flashbacks, granting both hope and despair in the many-tongued speech of symbolism. Even meditative, near-dream-like states of consciousness provide havens of peace and self-recollection during stressful periods. However the role of dreams in the two best novels is a structural one. Not only do the dreams advance the perceptions of the characters, but they bring into a temporary reconciliation the warring themes of the works. The clearest example of this occurs in *God's Sparrows*.

The author once remarked to me that dreams and the ability to dream kept him sane on the Western Front even though nightmares were his bane in the months immediately following his demobbing.⁹ Daniel Thatcher's major dream in chapter xix represents the closest the character will come to grasping that psychic wholeness that has eluded him.

The dream goes on for too long; it owes a little to Kipling's "On the Gate: a Story of '16" (1926). Most importantly, it offers a very "literary" (structured, patently referential) event rather than the more murkily symbolic and a-logical depiction of experience in dreams themselves. Its most striking characteristic consists in its use of the familiar stuff of military squalor and bureaucracy. Earlier, the novel has recounted Daniel and Beatrice's encounter with a spiritualist; while the man is no charlatan, the advice given Daniel by a stranger on the bus does him as well as anything he heard in the Magic-Flute-Egyptian confines of the medium's place of business. So with the dream, which follows a host of khaki-clad figures as they move through deathly parades to sentencing by military kangaroo courts to a glimpse of the celestial machineries where life is broken and renewed. The vision of reincarnation comes only after the commonplace frustrations of military life have been re-experienced.

I mentioned earlier that his cousin Quentin is the most interesting thing about Daniel, and in the dream Daniel reclaims himself through asserting kinship/twinship with his cousin during a court martial. In a way he has already done this, since partway through the dream his own consciousness merges for a while with Quentin's. However abrupt this switch may be, its dream-logic reveals a significant step by Daniel in his own healing, a process that will culminate in the claiming of kinship and the vision of life's process of distintegration/reintegration. The death of Quentin — which we learn happened as the dream took place — has become beside the point, and Daniel's taking of the poetic notebook his cousin left behind

and the poem's appearance as the novel's last word reveal the extent to which (on the level of the dreamlike and unconscious) Daniel's mission has been accomplished. The difficulty holds that the novel still remains split between dream and waking. However exhilarating the look at the vale of soul-making, however much the novel's characters may choose to position their moves for personal integration within "inner" psychic processes, the fact remains that a realistic novel — this novel — possesses an ineradicable commitment to the "outer" processes of society and politics. Our final look at Daniel Thatcher shows him a shattered wreck barely preserved from being hurled alive into a common grave. This may not impress a *guru*, but it is the kind of thing that registers on novel readers. The ending of *God's Sparrows* demonstrates the extent to which the world of dreams and the unconscious helps to knit together the splintered hero, but shows as well the fissures between that world and the everyday one which the novel cannot bridge.

"Don't you know there's a war on?" has been a traditional formula for snuffing whatever candles of moderation and decency might have been left burning during wartime. Similarly, the world at war in this novel sucks dry every other value but that of survival, so that the visionary remains of less importance than the practical. This is not quite the case with *Village of Souls*; some explanation of this difference is necessary to understand the more credible role played here by dreams and the visionary. The novel maintains credibility as a somewhat modernist version of the matter of historical romance. Far less concerned with grand political questions than its predecessors, far more meditative in act and tone, it still owes a bit to their flair for melodrama, sudden violence and shocking revelations. Its tortured characters, however, the wasteland setting, its journey into the dark of the soul, its dependence upon the unravelling of a series of lies and misunderstandings as its mode of plot revelation, with truth thus made into a private rather than a public matter: all these mark it as a unique piece of historical fiction, especially in view of its publication date (1933). Current critical practice could be tempted into reading the work as the projection of a contemporary existential dilemma onto a New France background (Yourcenar's *Hadrian's Memoirs* serves as a case in point), but the urge must be resisted. The novel's historical sense consists of more than its reliance upon the Jesuit *Relations* for certain incidents (see the opening "Note"); it is also a matter of the characters' dilemmas between the realities of frontier life and the conventions — sexual, cultural, religious — of *la douce France* ringing true, though they may not be expressed with word-for-word literality. The haunted wilderness, the Gothicism that Margot Northey has found elsewhere in Canadian fiction, presents itself here as well, but as a function of the cast of mind which newly-arrived Europeans would bring to the scene. For them and for its native inhabitants the country demands that it be grasped in terms of the non-rational and intuitive, the dreamlike and the visionary.

We expect the Indian, Anne, to reflect her culture's reliance upon dreams for the interpretation of experience. From the start she possesses some sort of racial memory/dream of white men in big ships whom she is compelled to seek out (the source of this is never quite explained, a weakness in the novel). Anne initially shudders at the individualism and introspection of the whites, since her version of interiority consists of a closeness to a collective tribal consciousness. She lives within a magical universe which Jornay (a trifle unrealistically for an uneducated Frenchman of his class and time) has left. Both he and Titange are aware of the extent to which dreams through suggestion can be cynically manipulated into rationalizations for fulfilling otherwise illicit desires.

Lys also, as part of the process by which the competing heroines merge at their edges (they both come to nurse victims of plague), is a flagrant dreamer. Thus long periods of time can pass for her "Like a dream" and, more importantly, she comes to Jornay as the object of an idealized erotic attachment, someone who represents the fantastic ("we are phantoms"). Jornay's bad dreams of a withered Lys (are they wish-fulfillments of the sort Jornay accuses the Huron of dreaming?) come true, and he encounters her finally in the surreal landscape of the dead villages sinking back into the bush. The reader of the novel is more than once told that the title comes from an Indian image of the afterlife: a village everyday in its appointments but populated only by the spirits of the dead. The charnel-house where Jornay finally locates Lys is a grisly counterpart of this Elysium (everything has its double), and the ephemeral nature of the humans contrasted with the "everlasting" trees, rocks and water sees to it that most human activities come to appear tissue-like and dreamy.

No wonder that Lys, even though she is white, recounts the patterns of the soon-to-be-ended relationship between herself and Jornay in terms of an Indian legend involving magic and the dead. Whether or not the tale is an "authentic" legend or one the author made up to point a moral doesn't matter. The important thing is that the parabolic and fantastic have become the accepted mode of discourse, and that within that mode supernaturalism and surrealism have come to rule, as if Jesus had delivered his parables in terms of djinns and afreets instead of sheep and seeds. Through the same logic of experience, Jornay's quest for his once-beloved becomes the night journey, a process of exploration of an almost phantasmagoric landscape. When it nearly kills him, the environment will have then imposed enough suffering upon him to have relieved him of the burden of guilt over Lys. The remarkable concluding section of the novel climaxes when Jornay, "beaten," "bruised," hobbling on "in spite of the pain," "ill and trembling," beholds in a dream the spirit of Lys in a grand apotheosis of swirling cloud. She gazes upon him with love and pity, the whore now a madonna; he views her with terror. His final perception notes her beauty, bringing to full circle his first glimpse of her and "the connected thoughts of death and of woman's beauty."

The tragic (pity and terror) combines with the erotic to produce a ritual in dream by which the burden of guilt can be lifted. This incident, rather than the vague, inconclusive reunion with Anne,¹⁰ resolves the novel's principal themes, of guilt, its pervasiveness and its final purging.

It is in *Village of Souls*, with its world where the divisions between dream and reality have been blurred, that Child proves best able to provide a convincing (not realistic, but convincing, the way *The Magic Flute* is convincing) calming of the storms of guilt, psychic disintegration and sexual terror which afflict his characters. The success of the integration process in that novel provides us with a heightened awareness of the unbridled horrors existing elsewhere. This helps to explain the didacticism, the flat declarations of hope and rejoicing that spot the novels. They exist, not as beauty spots over an unacknowledged fear, but as charms against a clear and present sense of danger. The cruel and monstrous shapes of frustration, which reveal the wrong people falling in love and the right people under a steam-roller, never quite fade away from the novels, however intense their subjection to happy (or at least hopeful) endings. This psychic savagery makes them still interesting to read and of some significance in tracing in our culture the assaults of modernism upon the certitudes of traditional systems of belief. In Child's fiction, those beliefs are still there to be asserted, though they cannot be integrated fully with the tangled, more subversive realities of the stories. The clashing systems can only be accommodated in dreams. But we wake to pain.

NOTES

- ¹ Philip Child, *The Wood of the Nightingale* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1965), p. 87.
- ² Linzey Kupsh, "An Introduction to the Novels of Philip Child" (M.A. thesis, Université Laval, 1958). This work overlooks the wartime thriller *Blow Wind, Come Wrack*, published pseudonymously (by "John Wentworth") in 1945 and acknowledged by the author as early as 1951 on the page opposite the title of *The Victorian House*.
- ³ See also Wm. H. Magee, "Philip Child: A Re-Appraisal," *Canadian Literature*, No. 24 (Spring 1965), pp. 28-36. This article deals briefly with questions of literary form.
- ⁴ The novels are: *Village of Souls* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1948 [orig. ed.: London: Thornton Butterworth, 1933]); *God's Sparrows* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1937); *Blow Wind, Come Wrack* (London: Jarrold's, 1945); *Day of Wrath* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1945); *Mr. Ames Against Time* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1949).
- ⁵ A similar absence of a firmly-felt sense of place also mars *Mr. Ames*, where a number of references are made to Canadian institutions even though one character asks another, referring to a brief, evening jaunt, if there has been much traffic in Hoboken.
- ⁶ "Letters in Canada. 1937. Fiction," *UTQ*, 7 (April 1938), 351-52.
- ⁷ "To a Future Poet," *The Victorian House and Other Poems* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1951), p. 52.

- ⁸ Significantly, Jorney's double, "who reflected his own moods grotesquely, like a twisted mirror," is a deracinated wreck of an Indian whose tribe has been destroyed by the Yankees, a very Canadian Last Mohican.
- ⁹ Conversation 3 February 1977.
- ¹⁰ "What had they for each other — happiness? tragedy? Perhaps both. They were together and life would go on. 'The Metchi-sipi,' he thought, 'we'll see where it flows. . . .'"

BLUE STOCKINGS

Alexandre L. Amprimoz

woman
speaks softly
laughs well

thin fire
spreading under
skin

papers
minutely marked
classes carefully prepared

allergic to rye
reads the greeks
and feels knowledge
as a chain

But ignorance bound,
he lets her speak of minorities
with a perfect CBC accent.
His own knowledge
breeding that stupidity.
The rich, the poor, the clever —
all equal minorities.

AND, NOW, HE,
WOULD, LIKE, TO, PUNCTUATE,
HER, SPEECH, WITH,
HIS, HEELS.

EYES

Ron Miles

(for the librarian)

I

Mine pained:
your desk in turmoil, paper
scraps escaping to the floor

or settling in your chair like leaves
around two roots grown foolishly
above the ground.

Yours strained to stay half open,
jostled by the half-remembered images
that drink made swim,

your shoulder hunched
to parry half-expected blows
and practise riddles no one guessed.

Your eyes are closed.

II

We worked in separate passages
and when they crossed
cast eyes, like scraps of paper

to the floor. Mine knew you
crumpled, soiled, an insult.
More: a warning.

Yours knew long-haired boys
with tanned and tender flesh, a half-
remembered wife and children left.

Now half-remembering is all I dare,
my eyes unwilling in your dark
and riddled past.

Your desk is bare.

TWIN MISUNDERSTANDINGS

The Structure of Patricia Blondal's

A Candle To Light the Sun

Laurence R. Ricou

"If I read till my eyeballs ache I shall eventually get a hint. It's like a mystery story, but the mystery is inside the reader waiting to be unraveled."

THROUGHOUT THE GENERALLY WARM REVIEWS of Patricia Blondal's *A Candle to Light the Sun* (1960) runs the persistent reservation that the novel lacks discipline: "reads everywhere like the sprawling incoherent first draft of a very promising novel," wrote Miriam Waddington in *Canadian Literature*; "there are enough characters and incidents for ten novels" observed F. W. Watt in "Letters in Canada." Certainly Blondal, driven by the premonition and then by the knowledge that she would die from cancer, knew she did not have time for ten novels. And the general impression that the novel consists of nice insights and lyric moments lost in a clutter of eccentrics and unlikely events has apparently persuaded most readers and students of Canadian literature to ignore it. But the novel should not be dismissed solely for having too much in it. On the contrary its amplitude should challenge an examination of Blondal's structural principles, and of the relevance of particular details to the whole novel. In beginning that analysis here I hope to show the way to a fuller understanding of the novel's meaning and achievement.

Blondal's prose in *A Candle to Light the Sun* is dense with new understandings, surprising resonances and startlingly right images. She is sensitive to the force which will unify her novel: the repetition of such images as the wind, the light, the railway, or the sun; the unobtrusive motifs, such as the variations on "thinness," or on "waiting"; the bristling of allusions, most obviously to the Bible and to T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land." There is, in short, whatever the imprecisions and hastiness,¹ much evidence that Blondal planned and constructed the novel with considerable care. This care is particularly impressive and interesting in the way she makes pairings of characters a principal structural and thematic feature.

Blondal was a fascinated student of psychology; her papers² include scribbles of notes (reminiscent of the scribbles accumulated by David Newman, the central character of *A Candle to Light the Sun*) on Freud, on Jung, and on the history of epilepsy. Her interest in psychology accounts for her attempts to expose the buried lives, the secret selves, in the individual character, as in *Mouse Bluffs* (and, indeed, in the world of which *Mouse Bluffs* is a microcosm). She is absorbed by imperfect man's lust for perfection; she sees human relationships tottering uneasily on longtime, deliberately nurtured misunderstandings. She creates her characters in pairs and watches them collide. In outlining *A Candle to Light the Sun* her notes describe the plot as "The Twin Misunderstanding":

David in his hunger secretly believes he is Doctor Ross's son.

Ross believes David an epileptic, if he were perfect Ross would have to accept him fully.

Blondal's attraction to this pattern can also be seen in the more transparently structured *From Heaven With a Shout* (1963).³ Through a classified advertisement Alex Lamond hires Arden Calcott as a wife. The story describes their mutual attempts to transcend the misunderstandings inherent in such strange beginnings. Arden must try to understand both Alex and his twin brother, George, a "duality in one man." The pattern of twinning is completed by the introduction of Monica Cosgrove, Alex's first wife, a doctor like him, and a lover to both brothers. Such complicated balancing is basic to both novels, and dozens of minor and major reflections of the design occur throughout *A Candle to Light the Sun*: the novel's division into two books, the tension between *Mouse Bluffs* and *Winnipeg*, the polarities of valley and plain, or river and drought, of Old Country and new, of "two societies . . . ordinary townfolk and the railroaders," the conflict between David and Darcy, the harmony of David and Ian, even the contradictory longings of the Henderson Twins. The contrapuntal structure, as old as literature itself, has its modern psychological dimension in Blondal's use of the pairings to objectify one person's encounter with himself. According to Derek Crawley, reviewing *From Heaven With a Shout* in *The Dalhousie Review*, "Blondal was always impressed by what she saw as Dostoevsky's attempt in *The Brothers Karamazov* to explore the artistic possibilities of fragmenting the various pulls within one individual into different fictional characters."

Crawley's suggestion that Blondal trusted the artist before the psychologist is particularly important. Indeed, as much as she was intrigued by psychological study, she probably shared the view she gives to Ian Ross in her notes: psychologists (their representative in the novel, of course, is Basil Waterman) are the "spiritual successors to the old puritans, . . . who cried deep and strong for a formal method of dealing with life, a prescribed manner of reaction to all things." Patricia Blondal was not concerned with working out a particular psychological

theory in fiction, but she was serious about probing the mind through the more reliable — because less prescriptive, less arbitrary — psychologizing of the writer's imagination.

Examination of any of a dozen or more characters would illustrate her detailed scrutiny. The intricate relationships among characters, by which Blondal challenges the questioning reader, extend even to quite minor figures (such as the parallel between Gavin Ross and Matt Henderson). But four characters — David Newman, Gavin Ross, Ian Ross and Darcy Rushforth — are most central to the structure and meaning of *A Candle to Light the Sun*. Blondal knows these characters intimately; whether or not she admires them, she certainly understands them. I had always felt that Blondal's sympathy for her characters emerged readily enough from the novels, but I found exciting confirmation of it in her papers. In creating eight of her major characters Blondal wrote sketches of up to eight pages for each. Six of these sketches, including those for the characters just mentioned, are written in the first person. Although the novel was to be written in the third person, primarily from David Newman's point of view, Blondal diligently attempted to know her characters from the inside, to imagine how they would see things from their own perspective. As a result, her characters persist in the memory with an individuality beyond their eccentricity.

A Candle to Light the Sun opens with the tentative contact, in sift of "snow, salt-fine" and dark of night, between the old doctor, Gavin Ross, and the frail, sensitive ten-year-old boy, David Newman. Gavin's solemn announcement, "The King is dead," marks not only the town's connection to an imperial past, but initiates a repeated pondering throughout the novel on the nature of kingship. David is at first frightened, partly by the looming figure of Gavin, but more by the magnitude of the King's death. But then — it is a key to the dramatic conception of the scene and apt to go unnoticed — Gavin sits down on the snowy steps. In doing so he brings himself down to David's level, and seems to reveal a warmth, even a humility, which makes his relationship with David much more credible. Blondal's analysis of the impact of the announcement indicates that David's development through the novel is not so much a wrenching away from all that he has been, but a consolidation of a change that occurs in Chapter One:

A boy stands in a bucket of syrup, waiting for someone to free him, reach out and touch his hand and release him, waits and waits, watches with apprehension the adults, not wanting to go, yet aching for someone to show him how, free his way, afraid to leave for the larger place, afraid of the night, the bleak unhappy old faces.⁴

For Blondal the death of the King marks the end of an era, the symbolic freeing of the town from an old loyalty. But behind the social significance lies the critical personal significance for David. He is not only discovering adult emotion, but also the *sharing* of that emotion. Blondal's emphasis suggests that David is here first

thinking — or feeling — for himself: the sharing with Ross is not so much a coming together, as it is an establishing of his independence and individuality, through his discovery of loss and loneliness.

Already in this carefully conceived opening scene, the polarities are peculiarly insistent: a boy / an old man; town / prairie; fire / ice; the King is dead / the Prince of Wales is King; joy / disaster; the *Family Herald* / the *Illustrated London News*. Such balancing of images governs the novel's lyricism, and, as the pattern grows through the novel, establishes the emotional landscape within which David struggles for himself. Here is a boy desperate for his own freedom, and yet at the same time desperate for a father. His maturing will involve both attempts to reconcile polarities and, more importantly, a recognition of the necessity of making a choice, of the time when there can be no more waiting.

David's fantasy that Gavin is his father is strengthened when Gavin gives him a dollar to spend on the Clear Lake trip, and invites him to come and meet Darcy Rushforth on his return. The irony is that Gavin's gesture is prompted not by his own affection, but by Ian's reminder of their debt to the boy. This irony demonstrates something of Blondal's technique of fragmenting and simplifying characters. The two brothers are acting in concert, as parts, in a sense, of one personality. Gavin may be doing what he wants to do, what his own yearning for a son urges (he had on the first night invited David in, and asked him to return), but we see the pressure applied externally, by Ian as a sort of *alter ego*. Gavin, we must remember, is by profession a doctor, and he is meeting David here primarily as patient.

It is as doctor, according to Blondal's note on "The Twin Misunderstanding," that Gavin Ross fundamentally misunderstands David. Yet it is clear from Chapter Six that Blondal's intention to have David mistaken for an epileptic has been altered — wisely, I think. At the worst Gavin sees David as a frail boy of poor appetite; David's one medical problem, the TB scars on his lungs, is not diagnosed until he attempts to enlist, and then by another doctor. David's conclusion that Gavin thinks him "constitutionally inadequate" reveals more of David's paranoia than of Gavin's callousness. The TB is mentioned on a Christmas Eve when David is home from Knox College: Gavin ensures that Darcy is out of the way before he takes David to the homey warmth of George Lee's restaurant, where he compliments him on his university work and dismisses the demerits for late hours as insignificant. In this atmosphere, which hardly seems as patronizing as David imagines, Gavin raises the question of David's health, and his comments are terse, it seems to me, mainly because he has to admit his own failure to diagnose the disease. What David interprets as a "grave" and "indifferent" attitude can equally be seen as concern and embarrassment at his professional failing. He is so in love with the dream of the grand moment when his ideal father will stand revealed that he is blind to the actual gesture when it comes. Gavin's "misunderstanding,"

then, seems more general and, therefore, more significant: he cannot understand the confusions of a growing boy, he cannot appreciate the boy's sensitivities or accept him as a thinker and potential artist.

The next discussion of David's university programme is not nearly so calm, nor is David nearly so imperceptive. David announces that he is giving up engineering to return to studying Arts. Gavin argues for a utilitarian education:

My brother had the humanities and it did nothing but enable him to spout Lucretius when he was drunk. . . . Being a gentleman is no profession in this country and that's the end of it.

Again we can just detect Gavin fighting against the other side of his own personality; his nostalgia for the "old world," and for "Old Country women" who "bring out the best in men," imbues this comment with a note of personal loss. But David is no longer prepared to submit to his surrogate father. Even as he senses that the idea of Gavin Ross as his natural father may be self-deceptive, he knows him to be his emotional father. The opening scene established that a father must show the reluctant son the way to freedom. David now is ready to act according to the freedom he glimpsed on that snowy night.

Gavin adamantly refuses to support David if he returns to Arts.

David smiled into his own rage: we've never been so alike as we are right now. He said softly, "To hell with you then."

As he left, he heard Ross roar with laughter and felt his stomach, clenched up with fury, suddenly burn with joy. . . . With the harsh delighted laughter at his back he knew he could manage. In resistance was the strength of challenge, the old man's love of challenge and respect for those who could meet it.

After this recognition, David, whatever his lingering desire for a father, always meets Gavin as an equal, asserting his own independence. When Gavin calls David a "stray," David senses the old man's loneliness and becomes more considerate; when Gavin asks David to work against Darcy's insanity plea, David makes his own judgment of Darcy and embraces the very imperfection which Gavin cannot accept. In Blondal's character sketches, David describes his own changing attitudes:

In our terrible hungers for him [Gavin] we became more alone than we might have been; he gave us something of himself in this way, that when it was done we were more like him, incapable of loving.

In the novel we can follow this same pattern in David, from his yearning to be like Gavin, through his solitude, to his recognition of their similarities. As he becomes a more complete and independent human being, David, paradoxically, seems to absorb Gavin's personality within his own.

A SIMILAR DEEPENING of David's personality occurs through his relationship with Darcy Rushforth. No one, of course, is more incapable of loving than Darcy. His murder of Pamela Green pushes *A Candle to Light the Sun*, for a moment, close to the worst excesses of the gothic novel. But, in the midst of the bizarre and crudely superficial events, David shows an intuitive understanding of the murder. The grimly tense relationship between David and Darcy is the most difficult in the novel to comprehend. Darcy's own attempt to understand it is described in Blondal's preliminary sketch: "David and I, Yang and Yin. The black part of him is dying, or perhaps now it will be part of him where once it was outside him." Clearly many of the dichotomies of the novel (the country/city tension is particularly obvious) are personified in David and Darcy. Yet it would be a mistake to associate Darcy with Yin, and therefore with the female, dark, passive, negative principle, and believe we have him finally classified. Blondal moves, on the contrary, toward a dynamic harmony, a balancing of opposites, within David particularly, but more generally among the other characters as well.

In progressing toward this resolution, however, the novel has a major weakness. Although Darcy is certainly the least likeable character in the novel, Blondal strains to show us his essential humanness. David is for a long time magnetized and intimidated by Darcy, then resentful and quarrelsome, until he begins to try and understand, and so, in a measure, to sympathize. But David and Darcy have related for so long on a superficial, external plane that the depth and complexity are not there (as they are, for example, in David's discoveries of Gavin) when Blondal needs to call on them.

Darcy's personality, in fact, tempts people to stereotype him. To Ian, Darcy is a "little swine," to Christine he is "gutter"; Gavin sees his nephew as a "scamp," while his father, Charles, imagines that he has "a certain select place in the world." Only David, even in the years when they meet only for a few weeks each summer, moves beyond simple classifying: "Darcy is his friend. Companion? Summer Friend? What was Darcy?" His questions reveal the tentativeness of the relationship: not only is David unsure of himself, he is also almost subconsciously cautious about becoming too intimate with this mysterious boy. And, although David is awed by the "wonder of Darcy, so foreign to Mouse Bluffs," he only meets Darcy in the first place because of Gavin's request to "show him the ropes." The small scene is rich with irony. Darcy is no doubt aware that David's friendship is motivated by his sense of duty to Gavin. Darcy, for much of their growing up, will be the teacher and leader; by the time David does begin to teach Darcy it is too late; Gavin, as much as he admires his scamp, may recognize that Darcy desperately needs a solid friend. Finally, the reference to "ropes" has a last cruel echo when Darcy is hanged.

That hanging brings to a violent end a relationship which depends increasingly upon crime to hold it together.⁵ David and Darcy are bound by their setting fire to the Yeates' place. The fire, and the accumulated disasters in the macabre ending of Book I, strike some readers as overdone. But there is good point, and considerable care, in Blondal's presentation. The brevity of the episodes, the abrupt changes of scene, the truncated monosyllabic dialogue all reflect stylistically the psychological turbulence. Blondal diminishes the sensationalism by focussing on the boys' motive, rather than on the actual fire. Both boys, although they are obviously driven by the electricity of the storm and their adolescent desire for adventure, are at least partly moved by a sense of charity: "Uncle Gavin says if that old store of Yeates' burned down, the town would give them a house." But the charity is perverted by an enormous, uncaring, adolescent egocentricity: "We are the only people in the world, David thought."

This self-centredness, however, is as much externally imposed by an intensified "everyman-for-himself" outlook, as it is internal. Certainly the death of Elsie Yeates' baby is as much a community responsibility as it is David's and Darcy's. The burning of the Yeates' shack climaxes Blondal's account of the Depression's effect on the small town, an account which began, of course, with the opening dirge on thinness. In those few paragraphs which precede Chapter One Blondal created an atmosphere of emotional draining strongly reminiscent of D. H. Lawrence, the sense of a life which has lost its richness, lost the inarticulate sharing which gave it strength and satisfaction. Now the wind fans the flames, and carries away the sound of the first bell; there is no water to fight the fire because Reese Todd, the town clerk, had ordered it turned off to promote his own perverse lust for power. In this scene David and Darcy, then, are to a great extent the anonymous dark embodiments of a social, physical and economic environment. The sense of overwhelming external forces is confirmed by the close linking of the fire with the death of David's mother, who utters at the end of her feeble claim to the glamour and power of a far-off world forever lost: "Tell him I was presented."

The fire, and the death of his mother, at the end of Book I bring David to the verge of manhood. In Book II the structural dualities become more apparent as they are inverted. The scene shifts from David's home territory to Darcy's city. But just as David had not been able to show Darcy the ropes in Mouse Bluffs, now Darcy is unable to guide David in the city. The more David changes, the more Darcy stays the same. Master of Gavin, and David, and world-beater in Mouse Bluffs, Darcy in Winnipeg is unable to control his father, or David, or his own vocation. Darcy, that is, remains the sophisticated adolescent, the grown-up child, unable to master the adult world.⁶ As in Mouse Bluffs "the asking [is] Darcy's always," and as David comes to recognize Darcy's inadequacy he grows into his own maturity. Or, in terms of Blondal's transparent surnames, he stops *rushing forth* and becomes a *new man*.

Darcy seeks out David at Knox College, and although David is trapped into continuing the relationship by the past and their never-spoken complicity in crime, he now has some awareness of his own inadequacy:

This is how the old man lives, he thought, and was glad he had learned so much. Then knew he was only making words, implying a choice where there was no choice. It is what everyone does, he thought. Take it and try to call it courage. It's what everyone does.

The imperfect syntax and the unconnected pronouns seem to reflect David's difficulty in understanding himself. David's sexual initiation with the prostitute Margie comes through Darcy's initiative, but again the complete picture of the situation exposes Darcy's immaturity. Blondal, as she does throughout the novel, reinforces the dualism on the rhetorical level by withholding information which, when revealed, causes the reader to see an incident from a completely opposite perspective:

I've never seen tail affect a soph so much.
And I've never seen a guy who liked to watch before.

In such exchanges David shows his growing assertiveness, here accomplished by a cheap taunt, but nonetheless significant. Darcy, too, is sensing the change. There is a touch of envy when he explains to his father: " 'He has a hero. . . . I have none.' " And a moment of agony when he realizes that David can see Margie as a living human being, not a sex machine. As potential writers, more generally as artistic temperaments, their differences become still clearer. In David's mind his own writing is a natural necessity (only haltingly pursued in the novel), while Darcy's writing is only a means to an end: " '[He] wants to write because he likes to read or because he has some compulsive desire in a thing-directed society to produce something above the level of things.' " David, realizing that he must keep something of himself intact and private, refuses to show any of his writing to Darcy.

AS ENGROSSING AS THE NOVEL IS from this point on, there is no doubt that pronouncements such as these on heroism and thing-directed societies diminish the intensity of Book II. In *Mouse Bluffs* the world, particularly as apprehended by David, is primarily sensuous and portrayed in precise, yet suggestive images: for example, the "bloom" of the street lights in the novel's opening scene, parodied as "grimy yellow pods in bloated gray husks" at the end of Book I. In Book II David is moving into the intellectual world of abstraction and concept. As Lilja explains, in *Mouse Bluffs* " 'they don't have to blueprint and verbalize everything they do or feel.' " Had Blondal written more she would, no

doubt, have found the way to present this aspect of experience without the blueprint showing. But, in this work, the prose often seems less dense and more evasive in the later part of the novel. A symptom of the weakness, perhaps, is the uncertain manner in which the imagery, and the proverbial truth, of the title is integrated with the novel's theme. Another is the unnecessarily long account of Charles's attitude to Darcy in Chapter 17, which does little to interest us in Charles, or to reveal Darcy. And perhaps most disconcerting is the hastily prepared and superficially presented acquaintance of Darcy and David with the Greens.

No doubt the haste and lack of detail intensifies the shock of Pamela Green's murder. But shock alone is hardly sufficient justification for the vague background and the uncertain connections among the characters. Blondal explains the cause of the murder by showing Darcy's pretence to be the urbane artist/genius gradually eroded by his awareness that David has the artist's sensibility and intelligence. Possession becomes Darcy's whole ethic: "I got me an artist, a writer," he exults in Blondal's sketch. Lilja sees Darcy's possessiveness and tries to warn David away:

'you've got it — what he's wanted. Maybe he's known all along, ever since he first came to the Bluffs and latched onto you. What he hasn't faced yet is that he hasn't got it, that's going to be worse. Get away.'

It is a sign of David's maturity and difference that he will not flee. In his less analytical (and more sympathetic) assessment: "'He [Darcy] needs someone.'" To satisfy that need Darcy arranges for David to meet Pamela Green, retarded daughter of a fur tycoon. The apparent plan is that this liaison will quickly leave David free for Darcy. But Darcy, again showing his blindness, does not anticipate David's simple interest in Pamela's gentle humanness. David, that is, approaches Pamela with the same openness that he had brought to the relationship with Darcy, and that he must bring to his relationship with Gavin. Perhaps it is some glimmer of this parallel that reduces Darcy to desperately open pleading for David's exclusive attention. But David fights for his own unique self: "'whatever I've got it's mine. Alone.'" David cannot be what he is not and has begun to admit it. Darcy cannot be what he is not, but refuses to be what he is. Here lies the final, unbridgeable difference between these two characters so closely paired. Hence Darcy's ominous final curse when he knows David to have slipped his grasp: "'I'll kill her first.'"

Not that David becomes a model of blameless perfection; in his continuing fear of, and fascination with Darcy, he shares, in a sense, responsibility for Pamela's murder. Once implicated with Darcy by violence he is now, ironically, implicated by his fear of violence. The murder frees him of Darcy and forces him to be more objective. Gavin Ross blames David, but as Gavin must acknowledge that Darcy

cannot be his son (since he is flawed), so, at the very moment he spurns David as a "stray," he is moving closed to him. David senses the new order: Gavin and his family will try to convert Darcy, who has lived and prided himself on the role of the Devil, into a new Christ: "Darcy would go out with the sun darkened and the veil of the temple rent, sane but temporarily foolish. My brother." This thought marks David's acceptance, his Christ-like gesture, when Darcy has been abandoned by all others. The brotherhood is clearest in the remarkable scene when David imagines himself being cross-examined concerning Darcy's sanity. At each turn he can see himself in the same situation, he can recognize the other side of him that is Darcy, and his generous understanding becomes also a mark of his increasing self-awareness. In singing rhythms he makes his half-deranged discovery of his own fault:

saw my dark brother waiting to do his work and let my mouth close over the warning, saw him in the shadows as I have seen him now for years, watching, waiting, and did not catch his hand warmly in mine to stay it. I feared that handclasp, told myself that whoever survived it would be a killer.

... Pity ... the one who had to destroy Darcy or live forever too near the sucking vortex of Darcy's heart.

Gavin, good man, I give you Darcy, my dark brother. I killed him for you.

No! I killed him for myself.

This passage indicates David's knowledge that he must be freed of Darcy. But that knowledge is coupled with the recognition that the Yin, the black and dark, is now within him. In reaching for the mystery within, Blondal risks complete muddle, as in the strange connection between surviving a handclasp and becoming a killer. Certainly the confused syntax suggests that David's understanding is tenuous and incomplete at best, more charged with emotion than with reason. Yet the hints of betrayal, purity, and even redemption in her understated analogy to Christ's death, broaden and intensify the meaning of this strange relationship.

David, searching for a father, eventually becomes a father, first to Darcy and later to Gavin. Gavin, yearning for a son and heir, is disappointed in Darcy, and unable to embrace David. Darcy, frustrated anarchist, refuses to be either son or father, though he exploits the external trappings of both roles. Ian Ross, Gavin's brother, completes this central pattern of pairings in the novel. But unlike the other three Ian is primarily an observer and commentator, in which roles he has a significance beyond the relatively few words devoted to him. Ian in the physical cripple against which we can measure the various emotional and intellectual failings of the other characters. Ian also has a public moral weakness (Mouse Bluffs, of course, would not see it as a disease), his alcoholism, against which we can assess the moral adequacy of the others. Among the other three characters, Ian has least to do, directly, with Darcy, though there is clearly some parallel between his relationship with his brother and Darcy's relationship with David. Bound to

his wheelchair and his drink, with, in a sense, little more to lose, Ian can be cynically frank about the world around him. His detachment makes him a valuable guide to David, a mentor more incisive in his advice and direction than either Gavin or Darcy.

But it would be unlike Blondal to cast him merely as the perceptive eccentric. When Ian drops his mask we see unexpected depths, particularly in the relationship with his brother. One moment he is boasting defiantly: "I'm the only sinner in town; you should prize me, not thwart me. What would Mouse Bluffs do without me? Mothers would have no bad examples for their sons." The next moment he is weeping brokenly, sharing with Gavin the inarticulate distant memory of a Scottish home: "'all gone. And the road from Bridge of Weir. And the frogs and the good hot voices out of the hills. Mary and it all coming back and no good, no good.'"

