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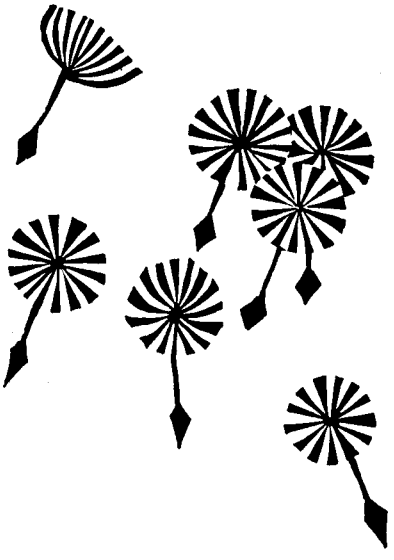

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A QUARTERLY OF CRITICISM AND REVIEW

1988

Gabrielle Roy Prize and Medal for Criticism

BILL NEW, EDITOR

Canadian Literature/ Littérature canadienne

University of British Columbia

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contents

editorial

SOFT ROCK STRING BAND

ALL GEOLOGY, says *Sarah Binks* somewhere, is founded on a rock. Words to live by. Science education has so changed in a hundred years — and perhaps the familiarity of Scripture has altered, too — that Hiebert's phrase now reads more like a rocky pun than a sendup of a fundamental scientific principle. Yet several recent works of popular science writing have begun to refer back to the nineteenth-century fascination with geology — to the work of William Paley, Mary Somerville, Charles Lyell, and (in Canada) Lyell's student, Sir William Dawson — in order to probe the sources of many ongoing assumptions about the world and to expose the presumptions in the vocabulary we still bring to descriptions of it. J. A. V. Chapple's *Science and Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Macmillan), for example, offers a good place to start. In a "context and commentary" series, it concerns itself with relations between history and literature and traces not only the growth of science and of a vocabulary relating to science in the nineteenth century but also the accompanying growth of a set of mind. Scientific ideas permeate the social attitudes of any period in history — Victorian and Modern no less than Renaissance and Medieval — and the nineteenth-century faith in geological strata and botanic taxonomies describes both a world tangibly "out there" and a set of attitudes that can now more easily be recognized as anthropocentric, governed by reference to empirical "fact," and impinging on expectations of behaviour insofar as such attitudes also define an "order" of races, languages, and "historical" stages of "progress."

George Levine's *Darwin and the Novelists* (Harvard) covers overlapping ground, examining science ("a shared, cultural discourse") less than the *patterns* of science espoused within Victorian fiction. Reading Darwin's work itself as a series of metaphors — a "cluster of 'stories,'" a "response" to particular issues that Victorian writers and thinkers found important — Levine argues that Darwin (and by extension Darwinism) has to be read as a kind of collective imaginative gestalt, influencing how we now tell stories and convey meaning, and why at the same time we distrust words. For the Victorian position (arguing for change and also for stability, trying to find a way of making Darwinian "survival of the fittest" prove the moral superiority of those then living) was inconsistent. And could an incon-

sistent language of "authority" be trusted? There's the question. The "rock" was soft, apparently. And where would an argument founded on such inconsistencies lead? For some, "chaos" was the only answer; and one response to chaos was to reassert order, perhaps in more disconcerting or even frightening ways.

William Barrett's *Death of the Soul* (Doubleday) can be read in such a context. Surveying attitudes to consciousness from Descartes to the computer, the book is one (of several we should expect over the current and coming decades) that is reacting to the millennium, the year 2000, as much as it is surveying history. Here the computer — or at least the idea of machine intelligence — is the demon cast as danger (the consequence of some form of evolution?), and the book asserts that if a machine consciousness is ever to exist it will still be without sensitivity, intuition, or a capacity for pathos, and will continue therefore to be less than human. Philip N. Johnson-Laird's *The Computer and the Mind* (Harvard) — an "introduction to Cognitive Science" — densely raises related ethical issues: how can one study the mind acceptably? can one computerize personality? Such questions seem diffuse, and they are; but they also rest on the old desire for categories, and they worry about the ramifications of introductory layman's guide categories when it comes to ordering persons. Are they acceptable? Stephen Hawking is quoted, in John Bosloughs *Stephen Hawking's Universe* (Gage): "'People are not quantifiable.'" Anyway, what does "acceptable" mean?