Ian, then, is no callous comic grotesque; his feelings and his sensibility combine to make him both a soul-mate for David, and a guide who cannot be condescending. The two are first seen together at the beginning of the novel when Gavin sends David to the hotel with word of George V's death. David, struggling with both sorrow and fear, hears Ian expound on the meaning of the monarchy and the significance of the King's death. Ian knows there is a "'great break'": he recognizes that ties are severed, that a new home must be built in a new place. But he knows, too, that the King symbolizes something more general than a particular Empire: the King is "'better than any of us and the best in all of us.'" This abstraction, the King as symbol of the best that man can be, is very meaningful to David (though Blondal does not suggest that he recognizes the significance at the time) and it is the hunger for this ideal that echoes through the novel as the allusions to the King's death are multiplied.

Ian's complexity is also suggested by the extent to which his impassioned babble contains in concentrated form the most memorable features of Blondal's style and approach: the ripples of allusion and symbol, the reaction against the precision of psychological theory, and the note of irreverent exuberance. It is fitting, moreover, that Ian, determined to penetrate the meaning of Eliot's *The Waste Land*, should find that "'It's like a mystery story, but the mystery is inside the reader waiting to be unraveled.'" For *A Candle to Light the Sun* has both poetry and wasteland in it.

I BELIEVE, THEN, THAT Blondal's main line of sympathy runs through Ian to David. Ian sees how similar he and David are, especially in their relationship to Gavin. He tells David of his own leaving for university: "That older brother was God and the Holy Ghost and Our Lord. Cut off your arm! The younger one would have cut away obligingly." Ian is trying to warn David

not to sacrifice his own life and individuality to a pursuit of Gavin's/God's approval. Then he turns on himself, apologizing with one of his memorable enigmatic phrases. " 'It's the morbidity, d'you see, the morbidity of the unloved.' " But the comment is more self-mocking than self-pitying, as if he is suggesting a more universal gloom, as if he is cautioning David against expecting love from Gavin. David, sensing the kinship, confides to Ian his darkest secret, his complicity in the murder of Elsie Yeates's baby. And Ian — quite naturally and without pretence it seems to me — grants an absolution and points the way to the future:

'I did many murders once myself. Deliberately. You don't stop thinking of them but neither do you talk of them and perpetuate the murder. I absolve you, you need no other absolution. Some day you'll absolve yourself, alone in the clear noon of reason.'

David grows still closer to Ian after Ian's death. Ian leaves a letter with Waterman in which, irreverent in his very seriousness, he hopes that David has become a man and warns him never the talk to Darcy about the night of murder. When David eventually follows Ian's advice and shares his guilt with Basil Waterman, it is not a sign of desperation, but a measure of his mastery of the situation. He leads the conversation, summing up along the way his own view (he now has his own view, and is able to give voice to it) of Ian's influence:

'He taught me to read good things and to distinguish between the King and God, and that the highest calling was not killing wogs for the Empire and that no one would beat the ass off me if I dared to think otherwise. But I was never impressed by his — histrionics?'

So Darcy's joke at Ian's death ("*Holy Ghost gone*") now becomes David's recognition: "No one has knowledge but Wiseman Waterman and Ian-Ghost. And my brother and I." And Blondal's central analogy, that the search for a father is a search for a King and for a heavenly Kingdom, takes yet another turn. Ian, who once saw Gavin as the Trinity, is now himself seen as the Holy Ghost. Ian has shown David the way to distinguish God and King, to seeing the difference between the material and the spiritual, to knowing that Gavin may be father, even a King, but certainly no god. David discovers, prompted by Darcy's taunting, that Ian is his best source of knowledge, his spiritual guide, and that Ian's search for the "best in all of us," as well as Ian's passion for writing, is his also.

As David learns something of Ian's ability to detach himself from his own experience (also a necessity for the writer) he grows in understanding of his own actions and values. As first Ian, and then Darcy, dies, David is stripped, in a sense, of possible fathers. From each he takes what he can, and the novel moves by combining several limited personalities in one complex maturity, and new man. The break with Gavin is, of course, the most difficult, even though, as I have described it, the progress of the whole novel is a deepening and extending of a realization that comes in the opening scene. The break with Gavin is more fundamental, since

Blondal presents it as the universal separation of son from father. "When it was done," to repeat David's conclusion in Blondal's preliminary notes, "we were more like him, incapable of loving." Thus do the inverted relationships of the characters bring their own insights. The dichotomies, the opposing characters, may lead to a twin understanding: that reaching for an opposite leaves one isolated in his own individuality, and that within that individuality lies a version of the other thing which must be dealt with. Hence the multiplying ironies of the novel's resolution: David begins fathering the child-like Gavin; Gavin, crippled, is trundled about in Ian's wheelchair; David, for a brief time, takes to furious drinking reminiscent of Ian's escape. David is finally able to write about Darcy, in elusive metaphors which would have delighted Ian. He wonders "Had the double man, four-armed, four-legged beast, dissolved once for all in the hemp-woman's embrace? Perhaps this was noon, the only noon a man could know, the clear simple awareness that the beast lived still." His questioning contains the awareness that the double man has not dissolved but has been absorbed, has become David Newman.

David avoids drink by repairing the suspension bridge, an act which Blondal presents symbolically as gradual "victory over the rot." The bridge is between David's present and his past, or, to use Lilja's metaphor, he is driving the wrong way down a one-way street. On this journey, "the quietest way forward I know," he meets Lilja again, and their old love flares up for a moment before they must admit that it can be no more. Against the backdrop of Mouse Bluffs' 75th anniversary celebration of its own past, the last stages of David's awakening take place. Roselee Rushforth returns to Mouse Bluffs and she and David acknowledge their long-unspoken love. So David makes a significant integration of past and present: he vows to marry Darcy's sister, and Gavin's now-so-designated "heir." "She was a Ross, on the line of Gavin or even Ian," as her father had once concluded. Having won Roselee, David tries a last time to ask for the most important part of the Ross estate, Gavin's love, but the words won't form and he can only say, "Do you remember the night the old King died?"

From Gavin's opening announcement, "The King is dead," to David's final query, "Do you remember the night the old King died?" is a movement from the end of a political era to the beginning of a personal commitment. Gavin dies watching the street-dancing, which last occurred in Mouse Bluffs when he married Christine; ironically, as the town celebrates its past, the end of the Rashleigh dynasty is confirmed. Yet David inherits a new life. After Gavin's death he discovers a final note, block letters spelling "*What King?*" If the note is a last reminder of Gavin's abrasiveness, it also marks, surely, his recognition that there are many kings. And the richness of the novel implies that the note is saying much more: that all is forgotten, perhaps; or that David must acknowledge no kings; or that Gavin's own reign is over; or, more simply, that he does remember his

first meeting with David most vividly and is reaching out for the boy in his query, just as David had used a question to hide his yearning. Repeatedly David asks himself the same question, and makes this answer:

I loved you, good man, loved your good imperfections all my life. *It's the morbidity, d'you see, the morbidity of the unloved.* From a long way off he heard Ian's voice, saw Ian's sick hands over the blanket, knew now, acknowledged, that he too had not been loved. Long after a son's needs were past, his life had been spent upon winning, earning a father's love. Now, having failed, he had no father, only his own identity.

The reflection seems an acknowledgement that there is yet one other king, David himself. As Lilja had once told him: " 'David, I always envied you your name. Your royal name.' " The passage on identity, or this last allusion, might seem in isolation too neat and too earnest. But the many versions of kingship, the weakness of Ian, the evil of Darcy, the reverberating questions of guilt and love, save the conclusion from insufferable certainty. David's search is finished and he is freed, but Blondal deliberately turns away from glib optimism to a final paradox more fitting for a man who has grown by embracing opposites: David is "freed . . . to loss."

NOTES

- ¹ McClelland & Stewart's contract with Blondal's Estate stipulates that a sum of \$500.00 is to be deducted from royalties as "compensation for expenditures made by the Publisher in preparing the manuscript for the press."
- ² The Patricia Blondal Papers have recently been donated to the Special Collections Division, University of British Columbia Library, by Stephanie and John Blondal, the author's children. Quotations from the papers are used with their generous permission. Many of Patricia Blondal's letters and manuscripts remain unlocated; I would be grateful for any information regarding such material.
- ³ The novel was written before *A Candle to Light the Sun*, and serialized as "Strangers to Love" in *Chatelaine*, 32, nos. 9-11 (September-November 1959).
- ⁴ Patricia Blondal, *A Candle to Light the Sun* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1960), p. 14. (The New Canadian Library Edition, 1976, has the same pagination.)
- ⁵ The bizarre and mysterious side of crime is a favourite Blondal subject. There is a strange connection in *From Heaven With A Shout* between Monica's shooting Alex in the leg, and Alex's mysterious suicide. An unpublished non-fictional novel, "Good Friday," is based on the murder trial of a Winnipeg taxi-driver.
- ⁶ David's first loves among women, Lilja Frank and Pamela Green, are also seen as eternal children. And both, of course, are left behind as David comes to maturity. As he tells Lilja, in another version of the twin misunderstanding, " 'You did the right thing thinking it was the wrong thing, most of us reverse the process.' "

FRAGMENT FROM A LOST ROMANCE

Douglas Le Pan

To the dark tower came, to the dark wood came,
and were frightened these children.
One said, "I'm still afraid of the dark." The other said nothing.
There should have been someone to guide them in
and there would have been — some dutiful page,
or wise old palmer, or peasant the colour of clay,
or perhaps a magical bird to fly
from the turret carrying a message —
if the land had been what the prologue promised.
But this was a blind bitter land, as most lands are.
There was no one. Darkness deep and forbidding.
Then one of them said to the other, "This is a wood
where we must find our own way"
and put out his hand and parted the darkness.
In the morning so surely so safely they lay
in each other's arms in the leafy clearing
that birds flew out of the tower in blessing.

A CLUSTER OF LOVE POEMS

Douglas Le Pan

I

Leaves protect me, lyrics shade me
from the angry god who made me.
Birds skim down with songs to save me,
sing me back the strength god gave me.

Nature joins both power and loving,
strong sap's beating, leaves' soft moving,
fold me in your green caressing
twine your veins and mine in blessing.

You are nature's child and minion,
strong your arm as eagle's pinion,
tender leaves your membranes beating,
our flushed veins two natures meeting.

I am yours for your green sheathing,
strong because of your sweet breathing,
new restored by your achieving;
a dark flower opens past believing.

II

A power-line marching through scrub,
that's what you've made me.

A transmission tower
crackling with messages, images.

A sunflower
aching sunward with seed.

A stricken tree
blossoming into flower and fruit.

Old limbs
new baptized into youth.

Passion of
a saviour streaming with blood.

Strength of
a saviour in a sheer white cloth.

III

Wild orchid, veined with tenderness,
that reaches down to glacial rock
past moss and rotting ferns and pine-cones
and the droppings of porcupines, raccoons.

This your just signet, seal and impress,
a moccasin plant sustained by rock,
pink in the sun-shot shade of June,
frail trumpet, satin-smooth, and clear.

A flower, so fragile, soon will fade.
But while it lasts its fine-meshed membrane
both holds and hides a veined perfection,
a slipper that a prince might search for.

This emblem of the sensitive
and strong, triumphant short-lived song —
for you this emblem will not fade
but blazoning be and heraldry.

A CRUST FOR THE CRITICS

JACK HODGINS, *The Resurrection of Joseph Bourne*. Macmillan, \$12.95.

IF ENGLISH-CANADIAN CULTURE has been significantly shaped by the spirit of our founding century, then it should be attractive to us that Jack Hodgins' latest novel is a resurrection — or reification — of some of the best features of eighteenth-century literature. *The Resurrection of Joseph Bourne*, like Hodgins' earlier work, occupies an indicative psychological territory between ironic extremes — the tranquil island seascape represented on the dust jacket and a moonshine madness of Hogarthian richness and Swiftean proportions between its covers. In a variety of ways *Resurrection* bears overtly the explicit imprint of 18th century style.

To begin with, Hodgins models his chapter titles, his rubrics, and much in his narrative style on eighteenth-century fiction, most notably Fielding. The book is divided into three large "chapters." The last and key phrase of the first perambulatory title is "The Ragged Green Edge of the World," suggesting, in the context of Hodgins' last novel, our fallen Eden and also his "Dividing Line," both a perilous habitation and perhaps a point of prospect. The prospect is announced in the other two chapter keys: "The Old Man and His Deeds" and "The New Man." The vocabulary is biblical (St. Paul) and Christian, but Hodgins' rendition is everywhere evocative of the translation of these same themes in 18th century novels such as *Tom Jones* and *Joseph Andrews*, and no less in the matter of his novel than in the mode of its

presentation. *Resurrection* portrays a contest between charity and cupidity, inviting a pursuit of love which could lead to understanding, cartooning some pitfalls along the way, and warning us of the distractions and distortions of affection. (As with Fielding, the affectations of Hodgins' characters usually proceed from vanity or hypocrisy, and are the source of the truly ridiculous in Hodgins' aesthetic.)

The basic humour in this book does not require a great deal of subtlety to appreciate, and that, I think, is one of its strengths. When a stunningly beautiful sea nymph (always suggestively, never explicitly described) is washed up miraculously onto the grubby streets of Port Annie, her walking (which is *extensively* described) creates a narrative trail through the characters of the book, a litter of responses and interpretations which tell the reader far more about the observers than the observed. The lady herself remains ineffable, a mystery. Hodgins' other characters are surely extravagant, but still for the most part imaginable up-islanders. Moreover, their particular manifestations of our general cultural narcissism create, even in a Hogarthian overdrawing, paradigms for a much more widely distributed experience of life. This first mysterious stranger who comes to town is an agent, a catalyst, the expression of a force which can best be understood in terms of what happens to those who in one way or another encounter her beauty. Principally, the residents of Port Annie are induced to recapitulate their own and the town's history, almost inadvertently, as an accident of trying to interpret the lady who seems herself to be almost without history, and it is of the essence of the book's irony that in trying to interpret her the people of Port Annie are always the ones who are being themselves interpreted.

Through the resulting *mélange* of gentle character assassinations, a theme

which is theological and political in Shakespeare, ethical in Fielding ("Judge not that ye be not judged"), acquires in *Resurrection* a new turn. But this turn is actually 18th century in its inspiration, too, or so one suspects. Early in the novel, the shadowy central figure, Joseph Bourne, anti-hero, is discovered to be a poet (is there a play on 'Birney'?) and his works are recovered by the zealous English teacher-cum-librarian, Larry Bowman. As if to suggest that this poor academic fellow never hits the mark, Hodgins has his interpretation of Bourne's poetry foiled against others of Port Annie's humble gallery, including his most sympathetic character, an ex-stripper, another would-be (and hopeless) poet, and a particularly crass journalist. Each sees in the poetry, of course, only himself: For ex-stripper Jenny Chambers the poem is about acceptance, and longing for a true home; for the would-be poet it is about frustrated desire for a "pure love"; for the journalist about "communication, baby"; for the prurient librarian himself it's about obsessive sex, "Copulation. Pure and Simple. . . ."

In Hodgins' world, like that of Chaucer or St. Augustine, people interpret according to who they are — which is to say, according to what and how they love. Charity or cupidity thus become key elements of distinction in moral life and good reading both. Evil — even in the form of petty sin — creates distortions, and in those who succumb to it wholly (such as merchant Jeremy Fell and his wife Cyn, proprietress of the Museum of Evil) the full effects of the Fall are an active hostility to truth, miracle, or joy, even to the point of wanting to destroy those who attempt to respond to these things happily.

In Port Annie, as elsewhere, the real miracle turns out to be love. While the resurrection of Joseph Bourne is a transformation of history (his own history and

the town's), the agency of his transformation is seen by every kind of observer to be something to do with love. Yet Raimey, the Jamaican beauty who awakens Bourne to "new life," is discovered to us to be more than simply a physical splendour which knocks the whole of Port Annie (and especially the librarian professor Bowman), off its heels. It is the "other beauty" of Raimey which emerges as her real gift, a quality of spiritual character which is the means of her "raising up Bourne," just as it seems to Bowman she raises up "fish from the dark bottom of the sea." What the lady offers, much to the distress of Bowman's licentious imagination, is discerned by literary indirection to be actually "the noble yifte of his [God's] mercy . . .," something powerful enough to raise up even Dirty Della (the golden hearted and weary prostitute) to a higher standard of love. (At this point there is a touch more of Baudelaire than St. Luke, or Fielding, in the mix.)

Ultimately it is Bourne who carries this higher quality of unselfish love to the citizens of Port Annie, becoming as he does "the salvation of the whole town." The restored poet, on good precedent, refuses to be what the citizens would first make of him, a newly acknowledged legislator of the world. To the disappointment of many he even leaves his radio interviewing and tireless documenting of mundane life. Refusing above all to become a tourist attraction, he becomes instead a neighbour, a bearer of grace, of assurances of forgiveness and love to those whose squalor least anticipates it.

One of the problems Hodgins clearly wrestles with in this multi-layered, complexly textured book is the problem of achieving for a modern audience a form for belief, or even for the understanding of belief. In the first few pages we see that the boarded-up church in Port Annie is a symbol for our modern rejection of

one kind of form. But this is paralleled by another loss of form which deeply affects the novelist — the fact that there can seem to be no options left for the creation of belief in modern fiction itself. Could there be a myth which is true? If so, how could it be written down?

Bowman the teacher has turned to reading poems and heroic romances because in them "hoping was not considered to be a crime." This sentence, the last of section 2 ("The Old Man and His Deeds") marks the point where Hodgins asks of his readers an imaginative leap, and I suspect it is a point at which most readers will either leap into cheerful suspension or impatiently part company with Hodgins' more hopeful imagination. The announcement of section 3 more or less maps the territory: "Of the Battle of Life and Death in its New Disguise; of Mrs. Barnstone's Ambitious Epic Poem and the promised descent of Fat Annie (God of this World) at last, with Calamities Following, or, THE NEW MAN."

Port Annie is now shown to us to be our world (Believe it or Not), thus a world looking for deliverance. Unfortunately, what offers itself as the redemptive spirit of the age is a slick and seductive antagonist. The town is infiltrated by another mysterious stranger — this time much more like the one in Twain's book of that title. With a moustached smile, smooth talk and a gold stud in his left ear lobe, Damon West is a real estate agent who wants to "develop" the town's potential, even at the cost of bulldozing its poor residents off the landscape to do it. Here we see Hodgins clearly as he could become to a wider audience, a twentieth-century moral novelist wrestling with the spirit of a decadent western materialism. For Fielding, the positive anima of Tom Jones' growth toward spiritual knowledge was figuratively associated with the West — "Sophie" Western [western philosophy]; in the eighteenth century there

was still, presumably, a general form for the spirit of charity which one could associate with western culture. But the contemporary "war" is symbolized in *Resurrection* by an explicit battle between "real" estate and spiritual estate. Damon West's attempt to convert the townspeople comes in the ramshackle church, informally deconsecrated, where he offers them a "hymn to the praise of the future . . . a psalm to the glories of progress" — another, less happy eighteenth-century legacy. The verbs are *seize*, *get*, *take* — what is celebrated by Damon West is the spirit of cupidity.

When the converts to real estate are preparing the disused church for West's speech we are given the bluntest image of "The Battle of Life and Death in its New Disguise." There have apparently been Scripture verses painted on the wall. One reads "For he that loveth not his brother abideth in death." Mayor Weins puts over it his poster "Grab your chance, don't think too small; the Future's coming, with fortunes for all." Then another verse is covered over — "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world" disappears beneath "When opportunity knocks on your door will you answer the call, or hide your head in the sands of lethargy?" In the coming order Mammon replaces not only God, but neighbour and the world as well.

Biblical imagery abounds in this novel. The temptation of Damon West is edenic enough, indeed satanic — we are invited to see that it is the allurements of becoming "self-made men" that most perverts the best provisions of Creation for the people of Port Annie. As in the man-corrupted gardens described by the biblical prophet Isaiah, island man's attempt to seize the land on his own terms makes of possessiveness an idol, symbolized not by a tree of life but by a tree of man's corrupted invention, and thus death. (The "terebinth" here is a huge cactus

imported to attract tourists.) In an ironic reflection on the biblical allusion, this 40-foot image of the mayor's civic presumption is destroyed in a kind of divine joke (which will tickle the fancy of up-landers) — it drowns in the incessant rain.

Yet despite these several "keys" to our understanding, Hodgins' central message (if one can call it that) is delivered here pretty much like Bourne's to Port Annie. That is, despite that this is a richly literary novel, textured with overtones from Fielding, Milton (*Resurrection* is a kind of *Paradise Regained* to that which was *Lost* in *Invention of the World*), Twain, Swift, Tolstoy, Chaucer, and the Bible, Hodgins doesn't depend upon the modern reader's acquiescence in a form for understanding and belief which he knows has been long discarded in much western fiction. As Bourne admits, "the old metaphors for eternity don't work any more." In consequence, Bourne puts it, "if symbols don't work — and what else can a poet use? Then eternity can only be expressed by implication, by the way we live our lives." Hodgins' own witness, as narrator, to the resurrection of Joseph Bourne, is in itself largely by implication. Some of this works very well, even for the casual reader. Some of it, as with Fielding, still needs the help of a closer reading, of some acquaintance with the literary conversation in which this novel asks us to participate. (In other words, academician Bowman may be a joke, but he is still, for Hodgins, a primary audience.)

The beginning of the end of this story is the mudslide which, with ironic justice, carries all of Port Annie into the sea except the shack district which the spirit of real estate would have demolished with bulldozers. The judgment is apocalyptic, apparently a response by Creation to the ultimate presumption of Mayor Weins, symbolized in his attempt to reinvent (ex-

hume, restore, but not resurrect) Fat Annie Fartenberg, the founder of the town. Instead the mountain (berg) farts, excreting the whole fool's paradise of her worshippers into the sea.

Yet Hodgins' instinct is finally for charity more than for judgment. Indeed, that is the whole point of his novel, and it redeems something of the ragged green edge. We see that the catastrophe, however definitive for those who have eyes to see and won't, could be for others a beginning. In the wake of it all, some lives have been renewed. Seen with the eyes of love, true values emerge: "those good invisible things that can't be stolen or disappear," Bourne says, reminding us that "love and perfect vision," or love and understanding, are finally the same. The calamitous conclusion of the novel is thus not in fact the end of the story, since, "as some of them knew, the things that aren't seen never end."

The Resurrection of Joseph Bourne is, I think, a novel rich and imaginative in its conception. There are moments in the

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execution when the burlesque gets out of hand and the extravagance becomes untuned. But unlike the poor poet Amelia Barnstone and her kind, by whose epic poem Jack Hodgins gently mocks himself and his own literary enterprise, the novelist knows more of what he is doing, and is developing an appreciable control on the structure of his fiction — much better in fact than he displayed in *The Invention of the World*. Amelia, with her Swifitean couplets (cf. Swift's "A Description of a City Shower") concluded her epic poem with the landslide itself, seeing "new life" only in the pseudo-hauteur of her empirical terms.

But oh, what fuss these earthbound mortals
make
When asked to pull up roots, or new life
take;
You'd think the sky had fallen on their
heads,
The earth in ruins, or even pets found
dead!

Hodgins himself, by contrast, is cut more out of the cloth of a Fielding, and his "poem" sits in a larger human context, a wider tradition of understanding. His humour is not cynical and self-distancing — like Fielding's it has more about it of Chaucer than of Swift. By our laughter, thus, he leads us to compassion for the folly in which we, too, participate.

In this novel Hodgins does come to some answers, I think, concerning the modern novel and a form for belief. The result is "a comic-epic-poem-in-prose" which Fielding could have liked very much, not only because of its success with the hilarity of our worldly affectations, but because it points us congenially beyond them, by a charitable vision to things we may not yet have seen. *Resurrection* is, relative to its contemporary fictions, a lively novel, and will earn much rereading. After a successful first novel, it is a critic's cliché to find the second one something of a disappointment. It would

be well this time to hold back on the reflex: Hodgins has shown himself to be all that his first work promises: a major talent, worthy of comparison with the very best of our contemporaries at home and abroad. He offers us an energetic book, attractively textured, if slightly apprehensively written. But despite its preemptive strike against an academic audience, it is much more than a mere crust for the critics. There is something better here to chew on. One looks forward to his next volume with rejuvenated expectations.

DAVID L. JEFFREY

ARTS & THE STATE

BERNARD OSTRY, *The Cultural Connection*.
McClelland & Stewart, \$7.95.

"GOD HELP THE MINISTER who meddles with art," said Lord Melbourne in 1835 when he was approached by Benjamin Robert Haydon with a scheme for supporting indigent painters, and for many years after Confederation his advice was followed almost to the letter by successive Canadian governments. Indeed, perhaps the most telling passage of all in the famous report of the Massey Commission on National Development in the Arts Letters and Sciences when it appeared in 1951 was a sardonic little note that the government of the day gave voluntary organizations connected with cultural affairs approximately one seventeenth of the grants it devoted to Fairs and Entertainments. In cash terms the portion given to the arts in 1949, the year when the Commission began its sittings, looked even more derisive, for it amounted to approximately \$21,000, just a little more than the subsidy given to the Boy Scouts. The Commission added its own pungent comment. "If national interest in voluntary effort in the arts, letters and sciences were expressed by existing grants of

money from the Federal Government, Canada could scarcely be called a civilized nation."

In *The Cultural Connection*, Bernard Ostry traces the rising curve of governmental interest in the arts that followed the publication of the Massey Report, an interest and an involvement that have been only temporarily reduced in times of economic stress. The government of Louis St. Laurent, vestigially tainted with Mackenzie King's distrust of the arts, responded slowly to the Report, doubtless feeling that its commitments to the CBC, the NFB and the National Gallery were heavy enough without moving into the area of supporting artistic organizations and individual artists, and it was not until 1957 that it fulfilled the main recommendation of the Massey Commission by founding the Canada Council.

From that time onwards official support for the arts grew steadily until the

recent marginal cut in funds, so that in 1977-78 the Canada Council was spending \$36,000,000 on the arts, the National Arts Centre was consuming an additional \$9,000,000, while in twenty years the operating budget of the NFB has grown from \$4,000,000 to \$29,000,000, and that of the National Gallery from half a million to \$4,000,000. All this has helped to create a situation in which, as Robert Fulford says in his introduction to *The Cultural Connection*, "to choose a career in the arts is no longer the foolish gesture it seemed to many of my generation in the 1950's."

Of course, it can be argued that the renaissance in the Canadian arts which we have been witnessing in the past quarter of a century was carried mainly by its own impetus, and that the position of artists might well have improved — though perhaps to a lesser degree — without the patronage supplied by the

ESSAYS NEEDED

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Canada Council and the various provincial arts councils. I believe this, and also that the patrons in Canada have been perhaps more lucky with their artists than the artists with their patrons; think how wasted all that money would have been if we had remained a country of Wilson MacDonalds and Nellie McClungs!

Yet there is an official case to be put, and Bernard Ostry is well qualified to trace from an establishment point of view the changing relationship between government and the arts in Canada, since he is the almost perfectly rounded cultural bureaucrat. He has a staggering list of involvements with the CBC and the Secretary of State's Office, with the CRTC and the National Museums of Canada, of which he was until recently Secretary-General. And as a concise history of the question, from the inside track, *The Cultural Connection* is a book that everyone interested in the difficult question of public support for the arts should certainly read. The key episodes, the circumstances that changed official minds, the significantly changing statistics are all carefully recorded.

But *The Cultural Connection* is more than a narrative of events. It is also an argument that a healthy and abundant cultural life is essential for a country's social and political health, and that — as the past twenty years have shown — this depends on generous and judicious support for the arts by the government, but in ways which ensure that there is no direct political influence.

This is a classic Canadian small-l liberal stance, and it is probably also held by the more intelligent big-L Liberals who have given thought to the matter. It is also a stance supported by most arts organizers, and by many artists, particularly performers, who do not want to see the lean old days return.

Those who look on such a stance with distrust are a curiously mixed group. On

the one hand there are the reactionary MPs (not all Conservative), radio hot-liners and petty journalists, who make political capital by complaining over the spending of tax dollars on poetry they do not like or painting they do not understand; these were the kind of people responsible for the recent campaign in Vancouver against Talonbooks and Bill Bissett, and essentially they believe that if public money is to be spent on the arts the public has a right to censorship.

On the other hand, there are the artists who have an innate distrust of governments and their works, and who suspect that even with the best of intentions official sponsorship will somehow curb their freedom. Long ago Robertson Davies spoke for them in his brilliant background paper on "The Theatre" for the Massey Commission in which he remarked that the only tolerable patronage was really the negative kind that took burdens like taxation off the artist's back. "The artist who gets nothing from his Government is not under his Government's thumb," Davies remarked, and added "Government patronage, unless it is of the negative, unobtrusive sort which I have mentioned, or unless it operates under special safeguards, can become severely repressive in its influence."

Bernard Ostry would obviously deny Davies' main point, and would argue that in any case the "special safeguards" were embodied in the constitution of the Canada Council. And indeed one can grant — one can even joyfully proclaim — that the Canada Council has done splendidly in giving artists time to work and in trying to ensure that their works are performed, and that it has done so with the minimum of interference in what the artist chooses to produce.

But the fact remains that he who pays the piper is tempted to feel he should call the tune. Once governments get involved in the arts there is always the danger of

their being shaped to political ends, overtly or obliquely. Even in western countries that officially sponsor the arts the pressures build up, as they are currently building up in Quebec, where governmental cultural policy is shaped to favour the separatist frame of mind. Even the Canada Council gives more of its subventions to organizations, which are reasonably predictable and vulnerable to budget cuts, than to individual artists who are unpredictable and less dependent, and to performing artists rather than to creative artists who by the nature of their activities are less conservative and more innovative. To me the most questionable of all the actions of the Canada Council — certainly the most ominous — was the creation of the Art Bank, in which the state ceased to be merely a patron and entered the art world as the leading customer, thus injecting official taste massively into the market for paintings and indirectly militating against artists whose styles seemed discordant in bureaucratic surroundings.

The danger is always there, under the best systems of governmental patronage, which does not mean that the artist should necessarily reject the help he is offered, since it is clear that the community benefits from the work of artists and should in some way reciprocate, though whether the best way is through state organization is not so clear. Thus all one can do after reading *The Cultural Connection*, Bernard Ostry's record of the shift from government indifference to deep official involvement in the arts, is to repeat what Virgil made the Trojan leader say: "I fear the Greeks, even when they bear the gifts." There is no foolproof way of excluding political pressures from governmental support for the arts. And so the artist must always be cautious, always prepared — if need be — to bite the hand that feeds.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

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FESTSCHRIFT

A Political Art: Essays and Images in Honour of George Woodcock, ed. William H. New.
University of British Columbia Press, \$15.00.

I ORIGINALLY AGREED TO REVIEW this book a year ago, in part at least because it would give me an opportunity to pay my own tribute to George Woodcock for his contribution to our literary life as writer, critic, and editor. I did not get round to writing the review until now. Some of the reasons for the long delay were beyond my control. But only some. Perhaps the most important reason for my procrastination was my inability to decide how to come to terms with this *Festschrift*.

I have for a long time, both as occasional contributor and reviewer, been wondering whether this particular kind of literary genre is still viable. As its name implies, it was a German invention. The desire to honour a distinguished scholar or literary personality is of course wholly laudable, and no one deserves such an honour more than George Woodcock. But what about the contents of a typical *Festschrift*? In the nineteenth century and on into the twentieth, a *Festschrift* was essentially a miscellaneous collection of scholarly articles, covering (though they did not in fact always do so) the interests of the person who was to be honoured. That pattern has, by and large, remained unchanged, even though the nature of periodicals has undergone great changes. The typical *Festschrift* has always reminded me of the most old-fashioned of scholarly publications, the Proceedings of the Royal Society, say, or of the Modern Language Association. In any given issue there are usually only two or three articles that really interest me, and the quality of the contribution is invariably mixed.

It is clear, both from his Preface and his arrangement of the contributions, that

Bill New, the editor of *A Political Art*, was aware of the problems posed by a *Festschrift* and that he tried to overcome them. The central aim of the book is of course to honour Woodcock, "to salute the man, to evoke something of the cultural climate he has fostered, to pay tribute, through word and image, to the influence he has exerted through his writings both upon individual lives and upon contemporary literary and political thought." To achieve this aim, the editor has arranged the material in three parts. "The first section — 'Person, Place, and Politics' — is a series of essays focussing on topics which relate to Woodcock's own work; the second section — 'Images in Time' — is an independent tribute by a wide range of friends and acquaintances, variously reflecting on moments in their relationship or responding sensitively and creatively to the world around them; and the final section, prepared by Ivan Avacumovic, is as complete a bibliography of Woodcock's own writings to date as it has been possible at this time to compile.

Apart from the bibliography, I found "Images in Time" the most interesting part of this book. Although the contributions are uneven, this section focusses most directly on the personality of George Woodcock and, perhaps for this reason alone, it has great vitality. Above all it succeeds in giving us a feeling of the range of his interests and of his influence on others, and it demonstrates very clearly the different reputations he has acquired in Canada and in England, though I must say here that Julian Symons' "George Woodcock: A Portrait" is a disappointment. Mulk Raj Anand's "An Open Letter to George Woodcock," on the other hand, is touching and revealing, as is Donald Stephens' "Man as Pattern: Recollections of George Woodcock." The tribute of the poets (George Bowering, Denise Levertov, Tom Marshall, Robin

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The Long Poem Anthology

Michael Ondaatje, editor

Omitted by most anthologists because of their length, these works represent important new directions in Canadian poetry and in the form of the long or 'serial' poem. The poems have been selected to show the diverse range of subject and method that nine contemporary poets have brought to this form.

The Long Poem Anthology includes an introduction by the editor, a statement by each author about the poem and its form, a bibliography of each author, and suggested further reading. In all but one case (Nichol's *The Martyrology*) the complete texts appear. More than half of these poems are presently out of print. It is hoped that this collection of book-length poems will, for the first time, make possible the serious study of this form and these poems in University and College classrooms.

Roy Kiyooka, The Fontainebleau Dream Machine

Daphne Marlatt, Steveston

Robert Kroetsch, Seed Catalogue

Robin Blaser, The Moth Poem

bpNichol, The Martyrology Book iv

Don McKay, Long Sault

Frank Davey, King of Swords

George Bowering, Allophanes

Stuart MacKinnon, The Intervals

Skelton, Tom Wayman, Al Purdy, and Seymour Mayne) gives a kind of panache to the volume. For what it is worth, I liked the poems by Bowering, Levertov, and Wayman best, and I liked also the reproductions of graphic work by Bob Steele, Jack Wise, Gordon Smith, and Jack Shadbolt.

The first section of the book ("Essays on Person, Place, and Politics") is like the typical *Festschrift* — a miscellaneous collection of articles. The thread that is meant to tie them together is often very thin indeed, because the attempted focus on topics which relate to Woodcock's own work is tenuous. For in spite of his valiant efforts, Bill New could not change the basic nature of a miscellany. Thus Jack Ludwig's somewhat curious impressionistic piece on Winnipeg is followed by some reflections on "The Novelist as Socio-Political Being" by Margaret Laurence, and that in turn by Arthur Erickson's attempt to analyse "the limitations of the single view of reality by which an architect ordinarily observes, understands, and evaluates architecture." We get some traditional critical essays on literature (Robert B. Heilman on theatre and society, M. W. Steinberg on A. M. Klein, and B. Rajan on the *Coriolan* poems by T. S. Eliot), an essay by Ramsay Cook on J. W. Bengough ("The Caricaturist as Social Critic"), and two more general essays by Naim Kattan ("Culture et Pouvoir") and D. S. Savage ("Anarchism"). All of the essays are competent; some are brilliant. Every reader will find something of interest here, but it is not likely that any reader will find all of the essays interesting.

By contrast, I found all of the items in the second section of the book of great interest, in spite of the fact that they are uneven in quality.

The one absolutely indispensable part of the book is Ivan Avakumovic's "A Bibliography of the Writings of George

Woodcock," 37 pages of entries, dating from 1937 to 1976. It documents the truly enormous contribution of George Woodcock to literature, politics, and culture in general. Long may he continue to enrich us!

HENRY KREISEL

IDEOLOGIES

ANDRÉ J. BELANGER, *Ruptures et constantes*.
HMH, NAIM KATTAN, *Les Fruits arrachés*.
HMH, PIERRE SEGUIN, *Caliban*, HMH.

S'IL EST UN LIEN entre ces trois ouvrages apparemment fort différents, il se trouve dans l'appréhension de phénomènes idéologiques dont l'émergence au Québec ne fait que caractériser leur constance dans le monde contemporain. Ces représentations mentales qui sont proposées comme autant de systèmes englobants et sécurisants dans la recherche d'une société dite meilleure s'avèrent au demeurant n'être que le temps fort ou faible d'une dialectique dont le but est de réconcilier les contraires. Qu'au terme de ce mouvement dialectique les oppositions restent entières, l'individualité ne se résorbant pas dans un totalitarisme idéologique, nous reconnaissons là une autre mesure de la réflexion suscitée par les ouvrages de Bélanger, Kattan et Séguin.

Ruptures et constantes d'André J. Bélanger est une analyse de quatre "idéologies-carrefours" au Québec, c'est-à-dire de systèmes de pensée dominants recueillant la faveur des "éléments progressistes de leur temps." Prenant la revue *La Relève* (1934-1941) comme point de départ, l'auteur étudie le courant d'idées qu'elle véhicule en réaction à la crise économique et qui pose le problème de l'homme universel, indifférencié, devant les angoisses de l'époque. En s'interrogeant sur l'échec du matérialisme, les collaborateurs de *La Relève* et de *La Nouvelle relève* (1941-1948), dont Robert

Charbonneau, Guy Frégault, Robert Elie et Roger Duhamel entre autres, recherchent un humanisme qui privilégiait la vie intérieure comme source de renouvellement. La Jeunesse Etudiante Catholique, deuxième idéologie-carrefour, a aussi ses racines dans les années de la crise. Mouvement de renouveau chrétien qui en appelle de l'engagement laïc pour renforcer les assises de l'Eglise, la J.E.C. se distingue par sa forme d'action sociale qui inspirera de jeunes militants tels que Gérard Pelletier, Claude Ryan, Jeanne Sauvé et Marc Lalonde. Partageant des préoccupations communes avec *La Relève* quant à une philosophie issue du thomisme et des encycliques papales, du personnalisme et de l'Action Catholique Française, la J.E.C. se donne pour fonction de servir de "banc d'essai de la laïcisation," dans une tentative de prise en charge de l'appareillage social et idéologique sur lequel le clergé avait mainmise. Pour la génération de *La Relève* et de la J.E.C. il ne s'agit pas de procéder à une remise en question de la domination cléricale qui s'est abattue sur le Québec depuis le milieu du dix-neuvième siècle. Il s'agit plutôt de rapprocher le message chrétien de la cité en misant sur les encycliques à portée sociale. D'où l'importance du terme "visa" ("sorte de sauf-conduit qui permet d'échapper à la sanction de l'orthodoxie,") qu'utilise Bélanger pour caractériser l'effort de ces laïcs vers une actualisation de l'Eglise qui ménage toutefois les assises de la foi triomphaliste. Troisième idéologie-carrefour, *Cité Libre* (1950-1965) prolonge l'action des deux premières tant au niveau des agents (Pelletier, Lalonde, Trudeau), des appuis religieux (Action Catholique, encycliques papales) que de la conception de l'homme (personnalisme, humanisme chrétien). Mais parce qu'elle a pour matière des conditions de déni de liberté intellectuelle et d'ineptie dans la pratique

de la politique (c'est l'ère du duplessisme), *Cité Libre* se démarque des "idéologies pionnières" que sont *La Relève* et la J.E.C. dans sa prise sur le social. Aux principes du christianisme éclairé s'ajoutent les acquis de la pensée libérale britannique (John Stuart Mill) et française (Montesquieu, Rousseau) dans un discours dont les termes-clés sont démocratie, liberté de pensée et d'action, assainissement des moeurs politiques et respect des droits de l'homme. Parce que les idéaux poursuivis par *Cité Libre* se limitaient, dans une première étape, à la mise au rancart du duplessisme et, dans une deuxième, à une conception fonctionnelle et a-idéologique de l'Etat, Bélanger démontre les limites de la vision rationaliste et désincarnée qui sous-tend son action. *Cité Libre* se fait fort d'inventorier le social, dénonce les abus cléricaux

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et les iniquités charniées par une orthodoxie nationaliste rétrograde. C'est ainsi que du nationalisme québécois, en tant que phénomène historique proposé au nom d'une collectivité, *Cité Libre* ne retient qu'étroitesse d'esprit, intolérance et régression. Il lui substitue l'individualisme de la société libérale: à chacun de concevoir et d'articuler ses projets d'épanouissement personnel. De sorte qu'avec la fin du règne duplessiste et l'avènement de la "Révolution tranquille" (1960), *Cité Libre* voit l'issue de son combat. Les insuffisances de sa pensée sociale et, surtout, son aveuglement quant à la question nationale (qu'elle avait pourtant fort bien comprise lorsqu'il s'agissait du Tiers-Monde) lui vaudront d'être dépassée par la génération qui atteint la maturité à l'aube des indépendances africaines. *Parti pris* (1963-1968) véhicule la pensée de cette génération et constitue la quatrième idéologie-carrefour étudiée par Bélanger.

Dans la mesure où la dialectique hégélienne qui sert de support à la thèse de Bélanger est bien comprise (au cléricisme qui monopolise les représentations idéologiques au Québec de 1840 à 1934 environ, monopole idéologique évacué du social laissé au trafic d'intérêt, s'opposent les quatre idéologies-carrefours qui de 1934 à 1968 effectuent une réconciliation progressive entre les idées dominantes et la pratique sociale), l'analyse consacrée à *Parti pris* mène au terme de la naissance du Parti Québécois qui "rétablit, semble-t-il, la jonction entre les plans idéologique et politique." L'idéologie de *Parti pris* plus que tout autre représente une rupture radicale avec la pensée traditionnelle, tout en faisant écho à certaines constantes historiques. Là où les idéologies précédentes avaient l'apparence de l'innovation en se réclamant du personnalisme ou du libéralisme. *Parti pris* se rattache au marxisme et propose la lutte des classes comme cadre analytique d'un projet collectif qui récuse l'individua-

lisme. Au nationalisme attardé et mystique dont le Chanoine Groulx est l'apôtre, il substitue le modèle des mouvements de libération et de la lutte pour la décolonisation dans le Tiers-Monde. Aux avatars des moeurs politiques et à la disjonction élite-peuple, *Parti pris* applique le vocabulaire de la dépossession et de l'aliénation pour formuler la nécessité de l'auto-détermination comme correctif. La pensée des animateurs de la revue, Chamberland, Maheu, Piotte, s'inscrit en porte à faux de l'idéologie libérale et s'avère reflet plus fidèle des remises en question auxquelles la "Révolution tranquille" donne libre cours. Bélanger souligne que la revue connaîtra des crises dans l'orientation de ses priorités. Elle prendra conscience d'une distanciation vis-à-vis du peuple qu'elle s'efforce de réduire en mettant sur pied des mouvements populistes. Elle fera l'auto-critique de son marxisme et s'interrogera sur l'ordre des échéances nationaliste et sociale. Mais tant par le public qu'elle rejoint (les étudiants, les enseignants) que par l'essentiel de son message qui s'accouple à la montée du nationalisme petit bourgeois d'une classe moyenne issu de la "Révolution tranquille," du rôle d'intervention de l'Etat comme agent économique, l'idéologie partipriste n'en est pas moins porteuse de contradictions dont le Parti Québécois serait le mandataire le plus immédiat, selon le processus évolutif analysé par l'auteur.

Pris globalement, *Ruptures et constantes* est la démonstration à l'aide d'une méthode et d'un jugement sûrs des étapes qui mènent au décalage entre le Québec d'aujourd'hui et d'antan. Il faut savoir gré à l'auteur de ne pas succomber à l'enthousiasme piégé que l'on trouve à la fin de l'ouvrage de Denis Monière (*Le Développement des idéologies au Québec*) qui, par ailleurs, complète parfaitement le sien. Et ce n'est pas l'un des moindres mérites de l'analyse de Bélanger

qu'elle s'avère disponible à l'interprétation multiple à même les textes soigneusement étudiés et résumés et selon les renvois historiques (les constantes) qui balisent les avancés les plus convaincants (les ruptures). La méthode est donc faite de souplesse et d'ouverture. Par exemple, l'auteur dit en conclusion qu'"avec la fin des grands systèmes abstraits de représentations, surgissent des idéologies issues cette fois de la pratique." Il mentionne les syndicats et les comités de citoyens comme nouvelles pistes de recherches. A nous d'ajouter la *contre-culture*, phénomène populaire issu d'une pratique du quotidien nord-américain, pour répondre au vœu de l'auteur.

Selon la méthode retenue par Bélanger, les coordonnées encadrant la contre-culture québécoise comme idéologie-carrefour seraient les suivantes: l'existence d'une revue, *Mainmise* (1970-) qui regroupe des "éléments progressistes de leur temps" (Jean Basile, Michel Bélaïr, Christian Allègre, Michèle Favreau); elle prolonge ou dépasse les idées dominantes d'une époque précédente ou d'une école de pensée parallèle dans le temps par des agents-relais: la présence de Chamberland et de Maheu parmi ses collaborateurs et sympathisants; elle rejoint un public fertile: la jeunesse urbanisée et un milieu artistique et intellectuel avant-gardiste; elle s'interroge sur les valeurs dominantes de la société québécoise dans la mesure où celle-ci ne se différencie pas économiquement de la société nord-américaine de consommation. *Mainmise*, cependant, ne vise pas à rejoindre le champ politique entendu de façon conventionnelle; et c'est là qu'elle fait problème pour le politologue. A l'instar de la revue *Rolling Stone* aux Etats-Unis qui succède à *Ramparts* vers la fin des années soixante, elle évacue un discours idéologique doctrinaire dans une relève qui mise sur les attributs de la culture populaire pour réclamer des

changements dans l'ordre social et politique. L'enjeu principal est la "qualité de la vie" et la démystification du pouvoir politique et économique qui l'entrave. Mais l'on voit bien que l'intimisme comme code d'éthique, l'hédonisme dans la recherche du bonheur, l'idéal d'une vie communautaire faite sur mesure et le souci de l'écologie sont des aspirations rebelles à la grille analytique qui inventorie une *praxis* dont l'utopie est irréductible. Il n'en demeure pas moins que huit années séparent la fin de *Parti pris* et la prise du pouvoir politique par le Parti Québécois. L'apparent vide idéologique qui les accompagne est comblé par l'irruption de la contre-culture qui s'inscrit en marge des "grands systèmes de représentations." Les racines essentiellement "américaines" de cette idéologie issue des conditions de vie dans la société de masse, dont le Québec est tributaire, laissent croire qu'avec la dimension nationaliste fécondée par *Parti pris* il faille compter avec sa contradiction.

Que l'accouplement de l'idéologie et du pouvoir politique soit le sceau de l'intolérance est une leçon qui sert de toile de fond au roman de Naim Kattan, *Les Fruits arrachés*. Roman de la fuite, *Les Fruits arrachés* est le récit de la vie de Méir, juif irakien étudiant en lettres à la Sorbonne vers la fin des années quarante. Celui-ci fréquente les milieux littéraires, réfléchit sur ses rapports avec son pays d'origine dont les nouvelles de désarroi lui parviennent puisqu'avec l'indépendance d'Israël en 1948 la communauté juive de Bagdad en subit les contre-coups. Méir retrouve dans la compagnie de ses compatriotes expatriés à Paris la division qu'il porte en lui-même et qui structure sa vision du monde: il oscille entre l'orient et l'occident, le judaïsme et l'islamisme, la francité et l'arabité. L'aliénation séculaire de sa race est surchargée par l'angoisse personnelle du protagoniste qui craint pour sa famille laissée à Bagdad

et pour son propre avenir, puisque boursier il s'attend à devoir retourner en Irak au terme de ses études. Cette angoisse, cependant, est moins la conséquence de déroulements politiques désincarnés par la distance physique et psychologique que maintient Méir tout compte fait à l'égard de l'Irak que l'emblème d'une recherche d'identité dans un monde d'exil où les contraires s'attirent et se bousculent. Un choix s'impose: Méir doit prendre charge de son destin d'étranger. Son séjour à Paris doit lui permettre d'arriver à cette prise de conscience.

Les Fruits arrachés est le prolongement de l'excellent premier roman de Naïm Kattan, *Adieu Babylone*, qui raconte l'enfance et l'adolescence de Méir à Bagdad jusqu'à son départ pour Paris. Roman de moeurs relatant la diversité culturelle de Bagdad, *Adieu Babylone* est surtout le récit d'une vie dans l'apprentissage de l'adversité qui n'arrive pas à diminuer une soif de connaissance et de dépassement. La riche sensibilité de Méir s'avoue dans l'espoir d'un monde meilleur que ses lectures et ses amitiés concourent à entretenir en dépit des interdits qu'il doit subir en tant que minoritaire. Le départ pour Paris qui clôt le roman confirme Méir dans son espoir: il quitte pour la terre promise. Contrairement à la richesse et à l'élégance d'écriture du premier roman qui calquaient les moindres nuances d'une fraîche sensibilité, le style des *Fruits arrachés* est elliptique, haché, et laisse une impression désagréable de sécheresse et d'aridité. Le contraste stylistique entre les deux romans est trop saisissant pour ne pas être voulu. Puisque Paris s'oppose à Bagdad, la vie d'adulte à celle de l'enfance, l'auteur a peut-être voulu caractériser ainsi les distances culturelles et psychologiques ressenties. L'ironie sous-tend sans doute l'abondance des dialogues superficiels et l'expression d'une vie toute en surface, vide d'intériorité.

Méir se méprend donc, il est sous le coup des illusions de la vie parisienne qui ne saurait qu'être transitoire puisque la "terre promise" recherchée n'est pas dans une Europe à peine remise de la dernière grande guerre mais plutôt en Amérique, continent vers lequel Méir se dirige à la fin du roman. Tout comme une lecture d'*Adieu Babylone* s'avère nécessaire pour comprendre les états d'âme plutôt suspects de Méir dans *Les Fruits arrachés*, seul un troisième roman ayant pour cadre l'Amérique saura répondre à des attentes qui restent entières pour l'instant au risque de masquer l'intérêt et le mérite réels des *Fruits arrachés*.

Pris isolément, ce deuxième roman de Kattan ne subit pas avec bonheur une lecture tant soit peu critique. La trame romanesque se résume en une série de brèves esquisses de la vie d'expatrié menée par Méir. Pour l'essentiel, cette vie est scellée par des appétits libidineux. Des aventures amoureuses se succèdent à la manière d'un inventaire mécanique et monotone. Méir découvre la femme à Paris et il tombe amoureux de chaque femme qu'il trouve sur son chemin. Il s'éprend d'Anne, une Française, d'Halina, une Polonaise, de Maxie, une Hollandaise, d'Erika, une Allemande et décrit de façon fort puérile ses exaltations. L'essentiel du roman étant la narration de ces exaltations, il s'y dégage une impression de sentimentalisme facile qui fait figure de valeur dominante. Sans l'ironie, c'est le ridicule qui caractérise les activités amoureuses de Méir. Devant l'invraisemblance des personnages et des situations, le lecteur se surprend à regretter le Paris de Hemingway (*The Sun Also Rises*; *A Moveable Feast*), Glassco (*Memoirs of Montparnasse*) ou Callaghan (*That Summer in Paris*). La comparaison est injuste? Elle ne l'est pas si l'on juge que, par-delà le thème de l'aliénation juive qui le sous-tend, *Les Fruits arrachés* véhicule également le mythe de la vie

parisienne tel qu'on le trouve dans les littératures américaines depuis la "Génération perdue" des années vingt jusqu'à nos jours. C'est ainsi que Georges Cartier racontait dans *Le Poisson pêché* (1964) une histoire semblable à celle de Méir avec pour protagoniste un Québécois aux études à Paris. Les liaisons internationales qu'entretient ce dernier ne sont pas sans rappeler celles de Méir (ici le compte est: deux Françaises, une Américaine, une Algérienne et une Canadienne anglaise), mais elles sont exprimées avec une richesse dans l'écriture et une vraisemblance psychologique qui rendent plus insolite la démarche de Kattan. Paris, bien sûr, appartient au mythe de la jeunesse, de l'universel et de la femme, mais il appartient à chaque écrivain qui en fait usage de le mesurer à un réel quelconque. Le Québécois de Cartier fuyait son pays natal. Le Juif irakien de Kattan fait de même, sinon plus. Car, au fond, Israël est la grande inconnue qui pourtant scelle le drame de Méir. Elle provoque sa fuite en Europe et bientôt en Amérique et c'est elle (sinon sa mère qui se réfugie en Israël, pour les Freudiens) que fuit Méir à tant s'éprendre et à si mal étreindre.

Caliban de Pierre Séguin par contre est de plain-pied dans un courant idéologique qu'il remet en question et qu'il évacue sous le couvert de la fable. L'éloge de la folie triomphe de l'échec d'un destin tragique. Avant de renvoyer à Erasme, cependant, *Caliban* évoque Shakespeare, plus précisément la dernière pièce écrite par le Barde dans son vieil âge, désabusé et sage à la fois, et pour qui tout n'est qu'illusion. Le pouvoir, la gloire, la connaissance, la richesse, semble-t-il dire, tout passe et seuls les méandres du rêve restent pour donner un sens à l'existence. Finalement, tout n'est que supercherie. Et il n'y en a pas de plus grande que celle de la bonne conscience de Prospero, l'homme de la civilisation éclairée, conspuant Caliban, l'homme de la nature

arriérée, dans *La Tempête*. Séguin a lu et compris Shakespeare, mais il est instruit également de l'interprétation que les écrivains de la décolonisation ont faite de *La Tempête*. Selon cette interprétation, Caliban représente le colonisé réduit à l'état d'esclave, le "nègre" imperméable aux lumières de la raison que lui apporte Prospero. Ce dernier, le Maître, le "blanc" se sert du "mulâtre" Ariel, symbole de la grâce acquise par la civilisation, comme intermédiaire auprès de Caliban. Ce schème classique de l'aliénation est transposé au Québec et répond à l'usage qu'en fait Aimé Césaire dans un cadre antillais (*Une Tempête*). La thématique du "pays" des années soixante sert de précédent plus immédiat à la dichotomisation colonisateur-colonisé dans *Caliban*. Mais là où les Aquin, Godbout, Chamberland et Vallières, ne se souciaient pas de nuances, encadraient leur recherche d'identité dans un tracé déterministe issu des conditions spécifiques prévalent dans le Tiers-Monde, Séguin dès le début du récit invite le lecteur à se débarrasser des idées reçues et des réflexes conditionnés.

La littérature, pour Séguin, n'est pas un lieu d'enseignement doctrinal comme en témoigne la parodie des commentateurs du théâtre de marionnettes et la forme caricaturale donnée à la tradition théâtrale par Jérôme Bassompierre. Ce dernier, protagoniste du récit, vit en marge de la société de consommation dans l'est de Montréal et monte des représentations de marionnettes une fois la semaine dans un hangar désaffecté. Son public, composé d'une vingtaine de spectateurs, lui est fidèle et s'émerveille devant les comportements de Caliban, Prospero et Ariel. De semaine en semaine le spectacle se poursuit, la même leçon est répétée: le drame de l'oppression et l'identification de ses agents et victimes. Si l'art avait pour mission de provoquer un changement social, semble dire Séguin,

celui de Bassompierre devrait provoquer la révolution. Pourtant ni le marionnettiste, ni son public, ne se rendent aux barricades. Au projet didactique de Bassompierre se substitue la mystification sémiotique. Les marionnettes sont encerclées par la réalité de leur invention. Est-ce que cette réalité est recherchée par les spectateurs comme source d'évasion ou par souci d'instruction? Elle est choix impossible entre le réel et l'irréel pour des spectateurs qui sont aussi des marionnettes dans le spectacle de leur vie. Bientôt le succès de Bassompierre est tel qu'il est poursuivi par une blonde admiratrice qui s'installe chez lui. Il se trouve entouré d'adultes et d'entrepreneurs désireux de marchander son succès. Il connaît une renommée internationale qui l'amène à Paris où il retrouve son mentor, Giacomo Fiorillo. Celui-ci lui reproche de l'avoir trahi:

Alors te voilà célèbre maintenant. Luigi a été te voir la semaine dernière. Il m'a tout raconté. J'ai honte. Moi qui t'ai enseigné notre art dans la grande tradition des Fiorillo. Et toi, tu attires les imbéciles avec tes stupidités prétentieuses et révolutionnaires.

Désenchanté, Bassompierre rentre chez lui, à Montréal, interrompt sa carrière et se replie dans sa chambre où il ne monte des spectacles que pour lui-même. Il ne partage plus ses rêves. Tout art mis à la portée du public étant travesti au gré des intérêts, Bassompierre se contente désormais de la mémoire de son enfance semée d'anathèmes familiaux et religieux. Il revoit sa vie vécue au pensionnat comme étape dans une évolution vers la solitude totale pleinement consentie vers la fin du roman: il est gardien de nuit dans une usine. Bassompierre-Caliban, rebelle aux lumières de Prospero dont il refuse la civilisation, triomphe dans l'affirmation de son individualité. Après avoir refusé le suicide comme issue à son aliénation, il éclate d'un rire démentiel:

Il joue à se faire peur, car, bien entendu, il ne sautera pas. Il a trop envie de rire. Puis, avec un accent épouvantable, il hurle contre le vent:

*A devil, a born devil, on whose nature
Nature can never stick, on whom my
pains
Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost,
And, as with age, his body uglier grows,
So his mind cankers.*

Critique de l'art "engagé," réflexion sur une adaptation tiers-mondiste d'un mythe shakespearien, éloge de la folie, célébration du rêve comme matrice de l'art, plaidoyer en faveur de l'individualité contre toute forme de récupération, *Caliban* est un dépassement dans le roman québécois contemporain.

Si *Caliban* oppose la déraison à la raison, la métaphore à l'idée, Caliban à Prospero c'est par souci de démasquer le totalitarisme idéologique qui réduit la pluralité et la diversité humaines. *Ruptures et constantes* et *Les Fruits arrachés* font appel à un même respect de l'individu.

MAX DORSINVILLE

POPULAR HISTORIES

HAROLD HORWOOD, *Bartlett: The Great Canadian Explorer*. Doubleday, \$8.95.

FRANK RASKY, *The North Pole or Bust*. McGraw-Hill Ryerson, \$17.95.

POPULAR HISTORIANS are frequently attracted to explorers, whose travels in the far regions of the globe readily yield marketable tales of extreme effort and intense suffering. Moreover, explorers can be seen as a last outcropping of individualism in an age of mass-men and bureaucratic organizations. Certainly an emphasis on adventure and individual personality underlies Harold Horwood's biography of the Newfoundland sailor Robert Bartlett and Frank Rasky's account of explorations in the North Amer-

ican Arctic between 1818 and 1918. Horwood sets out to revise the conventional picture of the man whom Leslie Neatby terms "the stolid Bartlett." Rasky wishes to portray the "human" side of exploration. Both authors are more interested in colourful personalities than in the impersonal social or geographical factors which might be the prime concerns of more academic historians.

Horwood makes three major claims. First, he asserts that Bartlett's leadership and individual heroics saved the survivors of the 1913 *Karluk* disaster; second, he claims that Bartlett was really the leading figure in Peary's 1908-09 assault on the North Pole, and was unjustifiably turned back at the eleventh hour by Peary, who then faked a claim to have attained the Pole; and third, he claims that between 1926 and 1940 Bartlett became "the first arctic explorer to place science ahead of exploration." The first claim is quite defensible; the second is, to say the least, an exaggeration; the third borders on nonsense.

Bartlett became the central figure in the *Karluk* disaster when the ship, part of the Canadian Arctic Expedition led by Vilhjalmur Stefansson, was frozen into the ice of the Beaufort Sea and later crushed by ice pressure. In responding to the occasion, Bartlett became a heroic figure by necessity. He led the survivors to Wrangel Island, and then himself journeyed over the ice to the Siberian shore in order to secure a rescue ship. In the earlier Peary expedition Bartlett was one of several European subordinates to Peary. He may well, as Horwood insists, have been the most useful member of the expedition, both as captain of the *Roosevelt* and as an experienced dog-team driver. But he was not the driving force behind the adventure; the underlying vision was Peary's. Horwood is on solid ground when he accuses Peary of entering a false claim to have reached the North

Pole, and when he supports the claims of Peary's rival, Dr. Frederick A. Cook. But Peary's claims have been cogently assailed before. In fact, recent discussions usually accept Cook and reject Peary. Horwood's account contains nothing new.

Horwood's most original suggestion is to portray Bartlett as a leading figure in the "scientific" opening of the North. But here Horwood stretches his case beyond credibility. Certainly, Bartlett may have transported scientists and collected specimens. But the scientific direction came from the scientists, not from Bartlett, who was not a "scientist" in any real sense. He remained what the Explorers' Club of New York had once called him: "the leading ice navigator of modern times." Surely this claim, a defensible one, would have given Horwood a sufficient thesis for his book. As it stands, Horwood has weakened his case by coupling legitimate claims with clear exaggerations. Horwood asserts he is giving just recognition to a neglected "great explorer." Actually, it is clear that his argument is motivated primarily by Newfoundland chauvinism.

Frank Rasky's *The North Pole or Bust* is the continuation of his *The Polar Voyagers* (1976), in which Rasky described northern exploration from the time of the Vikings to the early eighteenth century. In both books Rasky's emphasis is biographical. He builds his chapters around major figures or groups of explorers. As well as recounting the usual incidents of danger, heroism, or suffering, he chooses to recount incidents which reveal character and attitudes. He fleshes out the account of an explorer's adventures and accomplishments with information on personal background. He also devotes considerable attention to some figures who were not themselves explorers, but who nonetheless influenced the course of events. Most notably, he focuses his chapter on the search for Sir John Franklin around the formidable personality of

Lady Jane Franklin, who strove tirelessly to instigate relief expeditions.

Although Rasky's stress is on personality, he also recognizes the indispensable role of the native peoples who were enlisted to guide so many of the explorers, and whose methods of coping with the northern environment were gradually adopted by European travellers. In fact, the principal continuing story which emerges from Rasky's sketches of separate explorers is the European traveller's increasing use of Eskimo technology for dealing with the North. This process culminates in Stefansson's outdoing of the Eskimos by living off the game he secured in the supposedly barren polar ice-pack. Probably this emphasis on the native peoples and their adaptation to the environment constitutes the most "Canadian" element in Rasky's outlook. Farley Mowat, in his *Top of the World* trilogy, has preceded Rasky in praising explorers who adopted native techniques of coping with the northern environment; and many historians of the Canadian fur trade have emphasized the traders' reliance on native methods and native assistants.

Direct comparison of the two books is possible only in one instance: their treatment of the episodes involving Stefansson's Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-18. Horwood portrays Stefansson as the villain of the *Karluk* disaster; he depicts Stefansson as a negligent and callous commander, unfit for his position of responsibility. However, Horwood's outright condemnation of Stefansson is unjustified, and arises mainly from a fixed determination to magnify Bartlett into a major figure in the history of northern exploration. Rasky goes to the other extreme. He treats the *Karluk* disaster only very briefly, but he does tacitly side with Stefansson's assertions in *The Friendly Arctic* that the shipwrecked men could have survived easily had they used Stef-

ansson's methods of northern living (as did Stefansson's associate, Storker Storkerson, on a subsequent ice-drift journey over a region much like that traversed by the *Karluk* survivors). By approving of Stefansson in this way, Rasky endorses Stefansson's neglect of the facts of ordinary human nature. Stefansson couldn't understand why other men were not like himself. Because he could survive on the ice, living off the seals he killed, he didn't see why other people couldn't do likewise. Hence, he felt the *Karluk* passengers should have been in no extreme danger. But the power of habit and prejudice is too great to be reversed overnight. The *Karluk* survivors did not think of the polar icepack as a "friendly" place to spend the winter. Stefansson's originality of mind, which took him beyond the orthodox opinion, was also the cause of his deficiencies as a leader of ordinary men, whose conservative outlook he could not understand.

Although Horwood and Rasky both focus on personalities, they have set themselves significantly different tasks. Horwood is attempting a complete reassessment of an historical figure, using all the available primary evidence. Rasky is offering what is essentially a synthesis of other people's work, an overview of the existing evidence from a slightly different perspective. Rasky's book is more successful in carrying out its purpose. Horwood's major argument does not convince, because his claim that Bartlett became a "scientific" explorer rests on assertions rather than on hard evidence. Horwood does not give accounts of the scientific discoveries made on the later voyages captained by Bartlett, and offers no evidence that Bartlett himself made any discoveries. On the other hand, Rasky broaches a number of interesting topics which future students of exploration might well follow up. His remarks about the social context of exploration suggest

that the usual discussions do not go far enough in seeing explorers as responding to the pressures of their historical era. And Rasky's occasional use of popular accounts drawn from Victorian periodicals suggests that someone might profitably undertake a study devoted wholly to describing the popular reaction to exploration, and to tracing the effect of the prevailing "image" of exploration in shaping the attitudes and conduct of later explorers.

Ultimately, both Horwood and Rasky are historians in the romantic mode. They present historical events as a product of individual personality, rather than as the result of impersonal historical forces. However, Horwood's analysis of Bartlett's personality is finally disappointing. The portrait he offers is not up to Rasky's standard either of psychological penetration or stylistic vigour. Rasky has written a very good work of popular history; Horwood has written a mediocre one.

T. D. MACLULICH

BOOKMAN

JOHN MORGAN GRAY, *Fun Tomorrow. Learning to be a Publisher, and Much Else*. Macmillan, \$14.95.

ON 9 AUGUST 1978 THE BOOK TRADE lost one of its most respected members, John Morgan Gray, the retired Chairman of the Board of Macmillan of Canada. Several weeks later his long awaited memoir, *Fun Tomorrow*, appeared. Sadly enough, we will never see his planned second volume, for his autobiography closes when Gray at age 39 was appointed General Manager of Macmillan in 1946. What we don't hear about, unfortunately, are Gray's activities through the next quarter century, during which time Canadian publishing changed dramatically. The firm cut its branch ties with Mac-

millan of London, entered the paperback market, and developed one of the country's most distinguished lists. Nevertheless, we do get perceptive vignettes of Toronto publishing during the 1930's. If you believed the myth that Canadian publishers were a dull lot before 1970, this memoir will undeceive you.

Since biographies of Canadian bookmen are rare enough, this one is a gem not only for those glimpses but for the self-effacing personality of its engaging narrator. Like Donald Creighton and Joseph Schull, whom he published, Gray has the fiction writer's talent for succinct characterization and pithy dialogue. Moreover, as we have come to expect from Macmillan, this book is handsomely produced and free from typographical errors.

The first part stands as one of the best re-creations of upper-middle-class Ontario life in the Teens and Twenties. Born in 1907 into a respectable Toronto family with a factory in Cornwall, Gray grew up in these two cities, and was educated at an English prep school (for a brief time during World War I) and later at Lakefield and Upper Canada College. His private-school training nurtured interests that may have contributed to his success as a publisher, for he was attracted to both the reflective life and the active life. An average student who liked books, he dreamed of being a writer. In fact, he authored several works, and his descriptions here of the high-spirited active life — starting a brawl among lumberjacks in Fort Frances, living with French-Canadian workers in Quebec City, playing pro hockey with Clarence Campbell in Europe — are overwhelming evidence of Gray's literary accomplishments. He grew up to be flexible and pragmatic.

Those times are recorded with such vigour that the part which I awaited eagerly, the years at Macmillan, seem almost anticlimactic. It may be that I

expected a far fuller account, something we might have had in a later volume. As it is, however, Gray judiciously selects his episodes, starting with the day in 1930 — by now he was 23 — when Hugh Eayrs offered him a job, partly, Gray believes, because Eayrs was impressed with his bridge playing. Gray marvels that “by chance encounters, by blind luck, and perhaps guided by some instinct, I stumbled into what was to be my career.” It was the typical career in Canadian houses in those days. He moved from textbook traveller to Manager of the Educational Department within two years. Besides this official role, he did the usual variety of jobs in a small firm — design, production, and editing. His first trip was to Nova Scotia; later there were many jaunts across the depression-ridden Prairies. One section tells how in 1930 the Toronto textbook houses competed for a new set of readers for the four western provinces, with Macmillan and Ryerson lined up together on one side and Gage and Nelson on the other side. Chapters 7 and 8 recall the perils of publishing in the 1930’s, when service was poor, prices were high, and *Gone with the Wind*’s success almost ruined every other Macmillan book. Indeed, original Canadian publishing itself almost vanished with other winds.

Macmillan’s activities from 1921 to 1940 were directed by Hugh Eayrs, the prodigy of Canadian publishing who did so much to promote Canadian authors in the 1920’s. He was at once charming, sociable, impulsive, and arrogant. Here, Eayrs the good friend comes off better than Eayrs the businessman; in the end he is a complex and ambivalent figure — and he himself deserves a biography some day. His sudden death at age 46 facilitated a necessary shakeup in the Toronto office, from which Robert Huckvale (known as “Bob Harvey” in this memoir) emerged victorious. In the

meantime Gray was off to war as a Captain with the 2nd Battalion Toronto Scottish, and ended up in Counter-Intelligence from before D-Day until the summer of 1945. When he returned to Macmillan, the wartime managers were reshuffled on the advice of Lovat Dickson, and Gray found himself head of the firm in June 1946. It is impossible not to compare Eayrs and Gray. The older man relied on flair, instinct, and — near the end — on caprice. The younger man learned to back up his instinct with caution and thoroughness. Perhaps it is significant that Eayrs did not have Gray’s long apprenticeship on the road; certainly Gray understood that the educational publisher had to be “at once diplomat, politician, educator, and salesman.”

This memoir is full of anecdotes. Grandfather Putnam dies upright in bed of pneumonia. A teenage Evelyn Waugh tells the younger Gray to buzz off. W. L. “Choppy” Grant does his turn as gruff Principal of UCC. Lorne Pierce strides through, a stately yet worldly high priest. Young Marsh Jeanneret in a Fredericton hotel room confides to Gray that they might have gone into publishing together. There’s a hilarious incident when Eayrs unwittingly tells “Bible Bill” Aberhart that someone should shoot the Premier of Alberta.