Within the confines of research, "acceptable" sometimes defines as "objective," as though objectivity were possible; but increasingly the subjectivity of observation and discovery are becoming not only apparent in science but also recognized as part of scientific process. The much-vaunted "scientific method," in other words, founded on the rock of nineteenth-century empiricism, is opening to question. Martin Gardner's collection of essays by Darwin, Dewey, Einstein, Freud, and numerous others, *The Sacred Beetle and Other Great Essays in Science* (New American Library), reveals as one might expect that subjectivity has always motivated and shaped scientific enquiry, and that it expresses itself in a variety of ways: Rachel Carson was not required to agree with Bertrand Russell, or vice-versa. And two recent collections of reprints from *Scientific American*, for which Gardner (and subsequently the Canadian computer commentator Alexander Dewdney) has frequently written, probe the subjectivity of vision, perception, and language acquisition. The title "scientific American" is itself an example of the cultural shape of language, the subjective character of apprehension, though it does not constitute an overt subject in either of these reprint collections, *The Mind's Eye* and *Language, Writing, and the Computer* (Oxford). What the journal title implicitly asserts is a particular cultural claim to scientific rationalism, which in turn reiterates the long-standing hierarchy that grants greatest cultural value to the empirical, the concrete, the technologically demonstrable, "therefore" the pragmatic. Yet a "Victorian inconsistency" remains. North American society (and in this respect

Canada is included) repeatedly validates itself in terms of the empirical but claims to act according to metaphysical rules and aspirations. Nowhere is this dichotomy clearer than in recent popular writing on the subject that goes ambivalently by the name of "natural history."

Louise B. Young's *The Unfinished Universe* (General), for example, asks if the order we see in the universe is just a reflection of our own minds — and wonders if everything aesthetically pleasing is simply a construction of order where none existed before — but she goes on to argue that the universe has to be understood as a Masterpiece of Form whose "final lines" are yet to be "written." The assumption of finality, together with the mixed visual and verbal trope (*written lines*), underlies the book's attempts to reconcile notions of time, death, religion, and science. The persistently passive rhetorical structures, however ("It has been argued that . . .") and the grandiloquent apostrophes ("What awe-inspiring powers . . . !") undermine the argument, for they stylistically translate observation into cliché. A related problem afflicts Tim Fitzharris and John Livingstone's *Canada: A Natural History* (Viking Penguin/Royal Canadian Geographical Society), a book of beautiful photographs of "representative" Canadian flora, fauna, region, and scene (though there's no beaver, no arbutus, and no loon) that is burdened by its accompanying text. An enthusiasm for nature turns repeatedly to adjectives here in order to try to convey the virtues of subjectivity; and trope substitutes for feeling. The surf doesn't just pound, it does so with a "fearsome pounding"; an eaglet can't just feed, it has to spot "with keen eyes" *her* mother's "regal silhouette flashing against the blue"; the west coast's rocky islands don't just exist, they are a "myriad" created by "the thunderous hammer of Thor," they're the "Norse god's legacy." The Eurocentric bias, at least, is clear; it constructs a paradigm, reaching for a learned eloquence in the service of "natural history," but in the process ignoring the social and cultural history, in this case, *in place*.

A different dimension of scientific enquiry into cultural practice is represented in *The Serpent & The Rainbow* (Stoddart), by the Canadian Harvard ethnobiologist Wade Davis. In its own way a footnote to the ongoing tale of Ewen Cameron, the researcher involved with the CIA experiments in Montreal who is alluded to in passing, the book is primarily a dynamic personal narrative about Davis's attempts to discover which drugs are involved in the zombie rituals of Haiti. Encounters with vodoun priests, episodes of grave-robbing, theories about seasnakes and pufferfish, and other activities reminiscent of *Dr. No* lead Davis ultimately toward the identification of tetrodotoxin and to reflections on the practice of premature burial, both in Haiti in the present and in the 1890s in Europe. But they also lead him to reflect on the way in which a scientific "observer" is swept into a world view — which culminates in an ethical dilemma: to what degree does participating in an enquiry (or a ritual, to focus the terminology in a different way) have consequences? And of what kind? and on whom?