There’s far more here than publishing activities, however. Very few authors, apart from Mazo de la Roche and Grey Owl, make their appearance, and these only briefly. Rather, as his title indicates, Gray learned to be a publisher by playing games, listening to friends on trains, and witnessing war-torn Holland. Like the first-person narrator in a novel, Gray shapes those experiences into another learning process as well. But he learned “much else.” “Fun Tomorrow” was his and his wife’s way of facing the world in the 1930’s, and Gray saw in this motto his saving grace when things got tough.

A most humane man has left us his own fitting epitaph.

GEORGE L. PARKER

CULTURAL MUSINGS

Divided We Stand, ed. Gary Geddes. Peter Martin Associates, \$15 cloth, \$7.95 paper.

DESPITE THE IMPLICATIONS of its title, *Divided We Stand* is not merely one more exegesis on the by-now tedious "Quebec problem." Nor is it another pious example of the "tape-recorded-transcript-of-the-man-in-the-street" mish mash. Rather, Gary Geddes has compiled a finely organized, heterogeneous anthology of cultural criticism, theory, and contemplation. The book has thirty-two articles on a wide variety of Canadian topics; some were written specifically for this volume; others appeared originally in magazines or papers like *Maclean's*, *The Globe and Mail*, *The Albertan*, or in separately printed books and journals. In addition, Geddes's list of contributors (poets, journalists, politicians, publishers, and economists) reads like a virtual microcosm of the Canadian Who's Who: authors include René Lévesque, Naim Kattan, Margaret Laurence, George Woodcock, Richard Rohmer, Mel Hurtig, Atwood, Nowlan, Laurendeau, Gordon, Kierans, Purdy — the list goes on and on.

As anthologies go, *Divided We Stand* is remarkable for its overall consistency. From start to finish Geddes maintains a general level of excellence, a top-rate blend of intelligence, perception, and sensitivity. Admittedly, occasional nonsense creeps in: Robert Kroetsch's "Canada is a Poem," for example, detracts rather than contributes with its cliché-ridden prose; similarly, Leonard Peterson's "Thoughts that Try to Go Somewhere, but Stop Short: Canadian Style"

seems peculiarly out of place among mature and thoughtful writings. But this is only a minor quibble; from René Lévesque's "For an Independent Quebec," to Reshard Gool's "The Overwhelming Question," to Al Purdy's wry "Handful of Earth," the articles in this book are provocative, insightful and above all, intelligent.

Of particular interest to the academic audience is Rosemary Sullivan's all too brief note, "The City of Intellect Found Wanting." Using Earle Birney's infamous remark that Canada is a "land dead set in adolescence," Ms Sullivan goes on to elucidate exactly what this means for the throngs of unemployed Canadian Ph.D.s who, because of thick-headed University policies, remain unemployed in their own country or are forced to look elsewhere for academic jobs. Cogent, well-informed, and right, Ms Sullivan offers one of the most straightforward essays in this volume.

But *Divided We Stand* is not simply a source book for Canadian polemicists. It is a variegated and rich introspection: an articulate rendition by our thinkers, poets, and economists of how we see ourselves, what we do, and why we do what we do. Geddes is a careful editor who balances his variety of articles. Economic treatises are complemented with political theory, political theory with poetic fiction; *Foreign Affairs* is tempered with *Maclean's* or *The Globe*, Kierans, Rotstein, and Groulx with Purdy, Nowlan, and Wiebe.

And this is what is so attractive about Gary Geddes' anthology. Its variety of arguments, its different perspectives, and its assortment of tones make it a most suitable book for all branches of Canadian Studies courses. Its interdisciplinary spectrum should attract not only students (both graduate and undergraduate), but intelligent readers from all walks of life.

GARY A. BOIRE

SEA TO SEA TO SEA

AL PURDY, *No Other Country*. McClelland & Stewart, \$10.00.

THE SEVENTEEN SHORT ESSAYS in *No Other Country* reprint Al Purdy's decade-long diary of Canadian landscapes and inhabitants. Retaining the popular stamp of the magazines (*Maclean's*, *Weekend*, etc.) where they first appeared, the pieces are here collected under the rubric of "Nationalism as the knowledge that we are here, and reality begins here." Because Purdy sees reality as "what you can touch . . . in the space that surrounds your body," the tone is anecdotal; arm-wrestling and beer drinking figure more prominently than abstract manifestoes. Reflecting his coming of age in the depression, the book evokes the ethos of convivial small towns perched on the edge of the wilderness or on the shores of the Pacific, Atlantic and Arctic.

Purdy's apprenticeship began in 1937, at 17, with his riding the rails out of Trenton, Ontario, to escape the boredom of unemployment. At the end of the line in B.C., he found the "tremendous exaltation" of "country so beautiful that nobody deserves to die without having seen it." Ever since, he has been caught up in the "joy . . . that stems from making the map of yourself on paper coincide with a 5,000-mile-wide country." Like the Groves and Rosses of the twenties and thirties, Purdy is drawn to people who battle unpredictable weather in a landscape that resists settlement. Himself a builder of a country house originally without electricity, he admires the magistrate-angler-writer (Roderick Haig-Brown, Canada's Walton) who "has lived . . . a life nearly fused with nature," or the poor Newfoundland "men and women who can whittle survival from a piece of driftwood [and] may still be living in villages beside the sea . . . when the cities die." Purdy knows the hardship of storms

that can swallow fishermen's boats or destroy farmers' wheat. Yet these isolated, self-reliant people are closer to their few neighbours than city folk, and their language — usually concrete, sometimes hypnotic — has not been debased by abstractions. Fittingly, the book is dedicated to two Eskimo hunters lost on an ice floe while making a routine check of their traps.

Occasionally Purdy becomes overtly political, "sort of radically conservative, in the sense of conserving what we have in this country." He laments the fact that "we haven't made enough money from our own resources" and the shortsightedness that wastes millions on egg spoilage "but can't scrape up enough money to permit adequate Search and Rescue operations to save human lives." Impatient as a friend about the "recurring questions of identity . . . [which are] manufactured by writers and intellectuals," Purdy finds the cement for national unity in personal relationships. In addressing the French-English conflict, he grapples not intellectually with the ideas that humourlessly divide us farther, but physically with a *canadien* co-worker in a brawl that ends in a men's john. As in his poem, "Sizwe Banzi is Dead," where a South African variation is deliberated, the solution lies in spirited toleration, if not conspiratorial respect for the otherness of different human beings. But this position has limits: Purdy becomes ominously helpless on a short visit to Aklavik, where tensions between Inuit and whites have erupted in a number of senseless killings.

Purdy's "consciousness of self as the last link in a long line of selves" saves *No Other Country* from parochialism. Part of his definition of nationalism, this conception places current experience in the humbling, exalting perspective of aboriginal and geological time. The essay on Aklavik muses on the coming of

Asiatics myriads of years before Homer, let alone the European explorers, and ends with the speculation that "migrations and explorations might have deeper motives than the mere pursuit of food and profit: because humanity has always been searching for itself." Aware of the destructiveness that attends so much racist and nationalist thinking, Purdy warns that if humans fail to resolve their differences, an age may return as irrelevant for mankind as the time when dinosaurs romped beside the Bears paw Sea that covered most of Alberta.

In the few essays devoted to literature, Purdy's concern for how "the man lives inside his writing, and outside" leads to some acute, personal, non-academic criticism of Layton and Lowry. The literary importance of the book lies elsewhere, though, in seeing a major writer ruminating in non-fictional prose about whatever happens to interest him. While virtually every essay has its counterpart in one of Purdy's poems, the prose does not replace the poetry with made-to-measure paraphrases. Rather, the social milieu determining the stance in so many of the poems is sharply focused. Some techniques are fully articulated, as Purdy's "double view of history, for then and now merge somewhat in my mind" (cf. the equine mythology of "The Cariboo

Horses," which includes breeds from other continents and other ages as well the B.C. rangelands). In the end, the poetry resonates more complexly in the landscape the essays chart, and one is struck by the distance that separates compelling anecdotes from fine poetry.

ALEXANDER GLOBE

THESIS INDEX

Antoine Naaman, comp. *Répertoire des thèses littéraires canadiennes de 1921 à 1976*. Editions Naaman, \$15.00.

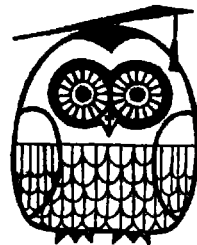
IF SOMEONE ELSE HAD ALSO attempted to classify all the literary theses written by Canadians at home and abroad since 1921 we could compare Professor Antoine Naaman and Professor Léo A. Brodeur's work with volumes by other bibliographers. But the *Répertoire* can only be compared to the previous bibliographies compiled by the same scholars. One can only note the improvement. And what if your thesis is not in the *Répertoire*? Write to Naaman and you will be listed in the 1981 edition. As a matter of fact, Antoine Naaman is so concerned with the problems created by poor information in this field that he is about to found a *Centre d'information*

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sur les thèses littéraires and a *Banque des thèses littéraires*. But the *Répertoire* is more than a tool for graduate students and thesis directors: it is a document that speaks loudly about our cultural evolution. Such a book should be examined by anyone concerned with Canadian ideas.

The *Répertoire* is extremely practical. The theses are numbered and indexed according to their author, director, writer studied and subject matter. This latter index is also divided into theses written in English, French and other languages (German: more than 100, Spanish: fewer than 100, Italian: 11, etc.). Significance? Most people teaching a foreign language in our Universities didn't write their thesis in the language they are "professing."

Now, not all Canadian literary academics write their thesis on Canadian Literature. The theses are listed in 7 chapters, but there is no special section for Canadian Literature. Meaning? In "established" academic circles, Canadian Literature is still not taken seriously. We hope that the 1981 edition will be divided into two main sections: (1) Theses written on Canadian Literature (including those written abroad, i.e., at Aix-En-Provence, The Bordeaux Centre of Canadian Studies, etc.) and (2) Theses written by Canadians on other literatures. Only humble suggestions.

Another interesting detail: Canadians have written 5,600 theses about literature since 1921. All proportions kept (on a per capita basis), we are writing *more* literary theses than the French do. Then one can be amused by a European reviewer commenting on the 1970 edition of Naaman's bibliography: "The production of Canadian academics is not behind continental erudition." No, in fact we may be ahead. However, I would recommend that theses not yet completed be listed separately in the *Répertoire*.

The weak area of Canadian literary theses is Comparative Literature. We have at least a well-established journal in the field (*Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*) and several universities offering programs in the area. Yet only 79 (completed or in progress) theses are listed under this heading. A closer scrutiny even reveals that simple thematic analysis of the kind: "The Feminine Image in the Novels of..." are listed under Comparative Literature. I am not sure we would all agree with that. On the other hand, theses studying relationships between writers, works, mutual influences, etc. are not all listed in this section.

In as far as Canadian Literature is concerned, a few things are worth noting. On the French front: there are no theses written on Pierre Châtillon, Cécile Cloutier, Nicole Brossard or Naïm Kattan, while people like Gérard Bessette, Rina Lasnier or Jacques Godbout have been studied in about ten theses each.

On the English front: there are no theses on Pat Lane, Susan Musgrave, John Robert Colombo, Michael Ondaatje, George Woodcock. On the other hand, Ralph Gustafson, Miriam Waddington and Fred Cogswell are each the object of a thesis. And there are 16 of them on Morley Callaghan, a novelist who is generally not recognized, we are told.

There are amazing things indeed: only two theses on Margaret Atwood written in this country. I know of at least three in France on the author of *Survival*!

Finally, when it comes to theses, we are far less traditional than other countries. We have moved into unexplored areas: literary study of journalism, translation, critical editions, indexation, dictionaries and creative writing—in this latter specialty, the English are ahead of the French: 2 to 1.

ALEXANDRE L. AMPRIMOZ

WHERE LAND IS LOVE

D. G. JONES, *Under the Thunder the Flowers Light Up the Earth*. Coach House, \$4.50.

FOR A LONG TIME it has been my belief that the reason the poetry of D. G. Jones has not found much *retentissement* in Canada could be attributed to the kinds of distances it creates, its air of spare, offhand intellectuality. Edward Thomas would have called his manner spectacular. Thomas, however, would have been mistaken, as I too have been. In a country where there is indeed a certain active interest in poetry, Jones' name is hardly ever heard, for certain things Jones eschews, and foremost among these is mere speech, mere sensational speech. He has never believed, like many contemporary poets, that wit needs to be stylishly diabolic, nor, as many others, that place is where *sui generis* poetry begins. Poetry, as he has said on more than one occasion, begins in *parole*, in the word charged with mythological force. Few poets in anglophone Canada, even those he admires, have carried the word as far as Jones, or have made it carry, indeed, such slippery weight.

Under the Thunder . . . marks at once a change and a deepening of the preoccupations of his earlier collections. If one considers the titles alone of the previous books — *Frost on the Sun*, *The Sun is Axeman*, *Phrases from Orpheus* — one cannot fail to notice both an ironic temper and a vertical vision of the natural universe whose pitch is one of descent. The title of the latest book reverses the direction of both irony and dichotomy: while the flowers are *under* the thunder, they *light up* the earth. The new poems have changed correspondingly. But the changes, both thematic and stylistic, because they continue to meditate on Jones' earliest obsessions as a poet, give a new and illuminating curve to his work as a coherent whole.

The core that permeates the whole of Jones' work has two faces, and raises one question: How can there be frost on the sun? The answer resides in the dialectical theme explored in his study of Canadian literature, *Butterfly on Rock*, in which he developed Frye's notion that Canadian culture is a garrison in a wilderness. There Jones argues that "The only defence for a garrison culture is to abandon defence." One might say that Jones' continual discovery of himself as a poet is that of a man who thought there were limits and found there were hardly any. The obvious formalities of the earlier books, formalities that would seem to respect an order that ought to be evident in the world, are now less evident, but more persuasive. What did he want?

If I could write: Five Starlings
Splashing in a muddy pool, and
All around them write a haze of sun. . . .

Jones' style in *Under the Thunder* puts away the old defences, and the starlings of *The Sun is Axeman* are no longer merely formal. Jones has now listened to himself so long that he has begun to hear his starlings assuming their own form.

The shift in speech pattern has generated a much more subtle development of irony. Juxtapositions of points of view are now so carefully treated that it is difficult to distinguish theme from style. The most succinct clue to Jones' understanding of language is provided by the third part of "Dilemmas":

the first garden was the flesh
the second mind

there never was a wilderness

The resolution of the old antinomy of garden and wilderness is not merely a perceptual modification of the edenic archetype. Jones is reminding us here by implication that what we thought was wilderness was, in fact, mind, a direction of the imagination. With an incredible succinctness one is reminded of one of the

forgotten aspects of *Wacousta*, the fountainhead of English-Canadian literature: the wilderness as terror is merely a projection of colonial irrationality. *Wacousta*, a Byronic perversion of Walpole's *Theodore*, is a wilderness as much as any other romantic hero, and no more. This means that in pastoral imagery the garden is a metaphor for the human being, and the ironies of Jones' latest poetry play on the fact that the human being is two gardens in the same place, each perceiving in its own way. The end of their perceptions, however, "is not knowledge, no, but a constant / reintegration." The movement of style and the movement of theme have become the same movement; and the mutual separation and return of flesh and mind in space as well as in the zones of perception (the poem's structure and pattern of speech) plays with the same core at the heart of Jones' earlier work, but its two faces, formerly so opposed, now often seem to merge.

The first poem, "A Garden of Milne," is a programmatic display of the book's major preoccupation, and it should be noted that both section I and III of the book take their points of departure from meditations on the work of David Milne and Alex Colville. Jones' sense of poetry as picture-space has been transformed, and, were it possible to accuse Jones of formerly creating a reader as a static observer, one can do so no more. As he observes in 13/1/77,

it takes
two eyes, bifocal vision, to measure
distance, it pays perhaps
to look at the view
sideways
no snow, strange peaks, sky, every
now and again to look at the world
upside down

Although such a statement suggests Apollinaire's cubism in "Zones," Jones' manner avoids the French poet's crosshatch of interpenetrating lines of perspective.

No longer exercised by why there may be frost on the sun, the poet seeks to imitate a world that

keeps
dismantling the syntax, escaping
a final sentence
Penelope weaving
and unweaving, night, day, to
avoid closure

Of course, the world of the earlier poems was an object of terrible dissolutions and heroic restitution, but it was never affirmed that the numen of destruction belonged to the same pattern as creation, that their dance was Shiva's, intimately relating both movements into one.

The figure for the dance is the flower, a sign crucial to both pastoral and Indian aesthetics; and as Jones ironically suggests at the end of "The Lampman Poems" (Section IV), "heaven is a mortalflower." In this section, in fact, the best of Jones' use of speech is "anthologized." All are poems that Jones, in the persona of Archibald Lampman, addresses to the latter's friend Kate. They suggest sonnets, but are in fact poems of thirteen lines of a loose trimeter without rhyme whose titles are acrostically formed from the letters composing the beginning of each line. All the titles but the last are names of flowers, and the flowers are integrated into the parole of the poems. Here Lampman and Kate become a landscape of flowers, and the landscape edges into word.

Part of the extraordinary energy of this whole section is its realisation of the clues and possibilities of the rest of the book. The poet is always a new Adam, writing the new landscape. But to do so, as he observes in *Modern Poetry Studies* in 1974, "it is not simply a question of naming what he sees; to name what people cannot see, what is not already in the language, he must go into the dark." The poet must, as he remarks in "Pictures By Colville,"

Choose the centre as it moves
every shift
is a precise season

Hence, to be disarmed, to be naked, a situation Jones frequently gives voice to, is to be in the dark and predisposed to name the new landscape. The seventh Lampman poem is specifically a "reading" of Kate as an *immortelle*, both as "everlasting" and as the little alpine flower that seems to endure long after its season is past. Dead, she is still alive in language, so ending divisions of destruction and creation.

To see the beloved heuristically in the landscape, to name her as parts of the world, is a technique as old as Petrarch who delighted in transforming Laura into "l'aura," "l'auro," etc. The uncentred world, however, Jones shares with the twentieth century. What sets him apart from his contemporaries is not only the manner of his constant shifts of point of view, the fruit of many years' meditation on illusions, visual repetitions, and *trompe-l'oeil* learned from a great variety of artists. He is also set apart by his uncanny obliquity as a speaker: no one engaged in a monologue with Doug Jones is quite the same afterward. He speaks, as he says in one poem, "like Lazarus saying, 'What's for breakfast?'"

One might be tempted to say that Jones' ironies, his almost oriental acquiescence, his apparent refusal to care about the merely dead, not to speak of "justice, guilt, the heavy crust of self-deception, carnage and its gods," that this marks him as carelessly surreal. It is more appropriate to say that *Under the Thunder* brings to fruition and closes the brief reign of nature as terror in Canadian letters. The Lampman poems, by recalling the nineteenth century, both short-circuit terror and display what so many earlier Canadian poets knew intimately: the only unpredictable figure in the land-

scape is man. To admit as much in no way removes the horror, it only puts it where it belongs; and fortunately Jones has made too many night journeys for us to believe that Kate and Archie are anything other than what they are, namely, small, brilliantly lit figures of the middle, pastoral distance. Where, in fact, Jones' intellectual courage is to be admired is in his awareness that the garden of the mind and the flesh are mutually dependent, and that the horror resides in their division, as he suggests in "Sebastien Le Prestre de Vauban" for whom "a plan of / fortification is itself a medallion, a mandala, a / multifoliate rose."

E. D. BLODGETT

THE NEW WOMAN

JOAN BARFOOT, *Abra*. McGraw-Hill Ryerson
\$9.95.

ARITHA VAN HERK, *Judith*. McClelland & Stewart, \$10.00.

ABRA AND JUDITH are both prize-winning first novels and both try to say something about the new woman in terms of the ideal of self-sufficiency, or as the Chinese like to call it, self-reliance.

At first glance the novels are not in the least alike either in intention, aspiration, or theme. *Judith* is written according to a familiar formula which employs the usual novelistic conventions. To this formula van Herk has added a new and local twist. The new twist is pigs.

Judith is a young farm girl who goes to the big city of Edmonton, works in an office, has a love affair with a married man, worries about her hairdos, her dresses and her shoes. Then, after receiving a small inheritance, she decides to change her life, buys a pig farm and starts to raise pigs. The pigs, and Judith's love for, and identification with them, are the most original and interesting part of the novel. Van Herk knows about pigs in

depth; she not only describes them with knowledge and love, but celebrates the femaleness of sows, and proudly proclaims her heroine's kinship with them. This is a refreshing change from the usual celebration of maleness, so tiresomely familiar from the writings of Hemingway, Mailer and others.

To reverse a stereotype may be a necessary corrective, but it is just as lacking in truth as its opposite. I happen to think that the philosophical and social implications of van Herk's celebration of the female creature as pure creature, are questionable, but she does describe in a new and compelling way, the sheer sensuous erotic pleasure of motherhood, the sense of wholeness in nuzzling and nursing. She also depicts pregnancy as a dynamic process which involves the female creature in *work*, as well as in pain and pleasure. At the pig level this work is completely physiological, but by implication, a corresponding psychological dimension exists in human femaleness.

Yet van Herk does not take this exploration very far or deep. Instead, she allows the strictures of plot and formula to shape the major theme of her novel. She cannot prevent femaleness from being the germinal theme, but the theme that emerges fullblown is pure Horatio Alger with a light dusting of CBC televisionese: forsake the city with its adulterous relationships, go back to the farm, raise pigs even if you are the first woman to try it single-handed. It will all end happily ever after, for the farm will give you what everyone in Canada is earnestly searching for — roots, and a sense of identity.

Needless to say, in *Judith*, the farm and the surrounding neighbours are as good, healthy, and helpful, as the city and its denizens are evil, sick, and destructive. And magically, through the farm and its associations, Judith finds not only a mate, but a suitable husband.

As fiction, *Judith* is a satisfying entertainment, unblemished by the slightest hint of social interpretation, let alone criticism. The fact that the heroine has, first, the capital, and second, the entrepreneurial initiative to run a pig farm by herself, has no real relevance to the feminist movement or the new woman. Anyone who is even slightly familiar with rural life in Canada knows of the many competent and courageous middle-aged widows who ran the family farms single-handedly and unromantically, long before the exhortations of the women's movement reached anyone's ears. These women not only raised pigs and cattle, but children as well. And it is only because they were middle-aged and could no longer be considered sex-objects, to be admired and coveted, that they probably did not inspire as much helpfulness in the men in their neighbourhoods as does van Herk's Judith. The only "new" freedom for women that emerges from this book is the sexual freedom of the creature-existence that men have always been ready to grant to the women they are not married to: a liberty that has nothing to do with being either human or free.

Although van Herk's novel says nothing very interesting about women, it is wonderful in what it says about pigs. Van Herk writes about them with immediacy, talent and a beautiful energy, and if I can not love her pigs quite as much as she does, I will always remember them with respect and admiration.

Abra, the other prize-winning novel, seems to explore the same theme of self-sufficiency as *Judith*, but is in every way more ambitious, more complex and more disturbing. It is a didactic novel, and deals more successfully with ideas than people. Even the name *Abra* is significant, suggesting as it does Abracadabra, an ancient cabalistic configuration of letters that was supposed to cure fevers.

Abra does all that society has planned

for her. She grows up in a southern Ontario town, studies, marries, and acquires a home and children. She lives the unexamined life of every upwardly mobile junior executive wife, complete with PTA, recipes, bridge club, and the latest in decorating. Yet she is unfulfilled. Husband and children are not enough for her, and she somehow lacks the energy, discipline, or brains, to find satisfying work of her own. Always in a misty state of depression, she hovers on the brink of a breakdown until she finally decides to run away. Like Judith, she also has an inheritance; enough money to buy a remote country property where she can hole up with garden, books, and birds. In this way she eliminates all social contact, and with it, all conflict, pain, and responsibility.

Who doesn't recognize this fantasy? Every child dreams of such utopian omnipotence. He will run away to the forest, he will build a hut of logs and pine boughs, he will need nothing from anyone. He will pick berries for food, trap rabbits and catch fish, and invent whatever else he needs for living. And no messy human relationship will ever touch, dominate, disappoint, or reject him again. Even better than Robinson Crusoe. He had a footprint to contend with.

Abra finds no footprints in her retreat. Her withdrawal is complete and represents the furthest extreme of fearfulness, which, Barfoot implies — unconsciously I think — is the inevitable result of the pain and horror we must all endure in the anonymity and violence of today's social living.

I said earlier that *Abra* is a didactic novel. It is also the work of a young writer, and as such, speaks not only for the author, but for the many people who are its readers, and also its ghostly writers. What does Abra's long withdrawal from social life and her return to nature really signify? Abra's abandonment of her chil-

dren, her lack of guilt, her rationalization of her problems, are not in the least convincing. We are asked to believe in the cool imperturbability of her nature on the one hand, and in her sensitive passion for willow trees on the other. Most difficult of all is the attempt to understand how a woman who remained unmoved in the sensuous presence (and beauty) of two real, live children could so deeply love and identify with a mere *thing*, like the natural wood-panelling in a cabin. I know as well as anyone that wood has a secret life of its own, and that Zeus once saved Daphne by turning her into a tree when she was fleeing the unwanted attentions of Apollo. But I also know that wood is somewhat less than human, and I can't help thinking that it is a strange set of priorities that will allow a woman to love wood panelling and squirrels more than children — or even husbands for that matter.

Here is how Abra describes her first sight of the cabin:

I was inside. The counters, all in natural wood . . . I felt them, unfinished but without splinters, smooth, solid. The kitchen large and warm . . . a breeze coming through the broken window panes . . . and into the bedroom . . . the window looking into the willow, how good, I thought, to wake up and know the willow is keeping watch. . . . and me wanting to just stay, to curl up in it until I absorbed it, or it absorbed me, this odd peace that was not peaceful, no memories, no bars, just a holding.

And about leaving home she tells us:

I wanted to be gone, out of this baffling place where the children and Stephen were just shadows, demanding that I be one of them when I could not. The cabin and the land were in me now. . . .

So Abra departs on what can best be described as a lifelong camping trip. She tells us that she became "an animal," and, "as the years [ten] went on . . . I became part of the wilderness . . . aware of my very minimal place in it. And I found it comforting."

The detached Abra thus seeks union with *something*; in this case it is the wilderness. Perhaps this novel is simply one more actualization in fictional form of the theological approach to nature which has so long been insisted upon by our most influential critics. When Abra casts off her social self, her lethargy is miraculously replaced by energy, and she yields without struggle to the limitations of season and weather imposed by nature. Within these limitations she finds her own internal rhythm and peace. What the author and Abra both fail to realize is that the peace comes more from the yielding to, and the acceptance of, *limits* than from nature. The acceptance of *limits* imposed by self and/or society, as long as it is chosen by the individual, will bring the same kind of peace.

In order to enjoy her new-found peace without guilt, Abra has to rationalize her leaving:

Was it escape I saw? I did not think so. Or if it was, it was not so much escape from this life, although I was dead in it, as an escape to something. Filled now with life, a sense of purity, and, at last, belief. . . . I was a different person.

This different person is scarcely believable. Although she feels no guilt about abandoning her children, Abra feeds the birds, nurses a wounded squirrel, and lavishes love on flowers and plants, who, unlike children, will grow without her assistance. If such a complete denial of the social self is not escape, then what is it? As Abra ponders this she comes to a conclusion that absolves her not only of guilt and conflict, but more importantly, of all pain:

And it came to me that all the components of the old life had . . . broken down . . . everything outside of me had broken down. I had been put together.

Maybe; but at what cost? What kind of integration is it that denies all human relationships? Perhaps it is the integra-

tion of despair, as Abra herself suggests when she wonders whether she is sane or mad, and speculates about the meaning of sanity and health in the everyday world.

The question of sanity is most clearly dealt with after a visit from her husband. She refuses to return and realizes, when he leaves, that an emotional breakdown must have brought her to the cabin and the wilderness. She believes she has now healed herself, and fears that she will break down again if she returns to her old life.

Abra thus continues to live contentedly alone for ten years, only agreeing to return when her daughter, now grown, visits and begs her to come back. Abra agrees, but at the last minute changes her mind, and decides to remain in her cabin where she knows she will never have bad dreams; life in the wilderness is without pain or dreams.

In spite of the unconvincing and flawed character and morality of Abra, Barfoot presents the reader with a very real problem. It is the same problem that Sinclair Ross posed forty years ago in *As for Me and My House*, namely: can a sensitive, inward-looking individual remain unbroken in a provincial, violent, society where the cultural barriers to satisfying emotional relationships seem insurmountable?

I can't believe in Abra's premises or her solutions, but Barfoot's novel convinces me of the reality of the problem. Van Herk, on the other hand, does not attempt to deal with psychological realities — except for the ones connected with parturition — and seems to ride along uncritically on the wave of intellectual euphoria that washes over all Albertans with oily complacency.

At its most profound level her message is the celebration of reproduction in all its glorious phases; this, in a world that is already dangerously overpopulated. Yet

different as they are, both of these first novels have one thing in common: they deal with strategies of escape, and with the postponement and avoidance of the pain that is an inevitable part of living as a human being. One woman drowns her sorrows in the metaphysics of nature, while the other drowns and deafens them in the noisy seductive music of the rites of generation. Metaphysics or physics — one has no validity without the other. Both authors write with accomplishment, skill and beauty, but only Barfoot's work has the added dimension of being disturbing.

MIRIAM WADDINGTON

CARR: MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

DORIS SHADBOLT, *The Art of Emily Carr*. Clarke Irwin/Douglas & McIntyre, \$45.00.

MARIA TIPPETT, *Emily Carr, A Biography*. Oxford, \$19.50.

WHILE READING — and looking with delight — at Doris Shadbolt's finely written and superbly illustrated *The Art of Emily Carr*, I have also been involved in a curious book by a quintessential English eccentric, Owen Barfield. A barrister and avowed disciple of Rudolf Steiner branching out into talk about the arts, Barfield is one of those garrulous amateurs with occasional penetrating insights who still thrive in Britain, and in *The Rediscovery of Meaning and Other Essays*, he had a few things to say that seemed to me particularly pertinent to Carr's achievement as Shadbolt presents it.

Now it is possible [says Barfield] to look not only at a fellow being, but also at the world of nature . . . not merely as matter but also as expression. It is possible, but for most people it is no longer normal and instinctive, to do so. It has been becoming less and less normal in the course of the last three or four hundred years. And the great discovery made by the poets and phil-

osophers of the Romantic movement was just this; that, although it is no longer normal, it is not impossible.

Emily Carr was in many ways a natural Romantic, perhaps in no way more evidently than in her power of seeing "the world of nature . . . not merely as matter but also as expression," particularly in the sense later elaborated by Barfield, where "spirit depends on matter, or on body, not for its being, but for its expression."

So much for Barfield. For if there is anything that differentiates Emily Carr among Canadian painters, it is her ability to see the world of nature as expression, and having in this way overcome the material rather than using it, to open a view into the inner realm where more exists than meets the eye.

The pace and structure of *The Art of Emily Carr*, with chapters of narrative and exposition alternating with sections where reproductions of Carr's paintings alternate with fragments of her writing about the painting experience, are admirably arranged to reflect this essential expressionist aspect of Emily Carr as a visual and also a literary artist. For Carr was one of those rare people in whom the two languages — of vision and speech — were manifest nearly at equal intensity. There have been writers — like Ruskin — who were sensitive enough visual artists to realize that prose gave them wider possibilities of expression. There have been painters, like Van Gogh and Cézanne, who wrote admirable letters discussing their art, but who never doubted that their true way of expressing what lay deep within them was through painting. There was D. H. Lawrence, who painted to extend disastrously into visual actuality an overflowing lush visual imagination. And there have been tragic lapses of judgment like that of Benjamin Robert Haydon, that fine writer who drove himself to suicide trying to be a

great epic painter in the tradition of David. But the artists who worked with almost equal intensity in the visual and literary fields have been few indeed. Blake, of course — Dante Gabriel Rossetti — Wyndham Lewis. Interestingly enough, they appear mostly within the English tradition, where poetry has always been strongly visual, and painting — from Nicholas Hilliard onward — strongly lyrical, as distinct from the French tradition, where the generic bounds between artists are more sharply drawn, and visuality belongs to what is seen — and shown to be — rather than to what is conceived in the mind and written.

English Canada, in this at least, follows the parent tradition. The country where — in the vision of T. E. Hulme traversing the prairies — Imagism was originally conceived, has produced poetry in which the visual element has always been strong and where the links between painting and poetry, if intermittent, are often intimate. Painters like Lawren Harris and Jack Shadbolt have written creditable poetry, while P. K. Page, masquerading as P. K. Irwin, is a highly interesting visual artist. And in Emily Carr the two vocations of painting and writing seemed to become virtually interchangeable, so that when she was unable to paint she turned very naturally to the kind of autobiographical writing in which she was able to articulate, in a prose that was at once precise and evocative, the “world of nature . . . not merely as matter but as expression.”

Doris Shadbolt not only recognizes the interdependence of Emily Carr's painting and her writing — the way they supported and elucidated each other. She makes that interdependence a strength in her book, for *The Art of Emily Carr* gains its value as an exposition of this often enigmatic painter from a critical use of what is said in prose to illuminate what was done in paint.

Emily Carr's books and letters do not reveal the kinds of sharp intellectual apprehension of a painter's problems that one meets, for example, in Cézanne's letters and which goes with the curiously logical and even geometric kind of passion that inspired his work. It is more often in other people's letters — and especially Lawren Harris's — to her that the difficulties she worked out in painting are likely to be clearly stated. What Emily Carr's writings do is to relate the thing in nature to its transfiguration in paint, often by telling us what she sees at the point of imaginative seizure, and then giving a sense of the inner feeling of movement without being able to declare explicitly what in her sets the movement going. Take this passage from Carr's journals, *Hundreds and Thousands*, which Doris Shadbolt places beside a group of reproductions of intensely mobile sky- and seascapes.

I woke up this morning with ‘unity of movement’ in a picture strong in my mind. I believe Van Gogh had that idea. I did not realize he had striven for that till quite recently so I did not come by the idea through him. It seems to me that clears up a lot. I see it very strongly out on the beach and cliffs. Now it seems to me the first thing to seize on in your layout is the direction of your main movement, the sweep of the whole thing as a unit. One must be very careful about the transition of one curve of direction into the next, vary the length of the wave of space but *keep it going*, a pathway for the eye and the mind to travel through and into the thought. For long I have been trying to get these movements of the parts. Now I see there is only *one* movement. It sways and ripples. It may be slow or fast but it is only one movement sweeping out into space but always keeping going — rocks, sea, sky, one continuous movement.

The most interesting of Emily Carr's paintings, as Doris Shadbolt clearly recognizes, are not the more famous early and very late paintings of the decaying and deserted Indian villages of the Coast.

These have their documentary value and their elegiac power as records of a culture whose very monuments were made in perishable wood. But it is the search into the natural world for the echoes of her own predicament that inspires the great paintings of the last decade in Carr's life — those dense visceral paintings of the coastal forests, and the other luminous visions of woodlands stripped to a few bare trees that rise like elongated umbrellas into a vast sky burning in passionate rotation.

So many of these are paintings whose surging colours mount to a passion that is visionary rather than merely visual; one is minded of the Salish novice going into the woods and driving himself to the point of hallucination where he recognizes the spirit of the land which his animist insight endows with supernatural form. There was a natural pantheism in Emily Carr's life view that — as Doris Shadbolt shows — was given definition by contact with Lawren Harris' proselytizing theosophy, and which enabled her to release — through the apprehension of nature as expression rather than matter (going back to Barfield) — the frustrations of a passionate and physically unfulfilled self.