Inevitably, the observer creates. The "science poems" of John Allman, *Curve Away From Stillness* (New Directions), shape a love poem out of the structures of physics, chemistry, and biology, observing at one point: "Proximity / itself / determines / shape / / substance / a reservoir the curved crystal of a watch / refracting / the instant of looking / because we are / looking." But as well as probing the ethics, aesthetics, and emotional engagement of "scientific" connection, the poem further asks why physicists speak of "elegance and symmetry" in their equations and "resort to metaphor to explain their facts." The verb "resort" carries its own hierarchical message, of course. But the question itself epitomizes a continuing disparity between understanding and communication, one which certainly marks the form of contemporary popular science writing and which perhaps also characterizes contemporary theories (i.e., "perceptions") of the science of physics.

Joseph Campbell's *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space* (Methuen) argues that metaphors are often misread because they are accepted as references to tangible facts when they are better understood as attempts to speak "poetically of that which cannot be told." Maybe so. The trouble is that a phrase such as Campbell's "epiphanies of the rapture of being" is more likely to take a reader back to Fitzandrew and Young than forward (is it "forward"?) into clarity. How, then, can people collectively understand anything? Campbell is at pains to explain that even number, much claimed as an "objective" or "neutral" medium of explanation, is just as susceptible to cultural manipulation as words are — witness the superstitions surrounding threes and nines, fours and sevens, binaries and snake-eyes. Do the "objective" techniques of historical record and scientific mapping fare any better? Not at all. Jean Audouze and Guy Israël, editing the revised edition of *The Cambridge Atlas of Astronomy* (Cambridge), include all the latest data on Venus, Halley's Comet, and Uranus, but construct visual metaphors (paper equivalences) in the process of representing their findings. Richard Jarrell attempts to record a factual history of Canadian astronomy in *The Cold Light of Dawn* (Univ. of Toronto), but Francis Graham-Smith and Bernard Lovell, in their personal account of their work at Jodrell Bank, *Pathways to the Universe* (Cambridge), emphasize even in their title how much a manner of perception depends upon the paradigm of conception. Introducing the subject of astronomy, Graham-Smith and Lovell break rapidly from the mythological sky designs of the ancients into the versions of space that contemporary physics constructs — but the *terms* of contemporary physics (binaries, clusters, variables, pulsars), as the authors are perfectly aware, also resonate with metaphoric effect, refract what's seen, and circumscribe one shape of meaning.

Hence Nick Herbert's initial premise in *Quantum Reality* (Anchor/Doubleday) comes as something of a surprise. Herbert observes the "absence" of an overriding metaphor for contemporary science (in contrast to Newton's clockwork universe, for example — one of the subjects raised in the Spring 1988 issue of *Queen's*

Quarterly, a tercentenary tribute to Newton's *Principia*). He goes on to challenge the message his own teachers conveyed to him (to the effect that it's pointless for physicists to ask what quantum theory means — i.e., to seek a reality behind the mathematics — and only functional to stick to the math itself) by tracing modern physics from Bohr and Planck to Feynman and Bell. Bell's Theorem (i.e., that "reality must be non-local" because an event is affected by something apparently distant from it) asks of course to be demonstrated, by scientific method. But how? Herbert answers with music: a composition of his own. Blues. But is this history or sine waves? Or another metaphor? While he may be right that there is as yet no *overriding* metaphor, there are plenty of suggestions in popular science to choose from. There's *Cosmic Code* (Heinz Pagels), *Stalking the Wild Pendulum* (Itzhak Bentov), *The Sphinx and the Rainbow* (David Loye): all articulating a *quest* for order in the face of a *conundrum*. John Gribbin's lucid *In Search of Shrödinger's Cat* (Bantam) runs a variation on this theme, explaining paradox through a theory of the simultaneity of many worlds. And Gary Zukav, in *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* (Bantam), reminiscent of Fritjov Capra's *The 'Tao' of Physics*, tries to transform physics, through Feynman diagramming, into Eastern Philosophy. To which one responds with one of the iterative phrases that have punctuated these comments several times already: "Of course," or "Maybe so." The signs of doubt and consequence, these phrases speak of the way people deal with paradox. Is uncertainty susceptible to ordered understanding, ask Gribbin and Zukav and the rest. Or is order always just another form of metaphor to deal with the uncertain, the inconsistent, and the unsayable?

Queen's Quarterly no. 95, on Newton, provides a clear survey of world-views from Copernicus and Kepler to Feynman and black holes. ("Most working scientists are notorious for their lack of interest in history," writes Stephen Jay Gould, in *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle* [Harvard], adding that science is nonetheless a Whiggish enterprise, fascinated by the idea of progress and constantly arguing about how things have *developed* since geologic time. Richard Dawkins's effectively written *The Blind Watchmaker* [Longman/Thomas Allen] — which draws its title from Paley's adaptation of Newton's clockwork universe, coupled with a notion of chance rather than foreordination — argues for a Darwinian reading of physics, and so reworks history yet again in metaphoric terms.) But the *Queen's Quarterly* contributors go on to postulate the relation between Newton (operating in the macro-universe) and contemporary string theory (postulating a way of reconciling the quantum mechanics of the submolecular world with the contradictory rules of a Newtonian world). To formulate equations that work, goes the argument, is to demand much of mathematical elegance, because we believe that the mathematical elegance *that must exist at the root of things in nature* has to be mirrored at the level at which we're operating. Again those metaphors recur: *elegance*, *mirror*, *field*, *string*. At the base of string theory, moreover, lies the suggestion that particles

are not points but minuscule lengths or loops of "strings" of dimensions, involving "a range of possible symmetries." P. C. W. Davies and Julian Brown, editing *Superstrings: A Theory of Everything?* (Cambridge), take up this possibility, and the nine contributors (including John Schwarz, who promulgates the idea, and Richard Feynman, who was disputing string theory before his death) discuss in interview how space has to be rethought as motion, in terms of time, and how strings (working in a ten-dimensional space-time, with some sixteen internal dimensions as well) either construct a unifying theory of everything (an explanatory form for motion and being) or explain nothing at all. There's a certain finality in this distinction. But what does it mean?

Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye* hazards a kind of answer. It *uses* string theory, as a running metaphor, a process of motion in space-time, to articulate the central character's shifting perception, hence her shifting sense of history, self, reality, and value. The conclusion to the novel tries to make sense of this process of understanding — in speech, in metaphor. Perhaps "only" in metaphor: it is, after all, something of an act of faith. The conclusion reads this way:

> Now it's full night, clear, moonless and filled with stars, which are not eternal as was once thought, which are not where we think they are. If they were sounds, they would be echoes, of something that happened millions of years ago: a word made of numbers. Echoes of light, shining out of the midst of nothing.
>
> It's old light, and there's not much of it. But it's enough to see by.

Of course, we say. Or maybe so. There's only a thin band between uncertainty and belief.

W.N.

MISSING PERSONA REPORT

Mick Burrs

(A Document of Secrets, Part III)

Of Blood and Bones and Barbed Wire

these missing persons this missing persona these
missing shadows from the life of one body
the body of one life

1.

my grandfather Sam Berzinsky
who died before I was born
[his secrets buried with his bones]

who I was named after
[his blood now seeps through my body]

whose hand never held my own
[his image now I can only read on stone]

2.

my great-grandfather Alex Berzinsky
whose name I did not know
until I was forty years old

whose date of birth
and date of death
have been removed
from all accounts

Alex Berzinsky's bones
were probably buried
in the old Jewish cemetery in Kiev
among the victims
of the pogroms of 1881 and 1905

himself a victim?
I will never know

I don't remember
my father speaking of him
or of the last pogrom
that brought my grandfather
(deserting the Russian army)
and my father
(then three years old)
across the sea to North America

later I would flee
from the land that gave
my father and grandfather refuge

I would flee
from the government
that wanted my body for war
from the bureau
that had registered
as its own
my blood my bones
my role as exile
in poetic keeping
with our family tradition