But always the statement is oblique; the personal is concealed in the universal, and in her writing as much as in her painting Carr leaves us to conjecture knowingly what is never obviously stated. Predictably, she was bad at portraits; better at interpreting the stylized representations of man on totem poles (and so giving humanity at third hand); best of all in rendering the shadows that oppress in the forest, the fires that burn in the sky, and have their reflections in the human heart, which is apart from and yet dependent on that vast world of perpetual growth of which Carr was so perpetually aware, as she declares in a diary note that Shadbolt sets among three

paintings of young forests starting up again after devastation.

There is nothing so strong as growing. Nothing can drown that force that splits rocks and pavements and spreads over the fields . . . Man can pattern it and change its variety and shape, but leave it for even a short time and off it goes back to its own, swamping and swallowing man's puny intentions. No killing or stamping down can destroy it. Life is in the soil. Touch it with air and light and it bursts forth like a struck match. Nothing is dead, not even a corpse. It moves into the elements when the spirit has left it, but even to the spirit's leaving there is life, boundless life, resistless and marvellous, fresh and clean, God.

In an obvious way this is pantheism, but Carr was not, any more than Wordsworth, the kind of simple pantheist who merely contemplates the world as it is and calls it God. Through everything — for her — there moved a preternatural force which her works express and which called on a world of inner vision behind the merely visual, so that one can say of the paintings of her best period, as she once said of Harris's works, "They seem to have called to me from some other world, sort of an answer to a great longing." In the end there is a final elusiveness about her works, about the source of their fire and passion. Admirably as Doris Shadbolt has guided us with her great knowledge of Carr and her background, with her impeccable judgment and her poised and lucid prose, she leaves us at the gate of a mystery each of us can only inwardly grasp by his own study of Carr's haunting paintings, never before so fully or so finely reproduced as they are here.

Recent interest in Emily Carr has provoked, if it had not entirely inspired, other works than Shadbolt's. Recently there was a CBC television film on her life, insensitively produced from Toronto instead of being done by West Coast people with a feel for her work and its links with the land; there have also been some very bad books whose titles I see

no reason to advertise. But it is fortunate that the other book to appear at the same time as Doris Shadbolt's *The Art of Emily Carr* should be a serious work which in many ways complements it. This is Maria Tippet's *Emily Carr, A Biography*. Tippet does not generate the extraordinary empathy for Emily Carr as painter that infuses the Shadbolt book, nor does she write so supplely, and the few colour prints in her book are jarringly off-key in colour and tone. But as a Life her book is formidably researched, dense in detail, and provided with an abundance of interesting documentary illustrations, so that whatever comparisons of quality one may make between the two books, they do in a sense support each other. After them there will be no need for another book on Emily Carr for a long time to come.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

LOWRY TODAY

ANNE SMITH, ed., *The Art of Malcolm Lowry*. Barnes & Noble, unpriced; Vision Press, £5.50.

THIS NEW COLLECTION of previously unpublished essays revives a vexed set of questions about Malcolm Lowry's troubled career. *Under the Volcano* is an acknowledged twentieth-century classic, but what are we to make of the novels and stories which followed? And how should we situate Lowry's exploitation of his own legend in his fiction in relation to often uncertain biographical data?

Several of the contributors to this volume correct Lowry's biographer, Douglas Day, on a number of points, most notably Russell Lowry, one of the novelist's brothers, who contributes a breezy preface which dismisses as "sheer nonsense" any notion of Lowry as a tortured adolescent genius. Russell Lowry is antagonistic to Day (understandably,

since Day portrayed him as an unsympathetic bully), but to be fair the biographer did observe that "Malcolm's early life was not nearly as pathetic as he pretended it had been." Russell Lowry scotches the legend of the schoolboy golf champion, but I am sceptical of his most sensational suggestion, that the young Lowry never voyaged to Norway. The U.B.C. Lowry collection contains what certainly looks like an authentic letter from Lowry to Conrad Aiken (unfortunately undated), apparently written from the Hotel Parkheimen, Oslo.

In a survey of the critical reputation of Lowry's masterpiece over the last thirty years, Richard Hauer Costa observes that the results of the academic Lowry industry have scarcely been breathtaking. Costa, too, takes the opportunity to rap Day over the knuckles, accusing him of being contemptuous of other Lowry critics while himself having little new to say. Unfortunately Costa hasn't really done his homework either, and fails to cover any but the most famous and easily accessible reviews of 1947 or to offer any analysis of the shifting cultural contexts which made Lowry initially so unpopular in Britain, or such a cult writer in the late Sixties.

Moving on from Lowry's life and critical reputation, the volume offers seven essays on the fiction. *Under the Volcano* attracts three very good commentaries. Stephen Tift usefully disposes of the fallacy that an etiology of the Consul's liquor-sodden decline is discoverable in the text. The Consul is a victim, Tift argues, because he has *decided* to be a victim; this paralysing consciousness of his role as tragic failure pre-empts and vitiates all of the Consul's encounters with the contingent world. Brian O'Kill uses manuscript evidence to demonstrate how only at a relatively late stage in the composition of *Under the Volcano* did Lowry transform his language away from

a fashionable Thirties' plain-style towards a quite different long sentence structure, replete with elaborations and qualifications, and much better adapted to the expression of simultaneous perceptions and the eddies of consciousness. O'Kill also has many valuable incidental insights into such diverse topics as Lowry and the occult, the mischievous influence of the famous letter to Cape, Lowry as analogist rather than symbolist, and the writer's failure of nerve in the later fiction. Sherrill Grace examines Lowry's use of spatial and temporal distortion in his writing up to 1947, in relation to German Expressionism and, in particular, expressionist films. At times her definition of expressionism seems a little too all-inclusive, and to my mind she underestimates the naturalistic foundations of Lowry's fiction (unlike, say, Beckett in *The Unnameable*, Lowry never let his fiction completely abandon the real world for a free-floating realm of consciousness). Nevertheless, her essay contains a number of illuminating insights and marks a welcome endeavour to approach Lowry from a new angle.

It's when we turn to the later fiction that the problems and critical disputes really begin to mount up. The need for reliable data on Lowry's life is shown by George Woodcock's essay, which puts the broader contours of Lowry's career into perspective, emphasizing that Lowry reversed the traditional progression of novelists from the autobiographical to the invented. Woodcock sees "The Forest Path to the Spring" as the only truly successful work of the later career. What, for Woodcock, is this novella's "flimsy plot of psychic experiences" is for Perle Epstein a profound Zen Buddhist allegory. Her reduction of the text in this way is crude and over-ingenuous, insensitive to the play of Lowry's irony. T. E. Bareham contributes an essay on the *Hear Us O Lord* . . . volume of stories, reminding us that much in the later

Lowry remains private and inaccessible without a knowledge of the earlier texts. His emphasis on the inter-relationship of Lowry's writings provides a useful contrast to those critics disposed to see only incoherence and failure in the later work.

M. C. Bradbrook tries to make out a case for Lowry's last novel, *October Ferry to Gabriola*, being an avant-garde experimental work with a narrative form that "lies between oral forms of the ballad or the seaman's yarn, with their multiple unstable versions, and radical new forms such as the 'neo-Gothic novel' in England, the *nouveau roman* in France." This clutter of narrative models seems to me far too contradictory to be useful. Professor Bradbrook scratches arbitrarily at the surface of the *October Ferry* manuscripts, but provides no coherent account of the novel's slow growth, and her argument collapses into a series of undeveloped points and rambling anecdotes (as well as including an irritatingly gratuitous quotation from Bob Dylan). Her essay culminates in the damaging admission that her quotations from the Lowry manuscripts were "made in haste," suffered in transit, "and have not been checked." A random check reveals that her quotations are, indeed, inaccurate.

In its presentation, this anthology fails to match up to the high standard of competing series like Macmillan Casebooks in Britain or Twentieth-Century Views in the States. There is no brief account of Lowry's life and career; no bibliography; no explanation why some texts have been left largely undiscussed (*Ultramarine*, *Dark as the Grave Wherein My Friend Is Laid*, the poetry); the proof-reading has been careless. With a little more editorial discretion and effort this collection could have been much improved. Anne Smith's terse three-sentence Introduction laments that critics still don't take Lowry seriously as an established novelist, the one important successor to Joyce. To a large extent

such claims for Lowry's significance rest on how we view his development as a writer after 1947; it seems to me unlikely that this anthology will persuade such critics to change their minds.

RONALD BINNS

CONTINUING STORY

CHRISTINE PAGNOULLE, *Malcolm Lowry: Voyage au fond de nos abîmes*. Editions L'Age d'Homme, 22 francs.

DAVID MARKSON, *Malcolm Lowry's Volcano: Myth, Symbol, Meaning*. Times Books, \$12.50.

WITH TWO NEW STUDIES devoted to Malcolm Lowry's masterpiece, *Under the Volcano*, the novel has at last secured its position as a major twentieth-century work of art. Both studies, one French, the other American, treat Lowry as a one book author, but apart from this they have little in common. Christine Pagnouille provides a general description of Lowry's novel with few fresh insights and little analysis. David Markson, however, offers a veritable feast for new or veteran *Volcano* readers.

In *Malcolm Lowry: Voyage au fond de nos abîmes*, Pagnouille provides a close textual description of *Under the Volcano* and, to a lesser degree, of the stories in *Hear Us O Lord*. She is quick to dismiss Lowry's first novel, *Ultramarine* (1933) as juvenile imitation. Lowry's other posthumously published works are similarly ignored. While this is certainly a critical prerogative, in this case it is indicative of a general failure on the part of the critic to move beyond an examination of the superficialities of theme and recurrent image. Just as there is much more to be said about Lowry's other works, there is more to be said about *Volcano* and the stories.

Pagnouille's main point regarding *Hear Us O Lord* is that the vision of hard-won

happiness presented there is false, indeed an evasion of the truth: "Mais la pastorale d'Eridanus, la symphonie de la foi retrouvée — n'est-ce pas une fausse réponse? une réponse qui élude la question?" Because she is, *a priori*, interested in "nos abîmes," it is "Through the Panama" which receives most of her attention. Her short second chapter is devoted solely to this story, an emphasis that lifts it out of its sequential context in *Hear Us O Lord* where it is a hell to be harrowed in the journey towards paradise. Throughout the discussion, Pagnouille reiterates the idea of Lowry's (or Sigbjørn's) 'writer being written' complex, thereby further reducing the story to its most ambiguous, if not negative, element.

The next twelve chapters of *Voyage au fond de nos abîmes* offer a chapter-by-chapter description of *Under the Volcano*. There is a sense of *déjà vu* in this *explication de texte* for the North American reader familiar with several fine analyses of the novel. Literary allusions, symbols, historical references, and the "immediate level" of *Volcano* have already received considerable attention — and in greater depth than Pagnouille provides. What is missing is any sense of how the novel works, its structure, style, language. In her final chapter, Pagnouille asserts that, "La difficulté quasi insurmontable que le critique doit affronter quand vient le moment de rassembler les fils . . . provient d'abord de l'ambiguïté même de notre rapport au roman." If, however, some attention had been paid to the form of the novel and to Lowry's intentions, an understanding of *Volcano* as a whole might be less problematic.

While my main criticism of this book is that it offers little that is new to Lowry criticism, I am also unconvinced by Pagnouille's thesis that Lowry's main works, *Volcano* and *Hear Us O Lord*, portray collapse and utter darkness. As if in direct contradiction of Lowry himself who

claimed that, in keeping with the novel's "trochal form," the reader of *Volcano* should re-read chapter I and be inspired by the prefacing quote from Sophocles, Pagnouille insists that chapter XII is the bitter end: "Pourtant *Au-dessous du volcan* n'est pas l'histoire d'une promesse; ce n'est pas l'histoire d'une résurrection. *Au-dessous du volcan* raconte la fin d'une histoire."

This argument is unconvincing because so little attention is paid to the form and intention of the text. The temptation in discussing Lowry is to confound biography with fiction — always to the detriment of the fiction. Perhaps it is because she has fallen into this critical abyss that Christine Pagnouille insists upon "les abîmes" in Lowry's work.

David Markson's *Malcolm Lowry's Volcano: Myth, Symbol, Meaning* approaches *Under the Volcano* from an entirely different perspective, despite the fact that Markson also offers a chapter-by-chapter discussion of the text. Markson argues that *Volcano* is a mythic text and that "by its inherently 'spatial' nature the mythic novel can define its terms only gradually, and that *process* itself seems worth exploring." Consequently, Markson's study is an "inductive investigation, from the inside out" of Lowry's masterpiece; it is also a rich, illuminating examination of the novel that transforms the act of criticism itself into an exciting voyage of discovery. Reading Markson's discussion of *Volcano* is like reading the novel in that one gradually enters Lowry's complex fictional world as the "reflexive configurations [within the text] come into focus."

During his analysis, Markson makes many interesting and helpful points about *Volcano* — from the identification of myth and allusion or the description of symbol, to the ways in which myth and symbol function within the text. Images, for example, are fluid, constantly shifting

from the particular to a wider resonance of meaning. Lowry's technique, in general, is incremental, with meaning gradually, imperceptibly, expanding to embody his vision. As with Dante, whom Markson feels to be a major influence, Lowry's symbols have several concurrent meanings: "where Dante writes on several levels at once, Lowry will draw parallels on several." Bringing this understanding of Lowry's imagery and symbolism to bear upon the prohibitionist poster in Laruelle's bedroom, Markson elucidates the meaning of the entire scene in chapter VII, and of one of the novel's themes — the loss, or perhaps worse, the wilful destruction of children.

Markson's interpretation of classical myth in *Volcano* is, for me, one of the highlights of his book. Particularly helpful is his discussion of Yvonne as a Demeter figure. The figure of Yvonne has often been criticized, but Markson shows the Yvonne-Demeter association to be integral to theme and image on each narrative level. Indeed, Markson's critical achievement lies in this ability to see the wood and the trees, the part and the whole. Thus, *Volcano* is not simply "la fin d'une histoire." According to Markson, the tragic rite of "timeless, eternally repeated pattern of contest, sparagmos, and renewal, must surely be seen as one of *Under the Volcano's* own."

Under the Volcano — "voyage au fond de nos abîmes" or "contest, sparagmos, and renewal"? Pagnouille's and Markson's differing conclusions are indicative less of the ambiguity within *Under the Volcano* than of the limitations of descriptive or narrowly thematic criticism. These conclusions are representative of reader response over the thirty-one years since the novel's publication. But Markson's book is particularly praiseworthy, for he takes one back to the novel itself with all its inexhaustible beauty.

SHERRILL E. GRACE

NIGHTMARE

CLARK BLAISE, *Lunar Attractions*. Doubleday, \$11.50.

Lunar Attractions is Clark Blaise's first novel. His two previous works, *A North American Education* (1973) and *Tribal Justice* (1974), are collections of short fiction. Blaise's predilection for the short story form is obvious in *Lunar Attractions*: the novel is loosely structured, comprising a series of episodes in the life of David Greenwood.

In *Lunar Attractions*, Clark Blaise's disturbing vision is vividly, even shockingly expressed. The novel develops several themes Blaise has explored in his short fiction — the isolated individual's search for identity, the conflict between dream and reality, the power of creative imagination to impose order on the chaos of experience. Readers familiar with Blaise's earlier works will recognize David Greenwood, a sensitive, intelligent, and above all imaginative character. In *Lunar Attractions*, he tells the story of his childhood and adolescence. The narrative viewpoint is retrospective: David, who has grown up to become a writer, recounts and interprets incidents from his early life. This technique, which Blaise uses in many of his short stories, contributes to the impression that the fiction is largely autobiographical.

David spends his first thirteen years in central Florida, an outsider in a closed society. His parents are "Yankees" whose northern speech and lifestyle mark them as aliens in the American South. David is a solitary child, who lives more in his imagination than in the "real" world. He is intelligent and curious and has a great capacity for memorization, but there is no order in the knowledge he amasses. The world he sees is chaotic. At the age of ten, he melts crayons so that all the colours run together, forming "a replica

of [his] mind . . . a repository of facts and textures and colours."

As a child, David perceives his parents not as personalities, but as "contending principles in the universe." His father, associated with the sun, is vital, energetic, colourful. His mother, aligned with the moon, is pale, quiet, mysterious. David's search for his own place in the universe is presented in terms of these contending principles. On the one hand, he wants to identify himself with his father, the solar, masculine principle; on the other, his mother's lunar, feminine nature exerts a strong attraction on his receptive imagination.

At age thirteen, David moves to the "almost northern" city of Palestra, where he is less isolated, his intelligence no longer unique. In school, he encounters two students whose intellects far surpass his own. One is an apparent paragon, unfailingly, logically brilliant, a model of piety and industry. The other is an eccentric, antisocial, radical genius. David, by comparison, is unformed, his knowledge merely an undifferentiated mass of memorized information. Although he senses that "all affinities must converge," he has not yet developed his creative capacity to impose order on experience.

In Blaise's fictional world, horror and madness are part of the texture of daily reality. David is peculiarly susceptible to such lunar influences: he is "on the side of fear, nightmare and all unanswered things." The image he offers of his adolescent mind is a museum display which depicts a Bedouin on a camel being attacked by a Nubian lion. The scene attracts David because it possesses "the quality of nightmare."

Nightmare and reality converge in the central incident of David's adolescence and of the novel. In his dangerous innocence, David becomes embroiled in a bizarre sex-murder. The resolution of the mystery coincides with David's discovery

of his own sexual and intellectual identity. His final understanding of the full truth about Laurel and Larry Zywotko prepares him to resolve the contention of solar and lunar principles within his own personality.

The final section of *Lunar Attractions* is not completely satisfying. After the sustained suspense of the central incident, the brief episodes that make up the conclusion seem choppy and disjointed. Nevertheless, the novel is interesting and entertaining. Blaise displays a remarkable eye for detail and great skill in transforming the details he observes into evocative imagery. At its most intense, *Lunar Attractions* possesses the frightening and fascinating quality of nightmare.

LINDA H. LAMONT

CAPER & LEGEND

MONICA HUGHES, *The Ghost Dance Caper*. Thomas Nelson, \$7.95.

CHRISTIE HARRIS, *Mystery at the Edge of Two Worlds*. McClelland & Stewart, \$8.95.

YVES TROENDLE, *Journey to the Sun*. Oolichan Books, \$4.95.

PERHAPS IT WAS INEVITABLE, given the increasing popularity of collections of Indian legends, that the culture of the North American Indian would become an attractive background for a variety of Canadian children's books. Two recent texts which incorporate this background are Monica Hughes' *The Ghost Dance Caper* and Christie Harris' *Mystery at the Edge of Two Worlds*.

Hughes' book is a traditional boy's adventure tale with an added twist: the hero, Tom, is a half-breed, the son of a totally unbelievable social climbing white mother and a father who is ashamed of his Blackfoot heritage. Thus Tom faces the identity crisis so popular in today's

children's literature. His only confidant, his elderly Blackfoot grandfather, suggests that he needs to take part in a ghost dance, the traditional Indian method of discovering one's place in the world, one's uniqueness. Unfortunately, the dance is possible only after Tom steals a "ghost bundle" from a local museum, a task accomplished with ridiculous ease. The dance itself, however, is somewhat anticlimactic, for all that Tom discovers is that he should not have stolen the ghost bundle in the first place. Although Hughes suggests in her notes that the dance is authentically described, this reader gets no sense of the mystery and wonder involved in such a ritual. It simply becomes a device necessary to establish the major episode of the book, Tom's return of the bundle to the museum at the exact moment when it is being robbed. Not surprisingly, particularly for those readers familiar with the Hardy Boys, Tom thwarts the robbery. He also discovers his identity in the process, after a somewhat ridiculous encounter with a bat, an animal that even Tom admits is "not exactly a kosher spirit symbol for an Indian."

Christie Harris, unlike Ms. Hughes, is an author who has, over the years, proven her ability to present the Indian tradition in all its mystery and uniqueness. Her *Secret in the Stlalakum Wild* is justly acclaimed as one of Canada's most memorable fantasies. The title, *Mystery at the Edge of Two Worlds*, promises more of the same, another tale which examines the secrets just beyond the fringes of the Western world, the wonders of the Indian culture. The first sentence of the book firmly supports such an expectation: "When storms stir the deep cold waters of the Northwest Coast and gales set the sea smoking with blown spray, it's easy to believe that the Great Whirlpool Maker is lurking down there with other strange beings."

Unfortunately, this is not to be a story of the Great Whirlpool Maker or of other strange beings, although the first half of the book certainly establishes the context for such an investigation. As the story begins, Lark, the heroine, is about to take a trip to mysterious Lucy Island, a journey which starts with a brief visit to her grandmother's home in a town which is, in fact, at the edge of two worlds. The description of this small town is very evocative, and there is a truly marvelous portrait of Winnie, a local artist, who is often overcome by the spirits and bursts into dance.

When the actual trip to Lucy Island begins, the reader is ready for a further exploration of such mysteries, a further understanding of the secrets of the Indian world. Inexplicably, the story suddenly changes from the careful examination of two worlds to a traditional girl's adventure story, replete with smugglers and the R.C.M.P. Though Lark does learn a great deal about her own abilities as a result of her confrontation with the smugglers of Lucy Island, she learns little about the culture that permeates the place. Thus, when the story ends with a factual account of the life of Lucy, the mysterious Indian princess for whom the island was named, it is not the culminating step in the reader's understanding of this culture at the edge of two worlds: it is simply an appendix.

Yves Troendle, in his *Journey to the Sun*, does not attempt to present the clash between the Indian and Canadian cultures. Rather he faces the difficult task of presenting Indian tales to a non-Indian audience. He approaches this problem in a unique manner, choosing to present, not a collection of tales, but a novel based on Indian legends, more specifically the myths of the Iroquoian Indians. His "novel" tells the story of four Indian children's quest to find the Land of the Sun. Their search, however,

is not simply for a place, but for the roots of their culture, to know not just that Sky makes life and kills it, "but *why* it does all these things." Thus the tale of creation, traditionally told first in modern collections of Indian legends, is the object of the quest, the culmination of the boys' arduous journey.

The quest of Snake Boy and his three friends is, of course, successful, and the children learn the origin of the moon, the sun, and man. They wander in the land of the dead, and most importantly, they come to understand the pattern which governs all living things. When they return after their three-day journey they find that generations have passed and that they now are the sole means of transmitting the legends of their tribe. And, as the novel ends, Snake Boy is beginning to tell the story of his long quest.

Troendle presents his Indian legends in a remarkably undiluted fashion, including even a scene in which the children are reborn after their flesh is literally cut from all of their bones. Though the actual acknowledgement of sources is annoyingly brief and somewhat inaccurate, Troendle does use these sources, presenting a series of legends which suggest the uniqueness of the Iroquoian culture.

The publishers at Oolichan Books have indicated that the first edition of *Journey to the Sun* has sold out and that they anticipate publishing a second edition with new illustrations. If this is so, the book will undoubtedly be even more attractive than it already is.

J. KIERAN KEALY



DEUX ENFANCES

THERÈSE RENAUD, *Une mémoire déchirée*.
L'arbre HMH.

ALICE BRUNEL-ROCHE, *La haine entre les dents*. Leméac.

Une mémoire déchirée est non seulement un document social intéressant mais la confession touchante d'une enfance déchirée, le cheminement intérieur d'un être en quête de son identité et la célébration de ses noces avec la vie dans la lumière.

Ce récit, divisé en trois parties qui s'achèvent par un épilogue sous forme d'interview, nous retrace le Québec des années 1930-1940 pliant sous le poids des interdits. Nous y voyons évoluer la société ecclésiastique à travers religieuses, prêtres et vieilles filles qui, loin d'être accueillants et ouverts aux autres, s'adonnent à la méchanceté, à la haine et même à la jalousie, détruisant et ridiculisant l'amour. Dans cet univers de "bondieu-series," "de contraintes et d'inhibitions," Thérèse Renaud, si éprise de liberté, de curiosité, d'indépendance et d'amour, souffre et se sent particulièrement frustrée. Ainsi, malgré des élans et une certaine révolte envers ces adultes si hostiles, elle se replie sur elle-même. La présence si pesante de sa mère a également ralenti son enthousiasme tout en entravant son évolution psychologique.

La troisième partie nous relate sa libération. C'est la coupure avec ce milieu et ce passé si vide d'amour, si mesquin, si avilissant. Nous assistons alors au cheminement de l'auteur qui a toujours eu comme "seule réelle préoccupation," "l'écoute de son démon intérieur." C'est ainsi qu'après avoir traversé des déserts de solitude, d'angoisse et de souffrance elle est arrivée à une harmonie intérieure lénifiante. "Pour aborder à une nouvelle rive, il faut, à la limite, s'être noyé être sans référence," dit-elle et elle ajoute

"sauf le cotoiement de la souffrance qui est en soi un maître, rarement une révolution est réalisée." Pour voir jaillir l'aurore il faut traverser la nuit, mourir à soi-même, changer en profondeur. Cette quête de soi amène à mieux se connaître et se découvrir.

Certes Thérèse Renaud a fait des rencontres merveilleuses qui l'ont aidée à accomplir cette traversée de la nuit mais elle conclue "le grand maître, c'est la vie." Les relations humaines, en effet, ont été source d'enrichissement, de joies mais ce ne sont pas les longues discussions qui lui ont apporté le plus de paix, ce sont plutôt ces regards, ces sourires d'un jour. Ainsi lorsque dans le couvent si austère de son enfance une inspectrice de passage lui sourit, elle déclare "je me suis sentie comprise, acceptée. Ce précieux sourire me réconciliait avec moi-même." De même, le regard que lui a porté un jour le médecin alors qu'elle était en dépression: "Nous nous sommes à peine parlé, mais dans l'échange de nos regards, ce médecin a tout compris de mon désarroi."

Artiste, vivant pour l'amour de l'art, Thérèse Renaud est aussi cette jeune femme attentive et enthousiaste qui s'est enfin réalisée elle-même, ayant réussi à acquérir cette indépendance psychologique qui lui a permis de mieux s'aimer elle-même et d'aimer les autres. Certes, les artistes vivent souvent déchirés, il leur est difficile d'acquérir une paix intérieure, mais désormais Thérèse est cette enfant du jour et de la lumière qui par la simplicité de son style, la sincérité et la chaleur de ses paroles entraîne le lecteur ému sur le chemin de la re-naissance.

La haine entre les dents d'Alice Brunel-Roche est l'histoire extrêmement touchante et bouleversante d'une existence déchirée.

Cette histoire nous est révélée à travers un Journal, celui de Marie-Noëlle. Celui-ci nous est présenté par l'amie du frère de Marie-Noëlle qui, avant de partir pour la

guerre, a remis une partie du Journal de sa sœur à Nana.

Ce Journal nous ressuscite la vie d'une adolescente issue d'une famille pauvre de Montréal qui essaie d'échapper à ce milieu si rude et si ignorant.

Marie-Noëlle est l'histoire d'un être aimant qui éprouvait "un immense besoin d'être aimée ... bercée ... consolée" et qui loin de recevoir de l'amour, a été massacrée, rejetée, méprisée, haïe tant par les siens que par ses collègues de classe ou ses professeurs. Sœur Saint-Jean fut la seule à lui redonner confiance. Le récit de son année dans ce couvent de riches "bourgeoises" est déchirant. Les humiliations, la méchanceté, la cruauté, le mépris de ses compagnes l'amènent à se mépriser, à se révolter, à se murer en elle-même. "Je ne suis pas méchante. Les circonstances ont fait de moi une Marie-Noëlle pleine de révolte, frondeuse jusqu'à l'insolence."

Parfois alors elle pleure, seule: "Si on savait que je ne suis pas une exception mais une multitude," mais personne ne sait.

Lorsqu'à la mort de ses parents son parrain la prend à sa charge avec affection, elle lui avoue: "Si tu savais parrain comme c'est bon de se sentir aimé." Mais cette affection exceptionnelle est supplantée par l'amertume qu'elle ressent face à la méchanceté et le mépris qu'on lui témoigne. Alors cet être si tendre, si épris d'amour, si beau, au fond, décide de répondre à la haine par la vengeance. Depuis son adolescence elle aime Patrice qui aime Rose-Aimée et réciproquement. Mais Marie-Noëlle a décidé qu'un jour Patrice serait à elle. Il entreprend sa médecine. Celle-ci suit ses pas. "En choisissant la médecine, j'avais une idée bien arrêtée: réduire Patrice, m'en faire aimer, me l'attacher pour la vie."

Alors la haine s'empare d'elle et devient plus intense encore lorsqu'elle apprend le mariage de Patrice et de Rose-

Aimée. Cependant Patrice avoue son amour à Marie-Noëlle mais il lui est impossible de rompre son engagement avec Rose-Aimée. La jalousie jette alors Marie-Noëlle "dans une fureur inexprimable" et comme "la haine ne connaît pas de frontières" elle attende à la vie de sa rivale arrêtée à temps par Patrice qui condamne son geste et la renvoie. Sa vie est désormais brisée. L'hallucination, le vertige s'emparent d'elle et c'est son incarcération en hôpital psychiatrique où elle met fin à "cette jeune vie de lumière" en se suicidant. Là voilà désormais "plongée dans le silence d'une interminable nuit" d'où le lecteur sort lui-même péniblement.

Le naturel et la simplicité de l'écriture ne font que rendre le récit plus poignant et l'on ne saurait oublier cette vive adolescente morte de n'avoir pas aimé, de n'avoir pas été aimée.

MYRIAM RECURT

MILLENARIAN RIEL

THOMAS FLANAGAN, *Louis 'David' Riel, 'Prophet of the New World.'* Univ. of Toronto Press, \$15.00.

RARELY DOES THE ENDING of a book so succinctly summarize its author's intent as the final paragraph of Thomas Flanagan's interesting and important book, *Louis 'David' Riel*:

All psychiatrists and most historians who have written about Riel have treated his prophetic mission as a symptom of mental disorder. Indeed, Dr. Lachapelle's original diagnosis of 'frustrated ambition' and 'delusions of grandeur' explains a great deal. But it does not explain everything. Riel was acting in much the same way as many other millenarian leaders. Faced with the annihilation of his people's way of life, he tried to create a new identity, a new life, and a new future. His insanity—if it may be called that—was a message of hope. Common conceptions of what is normal may

suffice for normal times, but they do not encompass the range of human response to absurdity. We need a broader view of sanity to comprehend the actions of men in dark times.

Flanagan's book differs from most previous works in its territory by moving the interest away from the two Métis rebellions on which even biographers of Riel have in the past tended largely to focus attention. He is concerned with an aspect of Riel — that of the "prophet" and millennial heretic — which up to now has been considered mainly for its bearing on whether Riel was actually insane and how far, if this was the case, his lack of mental balance may have affected his political leadership of the Métis and hence the somewhat irrational course of the Northwest Rebellion of 1885.

Flanagan does not commit himself finally on the actual issue of Riel's sanity. What he does point out is that Riel did at times think of himself as a prophet in the sense of a man specially favoured with divine confidences, and that he did also develop a millenarian view of history in which he saw himself presiding over a "New Rome" and over the creation in the New World of a "fifth empire" which would replace the decaying "fourth" or British Empire, based on exploitation, with a promised realm of peace without too much freedom; for, as Flanagan points out:

Today's left-wing radicals may wish to claim him as a spiritual ancestor because he struck out against the 'system', but his own political philosophy was so far to the right that it has no place in the Canadian political spectrum, even in its own day.

Riel's political master, in so far as he had one, was the notoriously reactionary ultramontanist, Bishop Bourget.

The attempt to follow the course of Riel's religious musings and of the visions he claimed to have received has taken Flanagan into areas relatively neglected

by previous biographers. He has had the advantage of studying a group of newly discovered early poems by Riel which reflect his besetting youthful guilts and the longings that led him away from orthodox religiosity in the direction of something resembling a direct and mystical relationship with the deity.

Flanagan has also investigated very thoroughly the crucial years between the two rebellions, the years when Riel acted eccentrically enough to be admitted to two different mental institutions and during which he developed the vision of a new world whose practical foundations he sought to establish during the tense weeks in 1885 between the beginning of the Northwest Rebellion and its collapse after the capture of Batoche by General Middleton's column. And he has turned up some clues which suggest that Riel, as well as Gabriel Dumont and perhaps independently of him, may in the late 1870's and early 1880's have been trying to forge an alliance of Indians and Métis aimed at a general uprising in the Canadian prairies.

Such a treatment has inevitably resulted in apparent distortions of our view of events which are in fact complementary to those of writers on Riel and his times who are more concerned with the political aspects of his career. This is particularly the case with the Northwest Rebellion of 1885; from Flanagan's account one gets little sense of the extent to which the political despair of militant Métis like Gabriel Dumont had developed an insurrectionary situation even before Riel arrived, and therefore of the real importance of the latter's millenarianism as an inflammatory factor. At the same time, Flanagan's arguments do show that, unless we regard all millenarian enthusiasts as mad, there is an explanation for Riel's political actions that does not require us to assume him to have been insane as well as exalted. After all, we have long given

up the idea of William Blake as a madman, and yet Riel uttered few things more extravagant than the Prophetic Books. Riel may have had periods of mental disorder, and even of what is generally considered madness, but to try and explain away his public actions as those of a lunatic shows, as Flanagan demonstrates, a shallow view of both Riel's crowded and fascinating inner life and of the actions it inspired.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

FANTASY, VOID

ADRIENNE CHOQUETTE, *La coupe vide*. Les Presses Laurentiennes.

ALAIN PONTAUT, *La sainte alliance*. Leméac.

THOMAS PAVEL, *Le miroir persan*. Editions Quinze, \$7.20.

ANDRE CARPENTIER, *L'aigle volera à travers le soleil*. L'arbre HMH.

DENYS CHABOT, *L'Eldorado des glaces*. L'arbre HMH.

La coupe vide by Adrienne Choquette is a classic. Published originally in 1948, it tells the story of four adolescent boys who are influenced for life by one halcyon summer when an attractive "older woman" enters their little circle. This new edition by Les Presses Laurentiennes includes selections of the reviews of the book at its first publication, a fascinating appendix permitting an evaluation of the novelist's achievement. Critics in 1948 were apparently most struck by the audacity of the theme, whereas modern readers are perhaps more impressed by Adrienne Choquette's wholesome serenity. Today, when the search for freedom — literary, political and spiritual — continues to dominate the French-Canadian novel, it is refreshing to read the work of an author who continually points the way to freedom and shows that she has achieved it. She attributes to one of her

characters the reflection that "those whom" he "admired most . . . were people with a definite aim, capable of judging for themselves, of escaping tutelage, of action, in fact." Such a theme seems rather mild to have provoked such horrified predictions as "Here we are engaged on the dizzy slope which will lead us, unless someone attempts a reaction, to a literature incompatible with our Christian culture." Yet, if one examines the contemporary tendency to compare Adrienne Choquette to Mauriac, one perceives that what appalled the critics of the Duplessis era was less that she showed the way to freedom than that she revealed a bondage from which escape was necessary. Mauriac, writing of a ritual-ridden, stagnant bourgeoisie, superficially similar to that of Choquette's novels, writes from within, showing the apparent inevitability and permanency of his empty world, whereas the author of *La coupe vide* opens the door wide to a life free of neurosis, manipulation, tutelage and taboos.

This is her most enduring achievement and the source of her charm as a novelist, but her insistence on self-fulfillment partly justifies the fear of her critic who foresaw "the floodgates opening" to "a literature of the subconscious and the void"; indeed the search for the freedom she and others recommend has taken many of her literary successors, for better or for worse, in just those directions. Much contemporary fiction is concerned with the act of writing, with bondage, magic and crime, exploring the limits of reality and the possibilities for new dimensions of a freer reality in those areas of consciousness normally censored as illogical, mad, fantastic, dreamlike. In techniques and word-play borrowed from the theatre and the cinema with their devices of masks, mirrors, masquerades and doubles, suitable to Hegelian dialectic, all the possibilities of self, the simul-

taneous might-have-beens and the may-yet-bes, are explored in a search, often tragic, for that vital space in which the individual and society could breathe more freely, enter into true contact with life freely lived.

In *La sainte alliance*, Alain Pontaut takes the most enduring of French Canadian images, that of the young girl who is Quebec, and recounts the story of her marriage in terms of tutelage, exhaustively exploring every aspect of the alliance — romantic love, sexual relations, property settlements, power plays between allied families and the complications of divorce. This is, as Godbout said of one of his own novels, "the story of a rupture between human beings who love each other but who at the same time are victims of a 'situation' in the Sartrian sense of the word." For Pontaut, they are victims of the essential brutality and inevitable alienation of tutelage, applied here to an emotional evocation of the history of Quebec from the Duplessis era to the eve of the P.Q. election. As in his previous novel *La Tutelle*, madness is the human condition of both guardian and ward. During one of the couple's quarrels, the beautiful helpless Kay looks at her husband, the fascinating but capricious John Canne, and is "staggered, overcome by the absurd: not merely did she have a guardian but a maniac guardian who didn't protect her but who deliberately maddened her because he himself was mad . . . with the false serenity of a lunatic. Or was she wrong? Was she alone in hell?" Books so explicitly and overtly about Quebec-Canada relations have become rarer in the 1970's than in 1965 when Godbout said "There are things, events, facts that a French Canadian no longer wishes to explain"; but whether this barely disguised "explanation" will satisfy anyone remains to be seen. It will doubtless please (but perhaps bore?) ardent P.Q. supporters. It will

probably infuriate ardent federalists. It may well disappoint admirers of Alain Pontaut, for its imagery is less universal, its command of word-play less dazzling than those of his previous works. Yet there are passages of wit and humour, there are passages of such skilfully built climax that the reader is outraged, and there is always the pure fun of "spotting" key figures and events from Quebec's history through the flimsy fictional camouflage.

Thomas Pavel's hero of his first work of fiction, *Le miroir persan*, reads in a secret library the secret thoughts of Leibniz and his pupil Aloysius, "un personnage non dépourvu de traits pittoresques." Born in Hanover in 1665, Aloysius records in a secret journal, discovered by Louis in a secret "coffret," how he discussed with Leibniz such propositions as "every individual soul has the property of reflecting the entire universe in itself," and the details of "possible worlds and their relationship with God." Aloysius falls in love with a girl who becomes a witch and disappears in a successful (?) attempt to reach other possible worlds.

In the second story — for his book is less a novel than a series of stories linked by the indefatigable Louis, reader of secret and rare documents — Louis is found on a modern university campus in France at the time of the student revolution. There he is encouraged to write a thesis on "what cannot be said" and the significance of the silence which a Grand Inquisitor used to interpret as "the sound of heresy." Later, he reads a play about a head of state who quarrels with his own mirror image, and becoming jealous of his sosie's subversive activities, organizes a plot against himself. The final story is Louis' own invention, for having had his learned articles rejected, yet "finding that he still had a confused desire to say something, he tried literature." This tale re-

counts the adventures of a man who acquires the persian mirror of the title, a possession which enables him, when torn in two by contradictory passions, to lead two separate lives simultaneously. Pavel thus seriously and playfully explores the logical and paradoxical consequences of certain philosophical notions, perplexing and entertaining the reader by his intellectual puzzles, and by a dizzying attitude to space and time, taking us from the middle ages in the near East to Windsor, Ontario, last week, and from reality to pure fantasy and magic, the whole kept under a disciplined control by a literary and craftsmanlike style. This is a delightful and elegant book.

André Carpentier tells a good yarn. He writes as if he were sitting around a campfire making up folk tales, to thrill his listeners with suspense, violence, black magic and dramatic atmosphere. As if drunk on words, he invents fables from his reading and his experience of the contemporary Quebec "scene" with its dynamic enthusiasms and its beloved oaths. The numerous allusions to writers and painters give the impression of having been added later, as do the last chapters, perhaps to give a literary varnish suitable to the published novel form. In this, his second work of fiction, *L'aigle volera à travers le soleil*, he recounts the adventures of a French Canadian living in Strasbourg who takes a detour to a mysterious village where he becomes possessed by a witch. The result is a series of dramatic episodes complete with innumerable cats, several motor cars (colour coded according to magical significance), and various lurid characters, all controlled in a science fiction manner by the witch. There is much talk of reality and dreams, their opposition, their interchangeability, the hero has a double, and demonstrative pronouns play their part in the drama.

Denys Chabot's *L'Eldorado des glaces* consists of stories "dictated" by a "gentle lunatic." The book begins with specific references to Nelligan's *Le vaisseau d'or*, its shipwrecked crew of Dégout, Haine, Névrose. A densely written novel, with no dialogue, it recounts, through five successive narrators, the foundation of a sort of ideal society or communal hell (according to the viewpoint of the narrator), and its downfall. The love of Oberlin, "nordic prince of legend," for Julie la Métisse runs lyrically and strangely through the whole. Reality flickers, the essential dramas remain obscure, as the narrators with their poetic and legendary names pour out fears, fantasies of orgies, sadistic violence, and the author (disguised) makes numerous reflections on writing in general and this sort of writing in particular, contemplating the margin between dreams and reality, endlessly exploring the literary possibilities of the semi-subconscious. The whole is linked by some fine passages about the mighty season of frost which is both the decor of much of the book and the psychological climate of the failed Eldorado of the title.

C. RUBINGER

A RELIGIOUS THING

MORLEY CALLAGHAN, *No Man's Meat & "The Enchanted Pimp."* Macmillan, \$9.95.

DESPITE EDMUND WILSON'S DESCRIPTION of "No Man's Meat" as "a small masterpiece," readers may question the reprinting of this 1931 story with Morley Callaghan's most recent novella, *The Enchanted Pimp*. One good reason is that both fictions treat man's loss of woman. In "No Man's Meat," a wife grown weary of her tidy life opts for non-conformity and the companionship of a glamorous female friend. This ending has been prepared by early references to the

wife's "boy's body," the friend's repugnance at having sexual intercourse with the man (which she does in payment of a rash bet), and the affinity between the women — revealed through bird imagery associated with both — in their need to fly beyond limiting relationships. But aside from its subject, made impressive by the original date of publication, "No Man's Meat" contains little that deserves Wilson's praise. Indeed, the dialogue is unconvincing (as in much of Callaghan's work) and the narration often disturbingly awkward. Witness the story's second sentence:

Beddoes, sitting up, looked out of the opposite window over the dark lake which was never blue from the cottage window in the morning sun, even without a shadow from the big rock across the water.

The Enchanted Pimp, which constitutes the other four-fifths of the book, poses a complementary version of man's loss of woman. Edmund J. Dubuque, who procures affluent but temporarily embarrassed women for visiting professional men, loses the "gentle golden whore" Ilona Tomory when she ceases to be sufficiently non-conformist. Thus Callaghan twists the thematic premise of "No Man's Meat." He also twists a clichéd plot device: the compassionate prostitute, so often used as a narrative end in itself, is merely the catalyst for the real narrative, the enchanting of a pimp by a whore far below his own commercial milieu. And above this milieu and narrative, as always in Callaghan, the real story hovers.

That story has to do with materialism and magic. The former is conveyed particularly through a motif of fur. Dubuque's first client prostitutes herself to make a payment on her fur coat; Dubuque himself longs for a fur hat when he is poor, and flaunts his expensive hat and fur-collared coat after becoming successful. Ilona's unique sensuousness is largely associated with her mink coat,

which she leaves behind when fleeing to Mexico with Sills, the disgraced son of a wealthy family. Immediately prior to that, she has used the coat to warm her dying mother, after all other attempts at comfort have failed. The fact that Ilona's coat is really an illusion, a shabby relic frequently taped underneath to preserve its facade of elegance, makes Callaghan's point about the limits of materialism, limits which stress the need for magic. Dubuque himself, recognizing the need, has long been an amateur magician who regrets his inability to become professional. His failure, quite aside from the question of talent, resides in his tie to the material realm. A sceptic who knows that magic is merely illusion, he is reluctant to believe what he thinks he sees in Ilona. At one point she calls him Caliban, emphasizing both his vulgarity and his misuse of extra-material forces. But he comes to believe in her powers, in the "magnetic promise" associated with the coat she wears: his loss of her at the end is the loss of an object of belief.

Much of the preceding terminology, not to mention the concern with materialism and magic, encourages a religious interpretation. Other encouragements abound. Many of the characters, unsure of life in general and of themselves in particular, suffer from the loneliness that Dubuque feels. Moreover, the central characters are all crippled or wounded: Dubuque has a right foot deformed by polio; at one point he is beaten by hired thugs; Ilona hurts her knee falling from a car when she first enters Dubuque's life; the second distinct stage in their relationship begins with another hurt knee, when Dubuque kicks Sills with his specially made (and heavy) shoe; Ilona's mother dies; and Ilona is ultimately murdered, standing, a knife in her back. Into this setting Callaghan introduces hints of world religions. Dubuque's first sexual experience was with a girl

named Eva; his furrier has a dog named Thor; Sills, a child of luxury, pursues ascetic eastern religions. Most importantly, Callaghan gives Ilona—in Dubuque's eyes—Christ-like qualities. He has "an illumination" about her, sees her working "gentle benediction" among "the lame, the halt, and the blind," forgiving sins: "she could make a man feel that no matter what he had done he could be excused and comforted." In her absence, he longs for her most at Christmas, and he sympathizes when her ancestry is doubted by sceptics. Even the image of her death approximates Christ's. After her death, Dubuque's sense of loss completes the pattern. Without an object for his faith, he is a lonely member of the economic middle class who cannot be comforted by his pseudo-respectability. He had sent money, during her earlier absence, to improve some poor family's Christmas, a charitable act performed anonymously so that—one infers—he would not have to deal directly with those in need. At the end there is no suggestion that Dubuque will learn to emulate Ilona's Christian capacity to deal directly with human suffering, but at least he has learned to mourn the world's loss.

This is not new ground for Morley Callaghan, and some readers of *The Enchanted Pimp* will wonder why he persists in reworking subjects he has treated before. One explanation is that he is still trying to get them right, and at least one reader believes he is getting there. This time around, there are complexities and economies that seemed lacking in such earlier books as *The Loved and the Lost*. There is more frankness at the same time as there is more human uncertainty in his treatment of a favorite theme, the flesh and the spirit. "If fucking can't be a religious thing," Ilona asks Dubuque, "what can be religious?" Out of context, this sounds comic, but Callaghan con-

veys its seriousness and much of its importance. The co-existence of fleshly and spiritual demands outlasts youth and even middle age. Upon finishing *The Enchanted Pimp*, readers will recall a notably gratuitous detail in a description of the bar used by hookers to make contact with their patrons. The lounge is populated by drug dealers, pimps, undercover detectives, university sociologists, friendly neighborhood folk, the hookers; and, "An elderly novelist who had once been famous sat by himself, trying to overhear conversations at tables nearby." Listening to the main theme.

RON MILES

GREEK RESTAURANT

GWENDOLYN MACEWEN, *Mermaids and Ikons: A Greek Summer*. Anansi, \$5.95.

THERE IS A NICE GREEK RESTAURANT we like to go to. The walls are painted white with bright rugs thrown over them and the waiters are alluring with that straight-backed sexual arrogance of Mediterranean men. The hors d'oeuvres are wonderful but the entrées are, well, a bit boiled, a steamy reminder that it really is raining outside. So we accept the first layer of hospitality and go home a little hungry with our small warm bulge of Greece.

This is exactly what Gwendolyn MacEwen has delivered in her first non-fiction book, *Mermaids and Ikons*, recollections of a Greek summer. MacEwen is more than a mere grecophile. But in this slim book she has given us the undigested surface of an obvious pilgrimage.

Perhaps MacEwen, *l'étranger* in spite of marriage and obvious scholarship, has frozen on the threshold of that complex eternity, fearing that the prerogatives of the stranger in a strange land do not include the probing of its mysteries. The result is a succession of casual portraits

of people, places, and ideas that are so undeveloped that they become almost patronising. "This is good, this is good" is almost a failure of will, and the absence of critical judgment leaves the characters flat. And we all know, having suckled our tragedies, that the Greeks are large in their virtues and their flaws.

What particular systems that gypsy women worked out among themselves didn't really interest me. What had caught my attention was the fact that although that particular tzigana had lowered her voice in a kind of whine to ask for my help, her head, nevertheless, had been held very high.

She has perhaps forgotten that the poet or historian is never a trespasser, even in her own husband's ancestral house. The eye, ever busy behind the mask, is always outside and always burdened with the obligations of observation. MacEwen tells of her act of *hubris* in penetrating the exclusive male sanctuary of the altar in a small Greek Orthodox church and her subsequent painful collision with a lamp of holy oil:

My hair is still quite oily, even after several shampoos, but it's all right. God was not displeased because I invaded the Holy of Holies. On the contrary I have been anointed.

But that annunciation is still only a threshold, and somehow she lacks the energy, the Greek energy, to take hold and make large her own questions which are explicit in the title of the book, *Mermaids and Ikons*. It promises a physical and intellectual free fall into the complexities of a culture on fire with the abrasive energy of a heathen past and an intense modern Christianity.

For all their history, the Greeks are the real existentialists; all that fire and beauty is consumed in the moment, now, so powerful that the past and future are obliterated in the pure joy or intense tragedy of being. This is the energy MacEwen perceives, even sometimes in its

absence, but somehow fails to be. It is partly the handicap of a poet writing prose. Poetry can be written with the skin and the mind. Good prose is a lot of guts, on or off the page.

The poet's fear of falling, of damaging words on the stones of another culture, is best expressed in her verse:

We would paint the universe the colours of
our minds and flirt with death, but
Whether we dance or fall or kneel, we fall
On stones.

She has told us "Greece presents a very real challenge to whoever goes there — a challenge to do more, to be more, to better the present moment in whatever way is possible, to improvise, to expand. To get things off the ground" and then takes us around a closed circle up to those little puffs of Shelleyan cloud above the Acropolis, into the sea where Icarus dared to fall, and back again to the little roomful of women knitting. In this case, less is not more. We are left with a larger hunger.

LINDA ROGERS

REGINALD EYRE WATTERS

1912 - 1979

Scholar, teacher, friend.

He left Canadian literature in his debt. We mourn his loss and honour his memory.

BONE-STRUCTURES

TOM WAYMAN, *Free Time: Industrial Poems*. Macmillan, \$4.95.

PATRICK LANE, *Albino Pheasants*. Harbour Publishing, \$2.95.

IF WE GAVE WAYMAN A CHANCE to change the world I think it would be safe in his hands. He came out of the radical 60's a radical, though I think it's more accurate and less typecasting to call him a man of common sense. The social consciousness, hatred of inequality, is in the bones. So is the vision — what these poems uphold and recommend (hazy though Wayman the person may find it, Wayman the writer makes it clear): the poems are hymns to family — relations, union, nation, friends. Each of us is a member of an alliance whose duty is to share, to love and protect and help each other. When Wayman gets bitter (not so often in this book as in others, like *For and Against the Moon*), it's often when bureaucratic associations, like government and business, promote unenlightened self-interest and obfuscation.

The pull to particulars is one distinguishing mark of Wayman's poems: "It is the detail of things, the intricate interlocking activity here that excites me." I would be willing to entrust the changing of the world to a man who loves the contents of his toolbox well enough to make a poem out of them (though not only that: one begins to realize that "Tool Fondle" is a sort of metaphor, the job contained in the tools). One who loves *things* so much (and who sees with so clear an eye) is bound to be uncomfortable with organized and abstract plans for changing society. Wayman documents his disillusionment with the left as a movement in sadly retrospective poems like "The IndoChina Victory Celebration, April 26, 1975." The poem commemorates "a decade of protest" on the

part of the left that has ended in anti-family faction:

We have gathered tonight to celebrate
what the sponsors of the evening have
called a victory.
But I see around us
what it means to have lost: the
organizations shattered,
solidarity broken on the shoals of fantasy
and personalities. . . .

The man who writes this is honest enough to look a hard fact in the face.

Wayman's voice so appealingly raised on behalf of the common man and the ordinary in life is a valuable one. So is the technique, disarmingly simple and impossible to duplicate when it really works. I'm aware of few writers who manage to be so wide-eyed and back-to-basics without sacrificing complexities. The technique that seems to me most Wayman's own is the use of a metaphor, very often for a whole poem, that the reader assumes and occupies with ease. Examples in this book are "Saturday Afternoon in Suburban Richmond" and "Grandmother." In the former a woman goes temporarily mad, haunted by the whispering numbers of her empty materialistic life. In the latter a TV set, sadly, occupies the position of paternal grandmother in a house in Fresno. In both cases Wayman's distinctive brand of metaphor gives us a fresh way of seeing contemporary life.

It's interesting to hear Wayman mention "the house of dreams / about which I have written so little." He is a poet of "the country of everyday," but his everyday takes on a touch of the magical and dream-like when everything in life may become animate. One thing that means is that, through metaphor, he extends the reach of the community he advocates, to include things as well as people.

A problem for Wayman must surely be how to grow in his craft without losing touch with the potentially huge audience

for such accessible poems. Wayman has the occupational hazards of those who make poems out of and into "shared experience": diffuseness, occasional aimlessness, a tendency to make comfortable prosy poems. One may like Wayman's work, as I do, without glossing over these weaknesses, and still want to register a cordial caution: "Tom, your 'first audience' is yourself. Good. Don't give too much away to the rest of us. Be wary of our enthusiasm for your poems. Many of us are not exacting enough for your good."

Albino Pheasants is a small book, 21 poems, only one poem over a page long. Also it is a large book, a book full of resonating enigmas, much pain and beauty. The book of a craftsman. The form of each poem and the shape of the whole book are carefully considered. All this shaping craft is in the service of releasing something: a spirit, a soul, a bird: mysteries at the heart of things.

Call the formal structures bones: regular two, three, five-line stanzas and other careful arrangements, sound patterns made by assonance and occasional rhyme, the energy of the autonomous single-line unit. All of this is very naturally done, and knits the poems. Flesh to the bones perhaps is the subject matter of these poems, love, work, writing, but listing subjects is not very satisfactory because there is always something more going on in the poems than the surface says. Lane understands this too. The final poem, for example, picks its title up from the epigraph (a passage from Wallace Stevens' "The Man with the Blue Guitar"). "And Say What You See of the Dark" ends a volume whose seasons have been winter, night, silence, solitude. It develops, with some of the complementary tensions of the volume, an image that touches on the relationship of surface and depth, in a way that brings to mind what more there is than meets the eye in the poems.

Night is the image of running
water and what runs beneath. . . .

My fire creates the night
I am surrounded by. The image
and what runs beneath.
The silence following sound.
That which is bound and that
which is undone. This is the bond,
the light and the night beyond.

The poems are not written for the sake of "what runs beneath" alone; they are for the most part very accessible, though highly mysterious for all that. But what runs beneath is perhaps most important. The surface we can see or touch; the mystery beneath we can only be put in touch with.

The spirit being conjured in the volume is that of poetry, in whichever of its ambiguous identities:

I have named you: blind one
staring through bars of flesh

faceless one
broken fingers beckoning

in poems.

See the spirit, in the guise of an "I," preparing to get loose and "shoulder the empty body" in "Still Hunting."

The poems (like life and the body) make cages, then, bone-structures, regularity of arrangement and measure, elements which are then subverted. Syntax tightens or loosens to create ironies, ambiguities, mysteries.

It is said when you cross the ice
you can see the seasons skull dream sleeping
fish
who breathe in the current your shadow
below.

There is an undercurrent of imaginative logic that strains at the sentence structure and parts of speech, pulling them a little awry and letting them breathe, like a living body,

bone and
the living bars of flesh
a cage made by the animal I am.

Metaphor helps too. It often takes the exterior landscape and population of the poems and turns them inward, sometimes with the flick of a word.

Nothing is finer, more mysterious in the book, than the title poem. In an austere season one pursues the difficult discipline of a waking dream, to commune with pheasant-spirits released as from his own interior. They feel like his own silence and solitude made visible. A silver danger.

STAN DRAGLAND

UNSHADOWED SUN

DAVID MCFADDEN, *On The Road Again*. McClelland & Stewart, \$5.95.

PETER TROWER, *Ragged Horizons*. McClelland & Stewart, \$5.95.

ALTHOUGH DAVID MCFADDEN's world is Hamilton, Ontario, and Peter Trower's is the British Columbia mountains, both express the trammelled suffering and ambiguity of contemporary man. For both poets the way out of despair lies through nature and the discovery of human love and tenderness. David McFadden prays "to be human" and in what is, perhaps, the best poem of both volumes, "The Alders," Peter Trower speaks of the need to recover "the whole unshadowed sun" of natural warmth and spontaneous fullness of being.

The sun becomes human and the alders symbols of the regeneration of human and natural vitality. David McFadden sees trees in a similar way (cf. "Standing Invitation") and records other moments of tender recognition as in "The Interloper," when his cat and dog accept a stray. So on one hand we have nature, tenderness and love and on the other the knotted (both poets use this metaphor), thwarted sense of alienation, despair and

pessimism. In "The Dairy Queen" David McFadden writes:

Is it just me getting grouchier as I get older
or is the world really getting dumber and
dumber
as it gets older, it seems that every day
there seem to be more and more people
wandering around
in a lifeless daze, dead, cold, hollow,
with all their lights out.

And of Peter Trower's "The Popcorn Man" we hear

The loneliness broke free from him like
moths.
The solemn voice scratched painful
memory
from dusty grooves:
the warwound — the stolen wife — the
coalmines —
the heart-attacks — the doctor's blunt
edict.
His words fell down the air like dead leaves.

The problem clearly is how to get beyond sodden despair and sustain the moments of tenderness, love and natural response. Perhaps writing poetry helps to provide relief from misery and thus clears the ground for the moments of affirmation and communion. One wishes there were more of these, but affirmation can't be honestly expressed unless really felt.

The strength of both poets lies in the honesty with which they express their dilemmas, which seem by extension to be those of contemporary man. Their limitations can be briefly summarized. Neither poet uses rhyme well. This is a besetting weakness of contemporary free-verse poets. They only use rhyme incidentally, but when not used well rhyme calls unfortunate attention to itself. Both use half-rhyme more skilfully to express effectively their laconic, jarring, modern-alienated sense of life. They would both like to reach a wide audience and have therefore avoided obscurity and recondite allusion as much as possible. McFadden's style is plainer than Trower's and he has more thoroughly his own voice. At times

McFadden sounds like Raymond Souster but there is a *real* difference — all the difference between Hamilton and Toronto. Yet, as with Souster, McFadden's plain style courts the danger of becoming banal and trivial as it seeks to express the banality and triviality of contemporary life.

Peter Trower's work is more rhetorical and lyrical than David McFadden's. At times he sounds like Dylan Thomas, at other times we hear the rhythm of Al Purdy's "Cariboo Horses" or Allen Ginsburg's "Howl" in his verse. His authentic, original, personal voice is less well established than McFadden's but it is there, particularly in a poem like "The Alders." Essentially Trower is an elegist who remembers more vital times: "I miss our vanished naive selves / young as spring-randy colts and just as frisky." But he realizes too that youth was ignorant; we get a sense that alcoholism has been struggled through and at least a partial victory won over it for maturity and love.

The last word, I think, should be given to David McFadden's "St. Lawrence Of The Cross," for of all twentieth-century writers it is Lawrence who has most profoundly explored our modern sense of division, who has expressed our anguish and our joy most resonantly and has conducted the most courageous search for human wholeness. He helps us best to achieve the unknotted spontaneity desired by both poets and provides us with the most vital sense of nature, tenderness and love. With his aid and example we can reach beyond ragged horizons for a road on which

the heart burns brighter than the sun and
filled with arch-angels
climbs mindlessly through the heavens,
knowing no knots,
and its cries are not the cries of one
crucified
but the sweet cries of a flute
as gentle puffs of wind pass through it.

There is a sense of pleasure here, but the "mindlessly" is troublesome. Lawrence believed that the mind, too, had its importance and that thought (the creative interplay of mind and emotion) was "man in his wholeness wholly attending." McFadden's best signpost points us towards Lawrence. He can show us Peter Trower's "whole unshadowed sun" over and over again and help us to find our own.

JOHN FERNS

A MYTH-MAKING BUG

IRVING LAYTON, *Taking Sides: The Collected Social and Political Writings*, ed. & intro. Howard Aster. Mosaic Press, \$4.95.

TED PLANTOS, *The Universe Ends at Sherbourne & Queen*, Photographs by Angeline Kyba. Steel Rail.

"A LAUGHING SCREWING GURU" is how Irving Layton describes himself on one page of some 1971 ruminations; then, on the next page, he deplores such a role as depending upon unthinking herd emotion. This record of forty-two years (1935-77) of Layton's attempts to make himself a myth, disintegrates that myth into many self-contradictions, some statements of conviction and wisdom, and some imbecilities.

As Layton's political outlook has changed over the years, he has unswervingly opposed public opinion. In 1943, in his M.A. thesis for McGill University, he played the Marxist parlour-game of Spot the Liberal Idealist in Marxist Clothing: his subject was Harold Laski. In the early sixties he voiced the humanitarian wish that the Germans not be eternally burdened with guilt for the Nazi holocaust. Then he became right-wing, defending American intervention in the Dominican Republic and in Vietnam in 1965, and the American invasion of Cambodia and Trudeau's invocation of the War Mea-

tures Act in 1970. He decried "hide-bound leftists" and in 1972 made this understatement: "I'm not the callow socialist I was twenty, twenty-five years ago."

The best of Layton's artistic criticism is a series of four passionate and perspicacious film commentaries (*Globe & Mail*, 1973-77); here, and in his remarks on *Hamlet* and Nietzsche, as in some of his best poems, he is concerned with the dualities of spirit and matter, contemplation and action. But the aesthetic excitement of his notes on art gives way to unexplained bitterness when he turns to his critics. In response to one critic's article on himself, he fumes: "I shall not dignify dishonesty, pompous vulgarity, and smugness by attempting a point by point refutation." Yet Layton's self-irony redeems him; enemies, he says, are "always the most valuable equipment of any poet." In his poems, this irony conveys his "profound mistrust of nature, of man, of God, and of myself."

Bons mots and *bêtises* abound here. It is hard to believe that the man who pithily described Canadian society's mixture of idealism and materialism as "piety and push" or "high-minded gab and low-minded grab," could commit this turgid self-contradiction: "Right is might, though paradoxically it is often the canon's mouth that pronounces the verdict." Or that the man who, in 1955, astutely perceived that "a constricted scientism, lacking both a sense of direction and a concern for values" threatened liberal education in Canada, could, in 1967, sanguinely proclaim "the vestiges of the cold war are about to be buried on both sides." Or that the man who said correctly that his poems still await the technical evaluation they deserve, could let impressionism run amok in his comments that his poems have "vigour" and "vitality," and that Canadian poetry has

more "humanity" than that written by contemporary "stooges" in Britain and the United States. Spot the stooge.

The myth-making bug has also bitten Ted Plantos, though it is not the myth of himself, but the exalted "spirit of place" that this volume of prose, poems, and photographs about Toronto's Cabbagetown evokes.

A little of Layton's irony would have been helpful here; instead, Plantos puts whimsical humour in the mouths of his personae, letting the common folk speak without imposing any ironic commentary. Kitsch collectors may love this, but for the "literary guy" (to use Callaghan's phrase) in search of meanings, there is only dumb pointless whimsy in the prose piece "Cashing a Cheque in Cabbagetown" in which a bank manager disparages Plantos' disreputable community and then tells him to do up his fly; or in the epigram "Dat's Kapital" which reads "Karl Marx knew / all the Engels'." Despite several pieces of this ilk, whimsy is effectively used in some poems; in the pitiful jokingly-feigned sincerity of the street wristwatch seller's spiel in "Hallelujah, Lady," for example.

Bathos is another quality sometimes used well here, but often overused, resulting in sentimentality. It is all too apparent in the book's title; in the achingly bathetic portrayal of "The Old Grey-Haired Men at the Checker Board Tables" and their "leisurely combat" of "pieces performing strategies, grand or otherwise"; and in the figure of ancient oriental wisdom ignored amidst his frisbee-tossing North American grandchildren in "Grandfather Lee." Bathos is used best when lightly; for example, in the final image in a swirl of images titled "Losing the Wheel," presenting a man's fleeting thoughts before sleep, and his recollection in a dream of the truck accident which killed his wife:

For several nights following,
she appears at the door of an empty room

: third prize money in her purse

These poems contain a wide range of strong emotions, often subtly expressed. Plantos also demonstrates a fine sense of rhythm, and a good ear for colloquial speech. But what is absent here is the distancing from the subject which allows a more complex treatment of a situation, and the recognition of ideas opposing or complementing the persona's attitude, which irony conveys. Cogent social criticism is not made by one-dimensional motifs, such as old people dying in their beds, cuddling bottles; or gaudy prostitutes, symbols of bartered youth. Nor is it aided by bludgeoning didacticism. I hope that Plantos will re-direct his talents in the future, for he can do much more than make readers murmur "how grass-roots, how authentic."

JOHN ROBINSON

PRIVATE REALITIES

FRANK PACI, *The Italians*. Oberon, \$15.00; pa. \$6.95.

JOHN MILLS, *Skevington's Daughter*. Oberon, \$15.00; pa. \$6.95.

JOHN METCALF, *Girl in Gingham*. Oberon, \$12.95; pa. \$5.95.

OTHER SMALL PRESSES have often directed their publications to a small academic audience, but Oberon has chosen an eclectic approach to fiction and poetry, stressing innovative editorial direction and a fine artistic sensibility in its approach to book design. Critics and readers will take an interest in several recent novels that show the imagination and diversity Oberon Press has come to represent.

Frank Paci's *The Italians* explores what it means to grow up in a small

Canadian town where hockey is both interest and escape. As a subject this has its limitations, particularly for readers who are not familiar with the political intricacies that control the lives of young, aspiring NHL players. But Paci's intimate knowledge of the sport—he played junior hockey for several years—is combined with his sensitivity to a player's family life to produce a novel that is informative, interesting, and, in certain passages, lyrically moving.

Paci is basically a realist, and like most realists he tends to stress detail at the expense of psychological introspection; his young protagonist, Aldo, becomes a representative man whose success or failure in hockey determines his success or failure in life. Yet the book's outstanding qualities appear in isolated vignettes: Aldo's marriage difficulties, his religious beliefs, his father's accident at the local smelter. At these times Paci's writing rises above realism; he seems then to be less concerned with the struggle to survive than with the feelings of those who are trapped by economic conditions. For these individuals, existence holds only a faint hope that the next generation may escape from a life in which self-knowledge is an ideal and happiness an illusion.

John Mills' *Skevington's Daughter* offers an "academic" variation on the same theme of journeying from existence to meaning. I use the term "academic" because *Skevington's Daughter*, filled as it is with English professors, their research interests, and their correspondence, is a highly mannered fiction, an idiosyncratic and fascinating work. The plot details the experiences of an imaginative scholar of travel literature, Professor Simon Motley, as he attempts to write a book on Francis Skevington, a nineteenth-century British traveller whose letters reveal he was a "corruptor" and a man of "illicit sexual pleasures." Indeed, Skevington appears to be related to an earlier Skev-

ington, "Lieutenant of the Tower under Henry VIII, inventor of an instrument of torture known as the *scavenger's* or *Skevington's daughter*."

There is, however, a real Skevington's daughter, one Stella Skevington, and the novel explores how Professor Mottley separates the myth of her father's exploits from reality. Much evidence appears in the form of miscellaneous letters and documents, many of them humorous; in the manner of Robert Kroetsch's *The Studhorse Man*, the reader is given disconnected dialogue, reconstructed historical events, and fictional characters whose motivations are often unexplained. Juxtaposed against these fictional manipulations are the comic adventures of a travelling communal group whose values are in direct contradiction to those of Professor Mottley and his academic friends. The transition from academic to counter-culture is handled smoothly, yet reads almost as if Mills is determined not to get too close to his material. Non-involvement becomes his fictional stance, and the result is a carefully structured imaginative work.

In standing apart we laugh at ourselves, but if we see ourselves too closely, the laughter often turns to tears. This much is clear in John Metcalf's "Girl in Gingham," and the longer and more exuberant "Private Parts: A Memoir." Both are written in Metcalf's usual style of connected narrative, and both are a blend of the comic and the pathetic. "Girl in Gingham" describes a recently divorced middle-aged man and his attempts to find a suitable mate. We learn of his despair after his divorce, his attempted suicide, and his absurd meetings with the women he discovers through "Compumate," a dating agency. All he wishes for is a simple, uncomplicated girl, a "girl in gingham," but he finds that

all who use the dating agency are victims of bitterness and cynicism. Finally, through a series of coincidences, a comic exchange of correspondence, and various embarrassments, he meets a girl named Anna Stevens whose plight seems similar to his own. Just as their relationship is about to begin, however, this ideal "girl in gingham" suddenly dies. The novella's resolution has overtones of Hemingway: everyone dies in the end. "Girl in Gingham" is a moving story of a man's search for the ideal and his final disillusionment.

Although Metcalf is capable of writing satirical comedy, his novels are obviously more than light entertainments. In "Private Parts: A Memoir," a university English professor recalls his traumatic and usually humorous adolescent experiences with sexuality. The professor's strict religious background has made it difficult for him to contemplate sex without feeling guilty, and the result is a satire on sexual awareness in the tradition of Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint* and Mordecai Richler's *Cocksure*. Examining what he calls the "ravaged battlefield" of his adolescence, the narrator recalls how, in spite of his parents' repeated warnings, his adolescent life became a search for "erotic incident." Accordingly, he relates his boyhood obsessions with pornography, sex research, and masturbation; he tells of a general uncertainty in sexual matters produced by the conflict between his Methodist upbringing and the sexual problems of puberty. Indeed, "Private Parts: A Memoir" uses the techniques of Jewish humour to explore the sexual difficulties of a Gentile world. The result is a novel that is both comic and serious, lighthearted and incisive—indeed, a controlled study of some subjects Canadians talk about but seem to have avoided writing down.

RODERICK W. HARVEY

GROVE & THE WELLSPRINGS OF FANTASY

ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION, Frederick Philip Grove's major characters are dissatisfied with the conditions of their lives and yearn for some sort of absolute value — spiritual purity, fullness of understanding, or a reordering of the world to conform to the highest intellectual or moral standards. In *The Yoke of Life*, for instance, Len Sterner avows that "the world as it was did not agree with the world as it should be" and that "he, being the apex of creation . . . in a moral sense . . . could have made a better piece of work of it." Life as it is is unable to satisfy his restless, questioning nature, and he is finally driven to despair and suicide.

In *Two Generations*, Phil and Alice Patterson choose a life of hermit-like scholarship; in "The Poet's Dream," Harold Tracey removes himself from society to write poetry and Frances Montcrieff commits suicide; in "The Weatherhead Fortunes," George becomes a pathetic nihilist; in *The Master of the Mill*, Edmund loses his life while pursuing his dream of utopian world order based on machines; in *Consider Her Ways*, Wawa-Queen survives the treachery and epic trek that decimate her ant followers, but her measure of the world is a scathing indictment of the entire machinery of human society. And in the so-called prairie chronicles, Niels Lindstedt, John Elliot and Abe Spalding all chase an illusory dream of patriarchy, even as they

uncomprehendingly watch their wives and children become estranged and their families disintegrate.

Grove's sense of the tragic foundation of all existence underlies the obsessive restlessness of his characters, but there is sufficient evidence to suggest that their impossible yearnings stem from a more immediate source — the kind of domestic environment which nearly always is to be found in Grove's fiction and which, more importantly, figured in his own life.

The connection between Grove's life and the pattern of restless questing that emerges in his fiction can best be explored through an examination of Grove's childhood as described in *In Search of Myself*. Douglas Spettigue's identification of Grove as Felix Paul Greve has shed more light on this period and we can now discount as fabrication most of the external circumstances Grove presents (the vast estate in Sweden, his travels, and so on); but nothing Spettigue has turned up contradicts Grove's description of the kinds of relationships he had with his parents.

The picture that emerges from his account is that of a traditional patriarchal nuclear family with concomitant rigid sex roles. The father is preoccupied with his business and pleasures, and often absent from the home. He is stern and authoritarian, and, in the few instances that he interacts with his son, bullies the young Frederick to "make a man" of him. Frederick, however, is sickly and a dreamer, and unable to meet his father's standards of masculinity. The result is mutual antagonism and estrangement. In his mother, Frederick finds sympathy and protection. Both mother and son fear and resent the father and eventually leave him. Alone together, their bond intensifies; he worships his mother; she becomes increasingly possessive. Of particular interest is a passage in which Grove describes how his mother won from him a promise never to marry:

My worship of my mother was still sufficiently recent to me to make me vow, when, in a tearful exchange of confidences, she urged me, that I, for one, would never marry. . . . In women she saw the great danger to men; in men, to women. And I . . . readily fell in with her plans as she painted for me her ideal of a happy old age for herself, directing my household, ceasing to do so only with death. I should be a middle-aged man then . . . beyond the temptations of early manhood.

As psychoanalysts and experts on the family have pointed out, it is just this kind of marsupialism that is most conducive to oedipal conflicts and other childhood traumas, which in later life can be manifested in insecurity of self-identity, guilt about sex, latent homosexuality and an extreme propensity for fantasy. It is as though the overmothered child never fully grows up, retaining forever a dependence on his mother and a need for her approval. He lacks a normal capacity to recognize and critically test the reality of situations, complicated by his early supersedence over his father, and continues to relieve anxiety, renounce instinct and avoid neuroses by indulging in fantasies, often of an absolute or extreme nature.¹

Grove's description of his youth indicates a striking congruency with this kind of pattern. In *In Search of Myself*, he tells us that once, in a delirium, he challenged his father to a duel over his mother's honour. He was troubled by severe guilt over his adolescent sexual stirrings and confesses, in rather enigmatic fashion, that he may have had homosexual leanings. After his sexual initiation (with an older, mother figure), he says: "If I had not always been so, I had become definitely, finally, heterosexual." Already present, too, is a strong propensity to take refuge in daydreams, mostly about his devouring ambition to master all knowledge and to perform great deeds.

The information Spettigue has turned up about Grove's early manhood tends to confirm that this kind of psychological development was not just a passing phase of youth, but was ingrained in his character. We know now that from an early age Grove led a double life, passing himself off as a rich young scholar-poet in his attempt to crash into a higher social and intellectual milieu than his petty-bourgeois origins would have permitted. He was excessively vain and fastidious about his dress and manners, a dandy who everywhere tried to leave the impression of detached superiority. But behind the bravado and pose, Spettigue says, there seems to have lurked "a youth prematurely beaten down, a loser in love, an aspirant to the heights who so often finds himself back down on the flats, just going on."² In fact, Grove's posturing led him into serious difficulties. As his debts mounted (eventually reaching 29,000 Marks), he resorted to deceitful and fraudulent practices, until, finally, he was sued by an erstwhile friend and creditor and jailed for fourteen months. A few years after his release, unrepentant and still convinced of his superiority over the common herd, he finally freed himself of his debts and disgrace by faking a suicide and fleeing to North America.

Spettigue's findings point out the great extent of fabrication in Grove's autobiography. This kind of extreme fantasy, as Northrop Frye has suggested, may indicate that Grove was a pathological liar — one of the possible outcomes of the kind of overmothering to which he was subjected.³ This insight is given further credence by the conversation with Greve-Grove recorded by André Gide shortly after Grove's release from prison. In that interview, transcribed for its "certain psychological interest," Gide recollects Grove saying, among other extraordinary revelations:

— Il faut que je vous avertisse, Monsieur Gide, que je mens constamment . . . J'éprouve le même besoin de mentir et la même satisfaction à mentir qu'un autre à montrer la vérité. . .

— Quand avez-vous commencé à mentir?

— Sitôt après la mort de ma mère.

Un silence:

— C'est le mensonge qui attache à moi ma femme; c'est mon extraordinaire faculté de mentir. Quand elle l'a sentie, elle a quitté pour moi son mari, son enfant; elle a tout quitté pour me suivre. J'ai d'abord voulu l'abandonner; puis j'ai compris que je ne pouvais pas me passer d'elle: C'est avec elle que je mens le plus volontiers.⁴

This admission does not necessarily prove that Grove was a pathological liar, for it must be remembered that it was made in the context of a self-serving interview, and most likely was meant to cast him in an intriguing light to the author of *The Immoralist*, who, Grove may have believed, might help him better his social and artistic fortunes. What is significant about it is that the description Grove provides of his lying and its effects — it is compulsive, it began after the death of his mother, it is deliberate, it provides heightened sensations, it requires a willing receptor — fits in perfectly with the profile psychiatrists have developed of the psychology of the pathological liar.

A widely-accepted definition of pathological lying is given by W. and M. T. Healy, who see it as

falsification entirely disproportionate to any discernible end in view, engaged in by a person who, at the time of the observation cannot definitely be declared insane, feeble-minded, or epileptic. Such lying, rarely, if ever, centers about a single event; it manifests itself most frequently over a considerable period of years, or even a lifetime. Various charges against others, and even self-accusations are sometimes indulged in . . . Extensive, very complicated fabrications may be evolved. This has led to the synonyms: mythomania, *pseudologia phantastica*.⁵

According to Dr. Ben Karpman, *pseudo-*

logia phantastica "may be viewed as verbally expressed day dreams and as in day dreams the patients half believe their own fanciful tales."

Theirs is an unusually rich imagination prodded into active expression by acutely-felt psychic needs. They recite tales of socially exalted backgrounds which provide the glamor for which they seem to feel a strong need, or will recite sad stories, calculated to arouse pity. This is an expression of a particular type of neurosis, and a study of the life history of the patients . . . reveals the presence of other trends indicative of neurotic make-up: marked egocentricity, high suggestibility, unreliability, a pathological need for self-assertion, a precocious sex life . . . and marked emotional conflicts about these.⁶

A survey of the literature on the subject shows that researchers are generally agreed that the roots of *pseudologia phantastica* are to be found in early childhood anxieties that have not been adequately resolved. Given the strong Freudian bent of most researchers in this area, these unresolved anxieties are usually seen in terms of marsupialism and oedipal conflicts. Dr. Phyllis Greenacre, for example, traces the psychopathology of the pseudologist to "an intense maternal attachment . . . as if he were a part of the mother." This

undermines his sense of a separate self and the development of his own identity. By placing the child in a position of definite superiority to the father — either through the mother's attitude alone, or by fate through the death or desertion of the father — there is set a potentially serious imbalance of the oedipal relationship, the child being able to assume an uncontested supersedence over its father. This inevitable intensification of infantile narcissism favors a reliance on omnipotent fantasy in other aspects of self-evaluation to the exclusion of reality testing.⁷

What we know about Grove's adolescence and early manhood tends to suggest in his psychic make-up the kind of confusion and insecurity of self-image that Greenacre mentions. Furthermore,

his posturing as a dandy and his various shady activities in Bonn and Berlin tend to bear out Karpman's observation that *pseudologia phantastica* is a "type of delinquency and leads to false accusations and swindling."⁸ Above all, there remains the unavoidable fact that throughout his life Grove was noted as a raconteur and teller of tall tales.

In Search of Myself, with its fabricated exalted background and subsequent sad tale of misfortune—mostly blamed on others or on unforeseeable circumstances—is the major example of Grove's pseudologia. But, as well, Grove's letters, the recollections of his friends and Margaret Stobie's taped interviews with his former students all reveal an inordinate compulsion to spin fantastic tales and pass them off as true.⁹

The fact that Grove persisted in lying to the very end, taking his secrets with him to the grave, suggests that he may never have fully resolved the anxieties that gave rise to his fantasies, and that he may have used his fiction to explore the hidden depths of his own nature.

All his works, as Louis Dudek has pointed out, can be seen as autobiography; not literally, of course, but in the sense that they are patterned

according to the author's nostalgic attachments, guilts, needs for retribution, needs for self-justification, the gradual construction of an order leading to self-understanding, or a reduction of chaos, and similar artistic and psychological goals.¹⁰

Grove himself argues in the author's note to *The Seasons* that "no book with the blood of life in it has ever been 'sucked out of the air.'" Elsewhere, he says that although an author may aim at universality, "by the very fact that he cannot convincingly represent a character or a happening which finds no echo in himself, he delimits his work by his own personality."¹¹ More specifically, he tells us in *In Search of Myself* that after model-

ling Ralph Patterson in *Two Generations* after his own father, "I . . . gave him, among others, one son whom I attached to myself by giving him my middle name."¹²

Not only is Phil Patterson exactly the kind of dreamer aspiring to mastery of all knowledge and to great deeds that Grove describes himself as being, but more importantly in terms of psychological motivations, he feels the same kind of antipathy for his father and close attachment to his mother. These characteristics link Phil to Len Sterner in *The Yoke of Life* and George Weatherhead in "The Weatherhead Fortunes," both of whom, incidentally, like Phil, place first in province-wide school examinations. All three are possessed of a questing, restless nature which the conditions of real life cannot satisfy, and all three eventually turn their backs on life to seek some ill-defined spiritual fulfilment.

Although such links are more tenuous in the other novels, most of Grove's major characters share this kind of questing, restless nature and exhibit signs of sexual maladjustment, extreme self-absorption, and a tendency to deny life while building extravagant castles in the air. From Phil Branden, who aspires to readjust "while improving upon, the creator's work," to Jane Atkinson, Harold Tracey, Edmund Clark, Wawa-Queen, and to a lesser extent, Niels Lindstedt, Abe Spalding and John Elliot, all are unable to find in life fulfilment for their fantasies.

As in Grove's own life, the origins of this pattern can be traced to the characters' domestic situations. Beginning with the 1906 German novel *Maurermeister Ihles Haus* (*The Master Mason's House*) and continuing through nearly all the Canadian works, there is a remarkably consistent pattern in the domestic arrangements Grove describes. His typical family is patriarchal and authoritarian, with the kind of rigid sex roles

evidenced by his own parents. Although more often than not it is the male side of the story that is told, or that of the children, it is usually the influence of the mother or wife that determines whether or not any psychological damage is done to any of the characters.

Because of the father's preoccupation with his affairs in the "public sphere," the mother usually has no choice but to give up any idea of a life of her own and to submerge herself in domestic tasks. If she is strong and resigned, as is Mrs. Patterson, she holds the family together through her role as mediator between past and present, between father and children. She represents the unifying principle — the spiritual and emotional qualities that complement the father's (and the children's) drive for dominance over the external conditions of life — which marks all their lives whole. As Mrs. Patterson tells her daughter: "Perhaps those who resemble *me* will see most in him; and those who resemble *him* will clash with his will."

In the more typical households, where there is no such understanding, even this kind of unity is lacking. There is little communication between husband and wife, much less any meeting of minds or spirits. Years of drudgery and the mother's increasing isolation as the children grow up and leave home eventually lead her to resent the denial of her self, and she turns against her husband. In at least three instances — *The Master Mason's House*, *Our Daily Bread*, and *In Search of Myself* — this resentment is dramatized by the mother's mental deterioration and subsequent attempt at one last desperate fling at the life she has been denied, followed by a premature death.

The pathetic loneliness and dissatisfaction with their lives that even the best of these mothers experience has serious repercussions on the lives of their children, especially the sons. In "The Weatherhead Fortunes,"

Ada Weatherhead, because of her boredom and frustration, tries to fulfill herself vicariously through her children, in the process spoiling her two sons by overmothering. One, the much-petted and kissed Gerald, turns out to be a thief; the other, her favourite, the more interesting older son George, becomes a sexless, intellectual nihilist, who for a while plays at being a dandy, but then gives up even that role for total passivity. He is intellectually gifted, but lacks ambition and will. Life is futile, he says at age thirty, repeating a familiar Grove refrain.

Only the daughter Leilah escapes Ada's clutches, perhaps because she is not susceptible to the oedipal feelings that are explicit in the mother's relationships with her sons.

Idealized pictures of their mothers nearly always loom somewhere in the background of Grove's characters. And because they can never reconcile themselves to her loss or find an adequate replacement (there are no happy marriages in Grove's canon), they remain forever insecure and unhappy. "If she hadn't died!" John Jr. tells his father in *Our Daily Bread*. "You know, I believe mother was one of the best women on earth . . . That's where the whole family went to pieces. I'd never have left the old homestead if she'd been alive."

Another striking example of this kind of maternal influence is found in *Settlers of the Marsh*, where Grove uses the device of dream visions to articulate Niels' inchoate inner life. In these visions, the faces of the virginal Ellen Amundsen and the worldly Clara Vogel alternate as symbols of his hopes, but more significantly, his dead mother also appears to him. As one of the early visions makes clear, Niels' sexual inexperience and his inability to cope with women stem largely from what can only be termed a mother fixation:

A lassitude came over him: a desire to evade life's issues. . . . He longed to be with his mother, to feel her gnarled, calloused fingers rumpling his hair, and to hear her crooning voice droning some old tune. . . .

And then he seemed to see her before him: a wrinkled shrunk little face looking anxiously into his own. . . . There was pity in the look of the ancient mother: pity with him who was going astray. . . .

Significantly, this vision comes immediately after Niels feels himself succumbing to sexual temptation brought on by Clara Vogel's touch. And significantly, too, Niels' mother does not appear to him again until the entire tragedy of his marriage to Clara has been played out. Then she reappears in a kind of hermaphroditic fusion with old man Sigurdson, who had been a surrogate father to Niels. The implication, of course, is that only this kind of sexless, serene unity of male and female principles constitutes wholeness, or completion in life.

This kind of unity — apparently missing in Grove's own childhood and seemingly sought after throughout his life — is a primary image that crops up over and over again in Grove's works. It is the motive behind most marriages in his novels: Old John Elliot, for example, muses, "Had he not deliberately chosen his wife because she seemed to be his complement?" And it is the basis of the fatal attraction that drives such of Grove's young male characters as Len Sterner to project with such tragic consequences all their unfulfilled longings on to their chosen love interest. Their search for the kind of absolute security, purity and peace of mind that they associate (often unconsciously) with their mothers becomes obsessive. But it is all in vain. Nothing in life, it seems, can meet their expectations, and they either give up the struggle or lose themselves in impossible fantasies.

None of the characters has any great degree of self-understanding. Each is

merely aware of being driven by some inner compulsion that leaves him dissatisfied with the conditions of his existence and hunted by impossible, inchoate, yearnings. Typically, the associated feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, restlessness or guilt are ascribed to the machinations of fate. As Niels Lindstedt says in *Settlers of the Marsh*, "he was a leaf borne along the wind, a prey to things beyond his control, a fragment swept away by torrents."

In Freudian terms, these characters are neurotics, whose psychic growth was arrested at an early crucial stage so that they never fully developed the mechanism of reality-testing to balance their overactive imaginations. Because of over-mothering and unresolved oedipal conflicts, their fantasies tend towards omnipotent self-evaluation, though with pronounced emotional conflicts and doubts about the resultant self-images.

According to Erik Erikson, such persons regularly retain their ideal image of the mother as the "unconscious model for the world," and their actions (and the rationalizations for their actions) are motivated unconsciously by the need for their mothers' approval.¹³ They remain child-like in their dependence and unable to take full responsibility for their lives. The fate that drives them is a kind of superhuman mother figure, guiding their lives in some way they cannot quite fathom, now rewarding them, now punishing them.

Grove himself, as the themes of his fiction suggest, was more aware than his characters of the psychological and environmental factors that shape consciousness. There is no explicit evidence or acknowledgment on his part that he fully understood these processes of socialization, but there is every reason to believe that his lifelong effort to project a superior persona — the image in which he wanted to be seen — was a deliberate attempt to alter the normal course of his

own socialization to bring it into conformity with his most cherished fantasies.

In *Our Daily Bread*, there is a most intriguing passage in which old John Elliot compares the growth of his children's characters to the development of photographs. Blank sheets of paper are immersed in a chemical solution and images eventually appear. But only that appears which was "already invisibly traced" on the paper. His children, he muses, are similarly already imprinted in some mysterious fashion. As they grow up, those imprints become visible in their personalities. "We can but become what we are," he concludes, unable to see any way out of this determinism.

But Grove does hold out the possibility that the imprints can be changed. "Perhaps," he has Elliot say, "if a person had been able, with his imagination, properly to interpret them, he might have changed the picture that was to appear by and by. But insight was lacking." Neither Elliot nor any of Grove's characters possesses this kind of insight, but Grove apparently thought he did. From an early age he tried to interpret the kind of image that was developing on his "paper" and with his imagination change the picture that was to appear eventually. More than once he altered his lifestyle and environment, deliberately fashioning for himself an identity, parents and past to suit the kind of image he had of himself. And his fiction, which depicts the kind of social and familial determinism he had to overcome to reach his mature understanding of self and society, is largely a record of this most fascinating odyssey and quest.

NOTES

- ¹ See, for instance, Sigmund Freud, *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex* (New York, 1962); Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York, 1963); and Alexander Mitscherlich, *Society Without the Father* (New York, 1970).
- ² Douglas Spettigue, *FPG: The European Years* (Ottawa: Oberon, 1973), p. 64.

³ Spettigue quotes Frye as saying "Of course, Grove was a pathological liar." In *The European Years*, p. 125.

⁴ André Gide, "Conversation avec un Allemand," *Oeuvres Complètes d'André Gide*, ed. L. Martin-Chauffier, Tome IX (Paris, 1932-39), pp. 138-39. The influence of such works as Oscar Wilde's "The Decay of Lying" and of Nietzsche's philosophy cannot be entirely discounted, but it seems the more likely case that Grove found these figures congenial because of his own predisposition in that direction.

⁵ W. Healy and M. T. Healy, *Pathological Lying, Accusation and Swindling* (Boston, 1915), p. 42. See also Thomas Hoyer, "Pseudologia Fantastica," *The Psychiatric Quarterly*, 53 (1959).

⁶ Ben Karpman, "Lying: A Minor Inquiry into the Ethics of Neurotic and Psychopathic Behavior," *The Psychiatric Quarterly*, 23 (Jan. 1949), 18.

⁷ Phyllis Greenacre, "The Imposter," *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 27 (1958), 369.

⁸ Karpman, p. 19.

⁹ See for instance: Margaret Stobie, *Frederick Philip Grove* (New York: Grove, 1973), pp. 50-51.

¹⁰ "The Literary Significance of Grove's Search," *Inscape*, 11, No. 1 (Spring 1974), 92.

¹¹ *It Needs to be Said . . .* (Toronto, 1929), p. 62.

¹² P. 20.

¹³ *Childhood and Society*, p. 339.

ENN RAUDSEPP

THE CHARACTER OF YVONNE IN *Under the Volcano*

THE THREE CHARACTERS surrounding the Consul in Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* are nearly invisible in most studies of the novel. For some critics, Lowry justified the exclusion of Yvonne, Jacques, and even Hugh, when he wrote to Jonathan Cape that the four characters were intended as "aspects of the same man."¹ The use of complementary

characters to present a more complex portrait of a human soul than is possible with autonomous characters does not, however, preclude the individualization of the supporting characters. James Joyce employed a similar method in the creation of his trinity of characters, the three-in-one of *Ulysses*. Joyce weighted his characters more evenly than did Lowry, who placed Geoffrey at the centre and set Yvonne, Hugh, and Jacques revolving around him. Yet in *Under the Volcano* it is not simply a single character, but rather a "single quartet of characters," as one reviewer labelled them,² whose destiny Lowry unfolds.

Yvonne's part in the quartet is more important than the fourth fiddle to which she is often assigned. Douglas Day, for example, subordinates her completely to the three male characters, casting her as "the eternal feminine . . . all things to all men."³ Day later admits that she plays this part poorly, and perhaps the reason for her faulty performance as an eternal woman is that she has a different score, one more complete than has been recognized. Back in the letter to Cape, we find evidence of the attention Lowry paid to Yvonne. In fact, there he singled her out as an example of his achievement in characterization, asserting, "I believe in some eyes the character drawing will appear the reverse of weak. (What about female readers?)"⁴ In his analysis of Chapter IX he suggested once more that in Yvonne he had created a noteworthy character: "Readers might disagree about flashbacks here — some think it good, others suspecting a belated attempt to draw character and at that a meretricious one — though I feel many of your *feminine* readers might approve."⁵ And when Cape's reader failed to mention "the very important fact of Yvonne's death," Lowry indignantly accused him of neglecting to read Chapter XI.⁶ Lowry's references to female readers are an oblique way of say-

ing that Yvonne would be recognized as authentic. He was right. Even if Lowry did develop her "belatedly" and somewhat artificially, Yvonne is an individualized, self-conscious character, whose action, speech, and thought contribute significantly to the meaning of *Under the Volcano*.

Lowry penetrated the minds of his four principal characters by distributing the narration of *Under the Volcano* among them, a choice of technique which provides further evidence of his interest in characterizing all players in the quartet. Only through Yvonne's own thoughts could Lowry have related many of the events of her life, for no one of the others knows everything about her past. Geoffrey cannot tolerate the notion that she might have nightmares like his own, and she hides her publicity photos from him, for her story bores and shames him; Hugh knows nothing of her Hollywood days and thus attributes the result of her competent riding, that her horse is not thirsty after their gallop, to a miracle; even with Jacques, a comrade in the film world, she speaks "not always honestly" about her career as a "Boomp Girl." Hugh, whose comments about her reveal the most understanding, sees that she is essentially alone even in the company of others.

Primarily through her interior monologues, then, almost exclusively those in Chapter IX, Lowry presents a portrait of Yvonne in sufficient detail to explain her situation on the Day of the Dead, 1938. Her mother's death when Yvonne was six left her without either the guidance or protection of an older person of her own sex. This early loss, Yvonne's dominant childhood memory, perhaps accounts for the "dislocations of the functions . . . of womanhood itself" which stunt her growth as an actress. The men who subsequently dominated her life either leaned on her heavily for support or demanded she conform to their plans for her as the

price of assistance. The close relationship she developed with her father may have interfered with her ability to develop marital relationships. Captain Constable in fact resembles Geoffrey in many respects: real and imagined disgraces, unconsummated desire to create, alcoholism, and consular assignments. More childlike than fatherly, he allowed her to support him by working as a child actress in parts which rather than glamorous were dangerous and exploitative. The death of "The Boss-Boss" left her in the hands of a callous maternal uncle who sent her to college but abandoned her when she defied his wishes. Her first husband's infidelities led to their divorce, and her child from the marriage, "strangely named Geoffrey too," died at six months from meningitis. Then, of course, she married Geoffrey who, armadillo-like, tried to pull her down with him into his tunnel.

For this life, marked by relationships to men, Yvonne might be classified as a helpmate figure, a female character defined by her role as wife, daughter, mistress, or mother to the male character(s). Yvonne's occasional refusal or inability to play her role, as well as some degree of self-awareness, differentiates her from these often stereotypical characters. Although less able even than Hugh to view herself ironically, she can stand back from herself and recognize that the face she presents to the world differs from the image she sees of herself. A shop window reflects a carefree, sun-burnished figure, but Yvonne realizes the disparity between her external appearance and the state of her soul: "But the sun turned grief to poison and a glowing body only mocked the sick heart, Yvonne knew, if that sun-darkened creature of waves and sea margins and windrows did not!" Further, that demeanour of gaiety and confidence she wears is consciously cultivated to cover her pain and fear. Perhaps she knows she must try to play her role: when Geoffrey

begs for her return, it is her "warmth and merriment" he calls for. That her bright countenance conceals terror, however, is revealed in a scene in the bull-throwing ring when an image of the old woman with the dominoes, who in their morning encounter "chilled her heart," seems to appear in her mirror.

For a second she'd had the awful sensation that not Popocatepetl, but the old woman with the dominoes that morning was looking over her shoulder. She closed the compact with a snap, and turned to the others smiling.

Both the Consul and Hugh were staring gloomily at the arena.

Yvonne has reason to be gloomy herself, but she fastens on a smile with the kind of deliberate control she often exhibits. Yvonne may be "all things to all men," or at least she tries to be some of the time, but she also has some sense of her own identity.

Lowry tailored Yvonne's dialogue to her individual personality, background, and emotional state. Her speech accurately reflects her inclination to active rather than intellectual endeavours, her limited education, and her intense preoccupation with her marital problems. Yvonne actually speaks fewer times, and usually at less length when she does speak, than either Geoffrey or Hugh. She never uses a literary allusion or figure of speech, elements prominent in the language of Geoffrey and Hugh. Both the serious philosophizing and the drunken raving of the conversation at the *Salón Ofélia* leave her behind. As the three scan Cervantes' menu, Geoffrey observes that his punning is "mostly over her head." When she tries to enter the discussion about the exploitation of Mexico, she draws a naive conclusion from the preceding exchanges between Geoffrey and Hugh and is advised to "Have another bottle of beer." Finally, much of her dialogue reveals deep concern about the fate of her marriage.

When Hugh puts a question about Maximilian and Carlotta to her in abstract terms ("Should Juarez have had that man shot or not?"), Yvonne's response, although characteristically shallow, is poignant and moving when one considers her involvement in an analogous circumstance: "It's an awfully tragic story."

Part of the time Yvonne simply remains silent. She arrives in Quauhnhuac with "carefully thought-out speeches," but she does not deliver them. Her silences, sometimes indicated by a dash within quotation marks (as Dale Edmonds pointed out in his 1974 MLA paper "'—': A Topography of the Typography in *Under the Volcano*"), most often result from her emotional turmoil or an effort to conceal it, as when the trembling Geoffrey offers, "Have a drink." Also, some of Geoffrey's behaviour would leave anyone dumbfounded. To his announcement that he has lost the car Yvonne begins a nonchalant response but cannot continue it: "I'd far rather walk, only —." In one instance, she is simply unwilling to say what she does not feel:

"Geoffrey, I'm so thirsty, why don't we stop and have a drink?"

"Geoffrey, let's be reckless this once and get tight together before breakfast!"

Yvonne said neither of these things.

Another time her refusal to speak demonstrates remarkable restraint, as when Geoffrey maliciously taunts her about Jacques and Hugh during their walk home. Yvonne does not monopolize silence, however. Geoffrey often tries to speak to her without success or imagines he is speaking when in fact he is not. On their final day together they face each other "like two mute unspeaking forts," unable to communicate.

The thoughts Lowry attributes to Yvonne, unlike her speech, are often indistinguishable from those of Geoffrey and Hugh with respect to language. Yvonne's meditations on "fanciful geo-

logic thaumaturgy," the bull's entrapment, and the relentless wheeling of the galaxies contribute to the growth of the novel's forest of symbols and reveal her own concerns. On occasion Lowry assigned thoughts to her which are unthinkable from the mind of any other character: "how delicious, how good . . . to feel oneself part of the brilliantly-colored serape of existence." Under the influence of alcohol, however, her thought process resembles Geoffrey's. She maintains an illusion of sobriety by transferring drunkenness to objects around her: "Yvonne was sober. It was the undergrowth, which made sudden movements into their path, obstructing it, that was not sober." Thus Lowry initiates her into the "Great Brotherhood of Alcohol."

Under the Volcano is about the ways in which guilt, the "weight of the past,"⁷ encumbers the human spirit. Beneath his burden of real and imagined sins, Geoffrey falls and he cannot act to steer away from his downward course. By contrast, Yvonne's path in the novel leads upward, and her reaction to her own guilt provides an alternative to Geoffrey's self-destruction, as well as a hope that his damnation need not be eternal. Like Geoffrey and Hugh, Yvonne fails to be a good Samaritan to the Indian ("mankind himself"⁸) dying beside the road, when her weak stomach turns at the possibility of seeing blood. Her insufficiency there is prefigured by an incident which, even if not so tragic as Geoffrey's callous use of the *Samaritan's* furnaces or so comic as Hugh's publicity capers and seduction of Jewish wives, causes her similar guilt. When she knew that her duty was to retrieve a dog dying in pools of blood on a Honolulu street, she fainted. In addition, as the final survivor of the Constable line, she carries the guilt of the entire family, that "mistake on the part of nature." Yvonne's response is consonant with Juan Cerillo's belief that "conscience had been

given man to regret [the past] only in so far as that might change the future": she strives to escape the "meaningless tragedy" which has left her relatives in insane asylums by discovering the secret of her own meaning.

Yvonne's quest, which is present only in barest outline, suggests the voyage upon which Sigbjørn Wilderness embarks in "Through the Panama," as well as the one Lowry planned for *The Voyage That Never Ends*. The pattern follows that of the mythological adventure through the stages of separation, initiation, and return or the equivalent stages in the *Divine Comedy* of hell, purgatory, and paradise. Lowry specified that the path motif in *Under the Volcano* derives from Dante, and thus here I shall discuss Yvonne's journey in the context of its Dantean imagery and structure. In Los Angeles, that "dark and accursed City of the Angels," Yvonne walks down Virgil Avenue alone, perhaps an indication that she has no guide for her journey, and sees "as might the Consul" a sign for "Informal Dancing" transform into "Infernal." In the same way that Dante's pilgrim sheds his sins in hell, here Yvonne discards the illusion that she might become a successful actress. Even after travelling to New York, "the awful darkness [persists] in her mind" and she walks among "faces [in which] all hope seemed to have died" until she sees Jacques' film "Le Destin de Yvonne Griffaton," in which Yvonne Griffaton, a French counterpart of herself, successfully escapes from the shadows of her ancestors. The film fulfills the same function as the representations of right action which Dante's pilgrim witnesses in purgatory, for Yvonne follows the example and travels to Europe where she meets Geoffrey and begins a new life. She might have found her paradise with Geoffrey, but, of course, she does not. Perhaps the fault is hers. She leaves the theatre for a cigarette just as Yvonne

Griffaton attains the "faith in life itself" which still eludes Yvonne. Lowry does not specify where she should place her faith, but he does seem to condemn her for not finding "a faith merely in 'life' sufficient." At her death, however, as she is drawn up into the heaven "through eddies of stars scattering aloft with ever wider circlings," the imagery recalls the concentric celestial rings of light in Dante's paradise.

Yvonne's capacity for self-renewal has significance for the novel because it allows her to retain the ability to act and to love. In spite of her failures, she survives to begin the climb again. It is, after all, her action of returning to Geoffrey on the Day of the Dead, 1938, which precipitates the action of *Under the Volcano*. Many readers have reacted to this event with the kind of disbelief Jacques expresses a year later: "But hombre, Yvonne came back! That's what I shall never understand. She came back to the man!" Jacques cannot or will not understand the simple explanation for her attempt to find Geoffrey once more: she loves him. *Under the Volcano* is, among other things, a story of love. The torture of separation revealed in their letters and their memories of a consummated marriage "too good, too horribly unimaginable to lose" make Yvonne's effort to recover this love entirely plausible.

The desirability of her return to Geoffrey has been questioned more seriously than its probability, and some critics believe that Yvonne's presence in Quauh-nahuac harms rather than helps the Consul.⁹ One reason given is that the convergence of Yvonne, Hugh, and Jacques only reminds Geoffrey of her adultery, on which he blames his alcoholic degeneration. He cannot forgive her; nor can she forgive herself. She stumbles and nearly falls because her guilty conscience has blocked out the scene of her "crime" with Jacques, and when Geoffrey drops his news about Hugh's arrival, she "stop[s]

dead." Although he reproaches her relentlessly, he admits to himself that his marriage, like his garden, was "willfully slaughtered." His self-absorption, sexual guilt, and self-punishment syndrome demanded that he wreck his marriage, and he forced her away by tormenting her emotionally and neglecting her sexually. With Jacques she found sympathetic affection and with Hugh, consolation in a troubled time as well as sexual release. Her lapses in fidelity were temporary, however, and Geoffrey occupies her full attention on this day. Although she apparently still finds Hugh attractive, she stubbornly resists any renewal of their relationship, and I find no evidence that on the Day of the Dead 1938 she has any interest in him as a potential lover. Both scenes in which she and Hugh might seem to be enjoying each other's company excessively, one at the swimming pool and the other at a taco stand, are narrated by Geoffrey, who would be liable to suspect, even to welcome, further betrayal. Hugh's perception of their activities is that "[i]n the square too they'd talked of nothing but the Consul." On Yvonne's agenda during their morning ride is finding out what he knows about Geoffrey's condition ["What do you think about Geoffrey? Yvonne asked the question at last"] and testing on Hugh her idea of constructing a new life with Geoffrey in a northern paradise. The escape she envisions can never succeed, for Geoffrey's demons would follow him anywhere. Also, the association Lowry makes between her pastoral vision and Hugh's excursion to sea indicates that her romantic fantasy is impracticable. Nevertheless, her transformation of the shack Hugh imagines into a home where Geoffrey might find the peace to finish his book reveals tenderness and sincerity. The creative power of her vision almost sways Geoffrey from his course of destruction: "the desire remained — like an echo of

Yvonne's own — to find her, to find her now, to reverse their doom, it was a desire amounting almost to a resolution. . . ." Nearly every character in the novel — not only Hugh and Jacques, whose judgments may be doubted, but also Dr. Vigil and Señora Gregorio, who are often voices of wisdom — expresses the opinion that Yvonne's return should save Geoffrey.

Yvonne is also thought to contribute to the Consul's ruin by not making sufficient effort after he runs into the woods toward El Farolito to pull him back from the edge of the chasm.¹⁰ In his own presentation of Chapter XI, Lowry stressed the symbolic level: "On the surface Hugh and Yvonne are simply searching for the Consul, but such a search would have added meaning to anyone who knows anything of the Eleusinian mysteries. . . ."¹¹ Even on the surface or naturalistic level, however, Yvonne's actions do not suggest neglect of the Consul. If anyone lags in this "salvage operation," it is Hugh. Yvonne marches ahead of him, "purposely too fast for talking," pointing out the way. She does make the wrong decision on directions, but at a juncture where both paths resemble the arms of "a man being crucified," the choice of the more traveled way is understandable, as well as logical, since it passes by two cantinas. She blames herself for the delay when Hugh tarries over a drink at the El Petate: "perhaps it was her own fault for refusing to come in. . . ." Hugh and Yvonne do seem to neglect their task when they order beer and mescal in the El Popo. Their stopping in the restaurant might be explained by the fact that Yvonne initially thinks she sees Geoffrey there: "on the porch, for an instant, the Consul sat dining quietly by himself. But only Yvonne had seen him." He has been there at one time, several months before, and their drinking gives them the time and opportunity to find Geoffrey's *Rech-*

nung and his poem — giving a clue to his condition and whereabouts. Upon deciphering it they rush out, and in Yvonne's head resounds the line "who once fled north." Yvonne is alternately determined, nervous, sad, and resigned but never frivolous about finding Geoffrey: "You know perfectly well I won't just run away and abandon him," she reminds Hugh.

Much of the meaning of this chapter, however, does lie below the surface, even if not perhaps in the Eleusinian mysteries. Yvonne's freeing of the caged eagle is one example of an action with almost purely symbolic significance: her violent emotional reaction would not be justified if this were simply a distraction from the task of retrieving Geoffrey. This scene functions as a parallel to Hugh's rescue of the seagull and as a contrast to Geoffrey's unsuccessful effort to free an "insect of some sort" from a cat's teeth. The flight imagery used in both incidents relates them to the ascent of Yvonne's soul into the stars. Thus, the release of the eagle prefigures her own death. At the same time, the eagle, "a little world of fierce despairs and dreams," can be considered to represent Geoffrey's soul and her action to free it a recognition of the inevitability of Geoffrey's departure. In either case, the eagle's escape symbolizes her final separation from Geoffrey: "She felt only an inexplicable secret triumph and relief . . . and then, stealing over her, the sense of utter heartbreak and loss." Although she once looks back for a glimpse of the majestic bird, she knows it is futile: he is gone. In the Aztec legend Yvonne recalls in this chapter, Popocatepetl lost Ixtaccihuatl just as he recovered her.

In a letter to Geoffrey, Yvonne predicted the cause and simultaneity of their deaths: "Never think that by releasing me you will be free. . . . You would only free something else to destroy us both. I

am frightened, Geoffrey." Geoffrey does definitively abandon any hope of renewing his life with Yvonne at the moment he realizes that his intercourse with Maria has very likely given him "brutal hygienic reasons." He immediately moves toward the branded horse, the force which in effect destroys both Geoffrey and Yvonne. Although Lowry defended the probability of Yvonne's dying under the hooves of a stampeding horse, the scene serves primarily as a prelude to Geoffrey's death and thus as an amplification of the power of the final devastating chapter. Yvonne's ascension into the stars functions not only as an appropriate close to her life of fascination with the heavens but also as a contrast to Geoffrey's fall into the earth. As he plunges into the barranca, Geoffrey recognizes that "succor was at hand all the time" and acknowledges Yvonne's efforts, as well as his love for her, in his plea, "Ah, Yvonne, sweetheart, forgive me!"

Thus, while it perhaps cannot be said that Yvonne has a life of her own outside of the novel as, for example, Molly Bloom does outside *Ulysses*, she nevertheless has life as a full human being within *Under the Volcano*. She is an individualized character who resists easy definition in a traditional female role and she retains her independence and the ability to act and love in spite of her own burden of the "weight of the past." As Lowry knew, she proves that he was capable of characterization and she is a character of whom female readers can approve.

NOTES

- ¹ Malcolm Lowry, *Selected Letters*, ed. Harvey Breit and Margerie Bonner Lowry (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1965), p. 80.
- ² "A Prose Wasteland," *The Times Literary Supplement*, 11 May 1962, p. 338. Cited in Dale Edmonds, "Under the Volcano: A Reading of the 'Immediate Level,'" *Tulane Studies in English*, 16 (1968), 67.
- ³ Malcolm Lowry (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973), p. 399.

- ⁴ Lowry, p. 60.
- ⁵ P. 80.
- ⁶ P. 83.
- ⁷ Lowry, p. 66.
- ⁸ Lowry, p. 79.
- ⁹ Day, p. 339; Edmonds, p. 74.
- ¹⁰ Day, p. 340; Edmonds, p. 76.
- ¹¹ Lowry, p. 83.

CAROLE SLADE

CARR & LIVESAY

CAN MYTHS EVER BE DESTROYED? Hammered to flatness by the hot iron of reason? Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher's book of admirable research into the "real" life of Emily Carr, *The Untold Story*, is at great pains to demolish the mythology that has grown up around her. But people, even today, prefer legend to history; and the reason, perhaps, is that legend is symbolic and appeals to the intuitive, irrational side of our being. Once these images take hold, it is difficult to see how "objective truth" can win out! An example is the tremendous impact on the young generation of that very bad film, *Star Wars*. Science is simply the projector; fantasy takes over. We are inextricably caught in the syndrome of Right Hand, Left Hand. Emily Carr knew this well. The extremes of love and hate feed the cauldron. From this vortex, how can even the closest friend sift out "the truth"?

Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher has taken great pains to check back on Emily Carr's own statements about her work, her public, and her friends. Particularly valuable to those who knew and loved her paintings is the "Chronology" describing Emily's day-to-day, year-by-year life, written in brief note form but with detailed information as to addresses, dates, travels, gallery showings, friendships and health. From this account I was able to remem-

ber just when I had met her, on a visit with my father, J. F. B. Livesay, to 316 Beckley Avenue in Victoria . . . probably in the spring of 1938.

At that time, following Emily Carr's recognition in eastern Canada, the then curator of the National Gallery, Alan Plaunt, enlisted Livesay's interest in seeing the paintings. My father, a newspaperman with wide interests, was quite a follower of the art scene in Canada. He was also a close friend of Plaunt. Accordingly, on a business trip west, he asked me to accompany him to the Carr studio. We were fascinated by what we saw: forest sketches in oils, on brown manila paper. Emily seemed appreciative of our interest.

In the meantime, Alan Plaunt had seen a portrait of Emily Carr by Nan Cheney of Vancouver. It had been painted (probably) in November 1938, and was shown in Toronto in the summer of 1939. Plaunt was struck with admiration for the work, so much so that he bought it for the National Gallery for \$250.00.

As it turned out, the cramped National Gallery at that time, 1939, had not the space for the portrait; so Alan Plaunt asked Livesay if he would like to hang it in his house in the woods at Clarkson — on condition, of course, that it would be returned to the gallery on the old man's death. Eventually the portrait, placed in a prominent position above the mantel of a stone fireplace, was a great joy to Livesay.

As a background to my knowledge of this transaction, I would like to quote from J. F. B. Livesay's report on the proceedings, dated September 12, 1941 (from *The Making of a Canadian*, Ryerson, 1947):

Brilliant young men in their thirties, devoted to their country, are scarce. The death of Alan Plaunt is a heavy loss. He was my friend. It is not easy for a young man to be the friend of an old man. Our friendship was formed, indissolubly, when I met him on the boat on my return from

the Fourth Imperial Conference in London and Edinburgh.

What I then liked about Alan was his freedom and frankness and the sense that as a young man he was following his way, thinking out and discarding ideologies as they became attractive or irksome. That was in 1930. It was shortly after this that he became the protagonist of public ownership of the then upspringing industry of radio broadcasting by founding the Canadian Radio League.

In that campaign he and I had much in common, because I had long been entrenched in the cognate field of co-operative news-gathering and distribution. That phase of his public effort, resulting in the report of the Royal Commission of those years, was the prime factor in the establishment of, first, the Canadian Broadcasting Commission, and second, the present Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, of which he was one of the original Governors. . . .

Even at the last his one thought was of how he could be of use to his country. With tender remembrance the writer likes to recall what was perhaps the last of these projects. It concerned that great Canadian artist, Emily Carr, of Victoria, maybe the finest product of Canadian artistic life in the past fifty years. Though she preferred to write her own life, there was in existence a valid statement of Emily Carr, a portrait by Mrs. Cheney, of Vancouver, a very remarkable portrait that perpetuates for Canadian generations this unique artist.

Just a few years ago — such long years, measured by that young man's life of brilliant promise — Alan Plaunt, a governor of the National Gallery of Canada, with the writer, was shown by the curator of the Gallery, Eric Brown, a photograph of the portrait mentioned. Brown wanted the Gallery to buy it and wanted also to put on an Emily Carr show, inclusive of other B.C. artists. . . .

It was a happy chance when we learned that the portrait was for sale, on a basis Alan could afford and that made the National Gallery residuary legatee. Alan and myself wrangled who should be the intermediate custodian. I am glad to think that I won and that this portrait was in his house in his last days, because it was a fine artistic testimony to the singleness of his devotion to what he used to call "The Canadian Idea."

After the untimely death of Alan

Plaunt, Livesay began his efforts to have the Nan Cheney portrait displayed in the Toronto Art Gallery. But by October 1942, Toronto's curator, Martin Baldwin, was writing:

This morning when I got to my desk, I found a letter from Lawren Harris in which he quotes Emily Carr as saying that she strongly objected to having *any* portrait of herself in the exhibition. Under these circumstances I don't see that we can do anything but defer to her wishes. . . . You will be sorry to hear that Lawren also reports that Emily Carr is now confined to her bed after another severe attack.

J. F. B. Livesay replied:

It's too bad that Emily Carr will not let us hang the portrait. My daughter writes to the same effect and that she is so ill, they fear the end. She was always crochety, about her art, her public, her private life. Something of this comes out quite strongly in this remarkable portrait.

Instead, on Livesay's death in 1944, Nan Cheney's "remarkable" portrait was sent to its rightful owner, the National Art Gallery. But instead of being hung or sent on tour, it was stored away in a basement holding. This incident illustrates, I believe, a problem inherent in Hembroff-Schleicher's book, which purports to be "The Untold Story." For there are always more details that come to light, more aspects, more opinions. The author says, for instance, that "J. F. B. Livesay bought the Cheney portrait." Untrue. And instead of using it for the frontispiece of her book Hembroff-Schleicher has inserted one of her own portraits of Emily Carr. But actually that is only a *copy* of a famous photograph of Emily, taken by Mortimer Lamb!

All during this period on the west coast Emily Carr was known only as a painter. But her Indian stories that were to appear in *Klee Wyck* began to be read over the CBC by G. G. Sedgewick and Ira Dilworth, some time before their actual publication in 1941. These inspired great

interest and led to a "conspiracy" between Plaunt and J. F. B. Livesay to find someone who could write the painter's biography before she died. Would I do it?

I felt the idea was a rash one for someone inexperienced with memoir writing. But I had been doing journalism for western outlets and for the CBC, and it was wartime: we certainly needed the money from my writing. A toddler son kept me at home. With this situation in mind I wrote to Emily asking for a follow-up interview, which was accorded. By this year, 1941, the painter was home from hospital, living probably in her newly built studio on St. Andrews St., a part of the old Carr property. She wrote to me, however, from "218 Simcoe St":

Dear Mrs. Macnair:

I remember you and your father coming to my studio on Beckley St. on Sunday. I remember that you gave my work a nice review, one that did not annoy me as most do. I dislike publicity. Most write ups are so insincere. Those dreadful little flappers who only use the art jargon they are now taught in school under the name of "Art Appreciation", these young high school and college students pose as art critics and are very hard to endure as they know nothing about art. They fill up with personalities, cheap witticisms at one's expense, exploiting one's eccentricity — detestable! The biography idea has been put to me a number of times but I have dodged it — always seems to me the time for that is after one is dead. I had a stroke last June and I have engina [*sic*] but I'm far from dead. All summer I could not work but in November I gave my usual one man show (work done before my stroke but not before exhibited) in Vancouver Gallery and now I'm working again.

I do remember that afternoon spent with Emily. She was now bedridden, wrapped up in her grey mantle. "I can't paint much now . . . my heart. But I can write." We spoke of *Klee Wyck* and of how she had managed to write it, between illness and painting; a great accomplishment. I told her her painter's eye enabled her to

use words with great vividness. I was nervous, however, about raising the topic of doing a series of interviews with her, an introductory step towards a biography; but somehow, towards the end of the visit, I managed to ask her the question. She answered, ever so bluntly: "I don't need anyone to do that for me. I am writing it myself!" Crestfallen, I returned by ferry to North Vancouver and to "my little Peter." On re-reading it, Emily's letter began to take on more pointed significance for me. It revealed an extraordinary person, determined to expose herself honestly to the world, whatever the consequences.

I repeat the text here (although Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher has printed the main body of it, in her book.)

Eric Brown mentioned a biography, thought it might be helpful to other Canadian students and said, he heard I was writing. Why not do it myself, or let someone else, and then it was suggested if I did not do it myself there were two writers in Victoria, Mrs. Legri Shaw and Gwen Cash, two women who know very little of me and whose writing I dislike. So I began, meaning to send it to Eric Brown for criticism later. His letter followed very soon and I finished it afterwards, parts need re-writing. The facts are there, just a story of the growth of my work. As one's life and work are closely woven, it meant I was obliged to bring in my family's indifference to my work, and also the severity of an older sister, now dead. I read the first part of my writing to my only close relative remaining (a sister) a couple of years older than myself and she was *very angry* about it. If I could not do it *honestly* I could not do it at all and the emotional stress was very bad for the engina pains. My sister is going blind and I felt she had enough to bear without the other, so the M.S. I have not looked at for several years. Some day I may re-write it. Some day I may tear it up? So look after the growing of your little Peter. Thank you for your interest but let me die first.

If you are ever in Victoria I would like to see you. I never go out.

That brief experience with the body and spirit of Emily became the basis for a poem of mine that is always in demand when I read to women's groups: "The Three Emily's." In it I express some envy, that Emily Carr had the fortitude to put her creative work first, be it painting or writing. Of course, in her peak years she received strong support from men as well as women. It has always been known that Lawren Harris encouraged her to go on experimenting with her painting; to be followed by Ira Dilworth, who became her guiding spirit, inspiring and editing her prose writing. What hasn't been so forcefully noted is that, whilst women artists and critics like Hembroff-Schleicher, Nan Cheney and Ruth Humphrey gave her everyday moral support, certain men, like Mark Tobey, pushed her forward into finding a transcendental *raison-d'être* for creativity. Hembroff-Schleicher's book makes this abundantly clear. It also reveals for the first time that for many years Emily had a persistent suitor: William Paddon, whom she as persistently rejected. She saw herself, not as a marriageable woman, but as a creator. The energy that a lover demands of a woman had to be poured, in her case, into painting. And when the body finally wore out and painting became impossible, she painted with words.

So, in the long run, what does it matter to literature or art whether or not in real life the artist was unpredictable, irascible? at times overwhelmingly devoted to someone, at times spiteful? What does it matter if the artist was careless about getting dates in chronological order and contradictory about how events took place? It is a truism worth repeating, as Derek Reimer in *Sound Heritage* emphasizes, that "in examining the past ... what people *thought* happened is just as important as what *actually* did happen."

DOROTHY LIVESAY

JOURNALS

Special "Canadian" issues of journals that don't ordinarily devote themselves to Canadian studies present a singular problem to readers who want to keep up to date. Yet pursuing them offers only mixed reward. *Pacific Quarterly/Moana*, from Hamilton, N.Z., for example, published a Canadian literature supplement early in 1979, with brief surveys (one by Fred Cogswell) mostly intended for readers overseas. ("One learns people through the heart, not the eyes or the intellect," says W. O. Mitchell at the 47th Couchiching conference [*Growth in a Conserving Society*, Yorkminster Publishing, \$6.95], quoting Twain to the effect that foreigners can only photograph exteriors — never know the interiors — of another nation; but then Mitchell goes on to assert a positive faith in the power of artists to construct "bridges" between disciplines and peoples.) *Ecriture Française* (Sherbrooke) promises to provide essays, profiles, and bibliographies on French-language writers outside France, and in its first issue (1979) looks at everyone from Senghor to Aquin. *Sewanee Review* also attempts comparisons, with a Commonwealth Literature number (Winter 1979). In it, William Walsh tries to evoke the metaphoric particularities of Klein and Birney in a context that involves generalizations about another dozen modern poets; from such nets, he admits, "the mackerel always escape," and Canadian writing is perhaps better served by some of the reviews. Reviews also constitute (emergent from what?) in 1978; as with most reviewing, there is a mixture of intelligent reflections, provocative judgments, and the acid aspersions of the slender mind, but there are excellent notes on Hodgins and Mandel, which repay enquiry.

Coupled with such journals are several new ones, in which much of interest is to

be found. *Compass*, Edmonton's deliberately but unrestrictedly titled "Provincial Review," has since it began in 1977 printed a number of arresting pieces: W. L. Morton on populism, R. R. Wilson on Borges and tradition (vis-à-vis Canadian writing), David Jackel's reviews, and some analyses of language and style. *Poetry Canada Poésie*, in a newspaper format edited by Clifton Whalen, P.O. Box 1280, Station A, Toronto, announces a beginning subscription of 11,000, which will arouse surprised envy in every other editor in the country; its first issue (Fall 1979) is a small anthology of new poetry, with an accompanying feature profile of Cogswell. Two further news sheets, *des livres et des jeunes* (Sherbrooke) and *Lurelu* (445 St.-François-Xavier, Bureau 28, Montréal), will be of great value to parents, librarians, and children's teachers of French, for they supply illustrations, reviews, interviews, and commentary relating to new publications in French-language children's literature. The virtue of the latter lies in its longer reviews; that of the former derives from its brief descriptive comparative comments on categories of materials that include dictionaries, record albums, stories, magazines, and much else besides.

W.H.N.

REFERENCES

FROM GALE RESEARCH CO. come several new volumes of useful reference books of interest to students of Canadian literature. In *Contemporary Authors*, vols. 77-88 (\$45.00 and \$48.00), entries include biographical and bibliographical comment on Ann Blades, Seymour Blicher, Lyn Hancock, George McWhirter, C. J. Newman, Ondaatje, Anne Hébert, de la Roche, Richard Wright, David Watmough, and Terence Shortt. In their *Contemporary Literary Criticism* series (snippets from critical commentary on various authors), vols. 9 to 11 (\$45.00 and \$48.00), readers will find quick guides to Dudek, Wiebe, Glassco, Gray, Oates, Buell, Munro, and Gabrielle Roy, and a useful

reminder of the perspectives on Canadian writers that have been published outside Canada. And while the 1978 accumulation of the *Book Review Index* (\$68.00) is an enumerative listing of reviews that have appeared mostly in U.S. periodicals (*Maclean's* is somewhat anomalously listed among them), the *Canadian Book Review Annual* for 1977 (from Peter Martin Associates), is perhaps more useful to librarians who want an annotation concerning content and a quick evaluation. Gale's *Children's Literature Review*, vol. 3 (\$25.00) follows the *CLC* pattern, excerpting author's commentary and critical estimates, this volume containing extensive mention of James Houston and Dennis Lee; Gale's splendidly illustrated children's literature series *Something About the Author* has added vols. 13-15 (\$28.00 and \$30.00), with a brief comment on Edith Fowke in vol. 14; and two new volumes, *Writers for Young Adults: Biographies Master Index*, ed. Adele Sarkissian (\$24.00); and *Who Was Who in Journalism, 1920-28* (\$42.00) provide additional useful biographical leads for researchers and librarians. W. A. McKay's revision, updating, and enlargement of W. S. Wallace's *The Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (\$49.95) omits some of Wallace's names in order to add some 400 others, many from the fields of science and business; the entries are brief and essentially bibliographic rather than genuinely biographical, but, so far as one can judge, accurate; and though there are no references to contemporary persons, the book remains an essential reference until the *DCB* is complete. Still other works strive to satisfy particular needs. Don Rubin's illustrated *Canada on Stage: Canadian Theatre Review Yearbook 1978, CTR*, (\$18.95), lists casts and productions and will serve theatre historians well; *Canadian Books in Print* (University of Toronto Press, \$35.00) remains a bookseller's prime support and possibly the clearest guide to the current Canadian publishing trade; the 1977 volume in John Saywell's always insightful series *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs* (University of Toronto Press, \$30.00) disappoints only in that, unlike the earliest volumes in the series, it ignores the cultural scene entirely. Among bibliographies of individual writers, W. H. New's *Malcolm Lowry: A Reference Guide* (G. K. Hall, \$18.00) annotates all critical commentary on Lowry's life and work; and several first-rate guides to other writers have appeared in *Essays on Canadian Writing*.

W.H.N.

ON THE VERGE

**** PHILIP J. THOMAS. *Songs of the Pacific Northwest*. Hancock House. One finds out more about a people, perhaps, from their cookery books than their history books. Or, as Philip Thomas admirably makes us aware, by listening to them sing. Thirty years of patient hunting and delighted listening have produced this marvellous volume, which not only provides the texts for some forty-nine folk and working songs (only a fragment of Thomas' collection), with clear musical notations by Shirley Cox, but also places the words and the events they animate in an illustrated and anecdotal context. We learn of John Jewitt ("The Poor Armourer Boy"); discover the song and stories about Governor Douglas' son-in-law ("Chief Douglas' Daughter"); trace the quarrel between the annexationists and the nationalists ("Cheer, Boys, Cheer for the Dominion Nation"); "Then the Maple Leaf entwined And the beaver too, combined With Old England's flag shall float upon the sea"); read Chinook macaronics, and listen to the songs of lovers, lumber workers, remittance men, road builders, gold seekers, sailors and many others, as they respond with gusto to the pleasures and pressures of their daily lives. Many of the songs have been collected elsewhere, and many are variants of songs already known; but brought together here they tell a different story, of Upper Canada's West Coast colony ("Said I, I come from Canada, you can't come over me!"), and of people who have risen to their own landscape and sought an equitable community within it. Not always successfully, of course — and this becomes a book with a message. "When the season is over," remarks one fisherman-singer plaintively, "And you figure out what you have made, you were better off working for wages, No matter how low you were paid. For the comforts of home are worth something, So take it from me, my friend, Frying-pan grub and no head room Will ruin your health in the end. So hark to the song of the sockeye Like a siren's call of old; When it gets in your blood you can't shake it: It's the same as the fever for gold." Thomas must understand this fever, for it's the sort of thing that affects the song-collector, too; but I doubt he would altogether approve the sentiment: he reserves his greatest enthusiasm for the songs and stories of the ordinary labourer, and for the equity of a labourers' brotherhood.

W.H.N.

***** *The Salish People: The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout*, ed. Ralph Maud. 4 vols. Talonbooks, \$6.95 per volume. The world of anthropologists is a strange realm in which men of originaive imagination like Sir James Frazer and Claude Lévi-Strauss rub shoulders with some of the narrowest-minded pedants in the academic world. Lévi-Strauss maintains a threatened and precarious ascendancy; Sir James Frazer has in recent years been shunned because creative people, poets and novelists, have found inspiration in his work. Among those who have been damned with consistently faint praise by the pundits is Charles Hill-Tout, the brilliant amateur who settled in the Fraser Valley in the 1890's, was snubbed by the vain authoritarian Franz Boas, and was virtually ignored during the last thirty years of his life, after Edward Sapir in 1910 rose to power in the National Museum of Canada, which — as Marius Barbeau remarked — "virtually eliminated Canadian pioneers, historians, local archaeologists and dilettantes." As a result of the Germano-American tradition that has since ruled the anthropological field in Canada, Hill-Tout's works have been unobtainable except in periodicals that are hard to find; many of them remained unpublished. Now Ralph Maud as editor and Talonbooks as publishers have performed an invaluable service by collecting all Hill-Tout's available papers, including his splendidly written versions of Salish tales and myths, and putting them together, with good introductions and a very useful bio-bibliography, into the four paper-bound volumes which they entitle *The Salish People*. It is the record of one of the most interesting of Canadian native peoples. It is also the first time the work of a very remarkable man — an acute observer, a fine prose-writer, and a daring if somewhat shaky theoretician — is brought together in handsome and convenient form. Doubtless the academic pundits will again ignore Hill-Tout, but at least his work is now available for those who can appreciate its value, the writers and artists who still pay Frazer the compliment of borrowing from him.

G.W.

**** J. L. FINLAY and D. N. SPRAGUE. *The Structure of Canadian History*. Prentice-Hall, \$9.95. There are now enough freely available histories of Canada for one to approach any addition to their numbers with a certain scepticism. Is it really necessary? Merely to repeat the facts is certainly not, after Creighton and

Morton and Careless; and in *The Structure of Canadian History* Professors Finlay and Sprague reveal little that will be new to anyone who has been reading at all extensively in the field over the past decade. But there is always room for rearrangements and restatements, and in seeking out the main structural elements in Canadian history — the bones and arteries as it were — and relating them to human aims and the social forms which emerge as “inventions” from these aims, Finlay and Sprague have produced a remarkably fresh-tasting and useful book. Lucidly written, unburdened by scholarly apparatus, it can serve either as an excellent introduction for those whose knowledge of Canadian history is still slight, or as a convenient *aide-mémoire* for those who want a handy book beside them to refresh their images of the country's past.

G.W.

*** FRANK W. PEERS, *The Public Eye: Television and the Politics of Canadian Broadcasting, 1952-68*. Univ. of Toronto Press, \$25.00. A decade ago Frank W. Peers discussed the radio age in Canada in *The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting, 1920-51*. Now, in *The Public Eye*, he brings the narrative forward with an account of the television age, though he terminates his narrative in 1968, and so avoids the last decade, which on the whole has been one of general decline in Canadian broadcasting, both radio and television. Professor Peers, who served for some years as a high CBC executive before he joined the faculty of the University of Toronto, knows his subject well, and his two books are useful background sources to the often unhappy relationship between broadcasting and politics in Canada over half a century. However, his often highly interesting material is mummified in some of the most arid prose I have read in forty years of reviewing. The reader strives for whatever he learns.

G.W.

*** RENE LEVESQUE, *My Québec*. Methuen, \$9.95. This book begins and ends with a speech by René Lévesque. The body of it consists of a series of extensive interviews with him. With Gallic precision, irradiated by feeling, Lévesque charts out the history of his involvement in separatism and the separatist ideals. It is a personal vision of a liberated Quebec that he offers, justifying the book's title — *My Québec* — but at the same time it is an excellent introduction to the intentions

of Lévesque if not of all Péquistes. Astonishing, in comparison with the writings of other Canadian politicians, is the fairness of mind that Lévesque applies in his accounts of events and personae alike. Compared with most of his opponents, and of his lieutenants, he strikes one as an honourable intelligence, a good man fallen among politicians.

G.W.

*** PETER C. NEWMAN, *Bronfman Dynasty: The Rothschilds of the New World*. McClelland & Stewart, \$17.95. Defending Oscar Wilde against charges of snobbery, W. B. Yeats once said that “To Wilde the aristocrats of Britain were like the merchant princes of Bagdad.” One might say the same of Peter Newman's attitude to the rich of Canada. He sees them in a romantic glow, fortunate and therefore in some mysterious way wise and graceful, while their life styles evoke in him an admiration that at times it is hard to distinguish from envy. In *The Canadian Establishment* there was none of the element of moral anger that distinguished the writings about the rich of a genuine social critic like Gustavus Myers, and *Bronfman Dynasty*, the pendant to that earlier book, is as near to a capitalist hagiography as one is likely to read, comparing the Canadian liquor lords to the great Jewish banking dynasty which actually entered the European nobility. The relish with which Newman described the exploits of these dedicated financial raptors is indeed infectious, and, as an apologia for the lives and deeds of corporate giants, *Bronfman Dynasty* is perhaps unexampled in its temporary persuasiveness. But it is only while reading the book that one is susceptible to the temptation of admiring; once it is closed the fascination fades, for one is out of the magic circle created by Newman's own obsession with wealth and the new aristocracies it creates. For as a document *Bronfman Dynasty* is of dubious value; its most interesting contents are anecdotes, the least reliable material of history, and the secrecy with which the rich enshroud their affairs makes it unlikely that a complete and open account of how the Bronfmans built a multinational empire on smuggling booze will be written, at least while the family runs the empire.

G.W.

*** JOSEPH SCHULL, *Ontario Since 1867*. McClelland & Stewart, \$15.95. Joseph Schull made his first name as a CBC dramatist in the

high old radio days. In recent years he has turned with distinction to biography and history. His *Laurier*, which won the UBC Medal for Popular Biography in 1966, is still perhaps the best account of the Liberal prime minister, and he is also the author of *Edward Blake*, a sound two-volume life, and of *Rebellion*, a book on the 1837 uprising in Lower Canada. His present book, *Ontario Since 1867*, is devised, like the books just mentioned, to combine a fluent readability with scholarly exactitude. It is one of the new Ontario Historical Studies, and is obviously regarded as a key volume in the series. Its scope is more limited than its title suggests, since it comes to an end in 1961, eighteen years ago, but it does cover the crucial periods of Ottawa's changing growth from the rural province of Upper Canada which it was in the year of Confederation to the mainly industrial province with a population of six million which it had become in 1961. Schull ranges widely, including not only political and economic but also social and cultural history, and giving a real sense of the setting in which successive generations of Ontarians lived. Yet one is somewhat surprised that the able biographer of Laurier should have brought to life so few of Ontario's political leaders. John Sandfield Macdonald and Oliver Mowat are exceptions, but the rest leave no deep impression on one's memory when the book is read, and this gives a curiously impersonal cast to Ontario politics as Schull presents them.

G.W.

*** FATHER JOSEPH LAFITAU, ed., and trans. by Wm. N. Fenton and Elizabeth L. Moore, *Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times*. Champlain Society, 2 vols. First published in 1724, this work makes available again an extraordinary account of the Iroquois between 1712 and 1717, and their perceived views about divining, dreaming, shamanism, politics, marriage, education, warfare, games, and hunting. Of equal interest is the historical glimpse it provides of the intellectual juncture between the old French Classical reliance on authority and the belief in a "new" rationalism. There are clear limitations to Fr. Lafitau's responses to environment and language (including his quests for sources among the wandering Israelites and St. Augustine), and he is more illuminating when he simply records the actions he observes. But as a kind of pre-Frazerian search for a totality of Meaning, of the sort

which Voltaire parodied, it may have come back into its own in this current comparative age. The book also provides another opportunity to applaud the Champlain Society for its meticulous services to scholarship and the history of ideas.

W.H.N.

*** Bruce W. Hodgins, Don Wright, and W. H. Heick, eds., *Federalism in Canada and Australia: The Early Years*. Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, \$9.00. When the separate Australian states came to federate in 1901, they possibly did not appreciate the degree to which the existing Canadian federation implicitly shaped their union. But nor should we in the 1980's be unappreciative of the differences. Canada, designed to be strongly centralized, was not what the centrifugal Australian states wanted; they would be satisfied with more or less an economic association which preserved their separateness. Paradoxically a "territorially-based diversity" intensified Canadian decentralization, while a relative homogeneity intensified a centripetal politics in Australia. The systems enact more than territory; they reflect basic cultural desires and assumptions, which these seventeen historical essays (while they do not address the subject directly) nonetheless underscore.

W.H.N.

*** HILARY STEWART. *Looking at Indian Art of the Northwest Coast*. Douglas & McIntyre, \$6.95. The art of the West Coast peoples is the most sophisticated of native Canadian traditions in sculpture and painting, and one of the most remarkable among the world's so-called "primitive arts." Its forms are intricate and based on quasi-esoteric traditions that are often understood only by the families to whom a specific design may belong. There are totem poles and other artifacts whose iconographic meaning is lost to everyone—Indians and non-Indian experts alike—because a family has died out or refuses to reveal its traditions. At the same time, there are general principles of design that can be explained, and Hilary Stewart's brief manual, *Looking at Indian Art of the Northwest Coast*, does the explanation well on this basic level. She introduces the techniques, the design elements and the symbolic structure; she identifies the beings that recur in Coast Indian art and she tells briefly some of the basic legends. She starts one on a journey of understanding; she does not claim to lead one to a destination of complete knowl-

edge, which is impossible without crossing from one culture to another.

G.W.

*** JAMES DE MILLE, *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*. A delightful photo reprint has appeared in an unlikely place: the Science Fiction series published by New York's Arno Press (\$16.00), though all but scifibuffs and bibliophiles might find the price prohibitive. The text is that of Harper's 1888 edition, complete with some splendidly romantic period illustrations by Gilbert Gaul. The book itself is a quite fine — and thoughtfully written — cautionary tale involving Antarctic adventure and public mores. The purple cover, however, is ghastly.

W.H.N.

** RONALD WARWICK, *Commonwealth Literature Periodicals*. Mansell, £22.00. One would like to praise this work more highly. It is an amazingly thorough and carefully organized union list of Commonwealth journals in U.K. libraries, provides addresses and other data, and so constitutes an important source for tracing periodical histories and simply locating information. Yet I found, checking information on Canada, that the entries for *Canadian Literature*, *Ariel*, *University of Toronto Quarterly*, and *Essays on Canadian Writing*, for example, were all in some detail or other inaccurate, which gives one pause. Nonetheless it remains a worthwhile guide to titles and locations, to which the research student might wisely turn.

W.H.N.

** *A Literary Map of Canada*. Hurtig, \$7.95. There is a certain fascination about placing authors and literary works; somehow to have located an author's home territory is to acquire a sense — whether accurate or not — of understanding their perspective. This clear, wall-size political map of Canada, with a selection of authors' names printed regionally on it, will make a handy and informative school classroom aid. Another kind of map entirely is that depicting New France as cartographers understood it in the seventeenth century. *L'Amérique septentrionale en 1688*, available from Editeur officiel du Québec (\$2.95), is handsomely designed and coloured, decorative as well as educative, and would enliven a classroom or any other wall.

W.H.N.

** MICHAEL J. GRIBBON, *Walter J. Phillips, A Selection of His Works and Thoughts*. National Gallery of Canada, \$8.95. I don't know how many generations of Canadians suddenly relive their childhood when encountering Phillips' prints, for his woodblocks decorated many a textbook. Though his cultural role in shaping an imaginative view of Canada and Canadians has yet to be thoroughly explored, some of the handsomest of the prints are reprinted here, with a formal, neutral life-and-works account. Here the woodcuts themselves are so evocative, however — both in colour and in black and white — that one wishes for more of them, and fewer words.

W.H.N.

** ROGER VIETS, *Annapolis Royal: A poem 1788*. Loyal Colonies Press. Viets was a Loyalist refugee who produced, as Tom Vincent points out in his helpful editorial comment, the first booklet of English poetry to be published in what is now Canada. The poem, of more historical than aesthetic interest, is pastoral and inspirational rather than political or descriptive; Viets found in Annapolis Royal (at least for poetic purposes) a harmony of nature that inspires him to appreciate both music and the divine and never-ending hymns of Christian grace.

W.H.N.

** T. W. PATERSON. *Encyclopedia of Ghost Towns & Mining Camps of British Columbia*. Stagecoach Publishing, n.p. This is almost a model source book of local history. It is the first of a three-volume compendium of information on the early life — which was often the only life — of British Columbia pioneering settlements connected with the primary industries of mining, logging, fur-trading, fishing. In this volume some fifty settlements are recorded. The text is well-researched and densely detailed and the detail is often fascinating, while trouble has been taken to select unfamiliar as well as well-known illustrations. The amateur in regional history will find it interesting, and even for the professional historian it has its uses.

G.W.

NOTE: *Canadian Literature* will now also be indexed in *New Contents*, a bimonthly from the University of Göttingen. An index to *Canadian Literature* Nos. 1 to 77 is currently available from The Golden Dog Press for \$12.95.

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