Alex Berzinsky's bones
have not been allowed
to rest in the soil of the Ukraine

this is all I know
of my great-grandfather

how his cold blood underground
would later be joined
by the warm blood
of thousands upon thousands
murdered in a ravine nearby in 1941
the year after I was born

the bodies of entire families
sanctified by bullets
their bones blessed and bulldozed
in mud and barbed wire
by Einsatzgruppe C from Germany
in that ravine known as Babi Yar

later in peacetime
by state directives in 1962
the old Jewish cemetery in Kiev
and my great-grandfather's name
were finally
obliterated

this progressive act
only required the revision of history
the word of authority
the silence of neighbours

how the final solution
would find perfection in Kiev
concocted by invaders from another land
completed later by the local regime
and condoned by those who could hide
behind the whitewashed walls
of their simple piety

this serviceable collaboration this
unconscious conspiracy
would signify
no Jewish grandfathers and grandmothers
no Jewish mothers and fathers
no Jewish children
ever existed in Russia

and where
no gravestone no monument marks his name
my great-grandfather never existed on this earth

and now you know
why I do not exist
I am a missing persona
only an image in your brain

the blood and the bones and the barbed wire
the names and the names and the
names rest in pieces now
in Kiev under a

modern communications centre
erected by the state
where now it is official
all the citizens can see

death shall be replaced
by television

SO WE KNOW IT'S NOT JUST US

Neile Graham

Call it the black spirit that bursts
out of you when your husband touches
your breast that pushes his hand away.

The leaping thing that sputters
obscenities like water dropped
in hot oil. As angry as that. More —

like the rage that runs out of
words describing it. Limitless,
envious, that makes you a stranger.

It binds you within and outside
love. Part fear; regardless of fear.
Part wolf and part spirit.

Part death squad just in its human
shape. Part the official knock
at the door at 4:00 a.m.:

the heart's knocking in time
with the blows. Even when you know
it's next door, not you

they're after. Fear and fear of
your relief. The mad dogs run
through the street in packs,

panting and rabid — that's you.
You in the closed circle
of lamplight watching behind

the curtain your breath heavier
and heavier as your blood runs out
into the city's night.

PRIVATE CHRONICLES IN PUBLIC PLACES

John Stuart Batts

AS AN INDUSTRIAL NATION Canada is renowned for its natural resources, but among the lesser-known materials of its literary wealth, manuscript diaries have seldom received much attention. The poor relation of life-writing, the diary has existed as a raw, imprecise literary form for some considerable time. In Canada, although a couple of centuries' worth of such manuscripts has accumulated, their presence is for the most part perhaps assumed but sadly neglected. Occasionally a diary draws attention to itself as a promising commodity — recall the headlines over a newly released Mackenzie King revelation or about the auction of Louis Riel's manuscript — but generally diaries fail to attract the academic investor (in either sense). The metaphor, of course, has more glitter than modesty, but this article will be outspokenly "bullish" in assuming that the diary, being so little known, generally has not had the scrutiny it merits and that it has potential for growth and even rich, literary dividends.

Part of the problem in the past may have been that old feeling of national inferiority, a sense that there were likely to be many epigones but no Pepys or Boswell or Woolf, or again, that no Canadian item could measure up to the attractions of journals kept by Hawthorne, Dana, or much less those by Anaïs Nin or Gide. All of which is a pity because since centennial year especially, Canadian diaries have been increasingly available both as manuscripts in archives and even as published books.

Even so, it is hard to dismiss the reflection that possibly neither the general public nor the academic community is aware of how many diaries are available for perusal or study in one form or another. Beyond the unique manuscript, that same diary is often to be seen as a typescript or carbon copy, as a xerox, or in microfilm and microfiche; and such copies may exist not only in the home archive but in distant archives and research collections elsewhere in the country. Yet the usual access is through its published version. Even here, though, one may need a very comprehensive guide to what is in print. Published diaries are often the enterprise of small presses, who are prone to regard their editions as parochial affairs unlikely

to generate large or far-flung sales. Hence knowledge of such works may depend on seeing a brief notice or advertisement in a regional journal such as *The Atlantic Provinces Book Review* or *The Saskatchewan Multicultural Magazine*.[1] Happily, established publishers have not wholly ignored diaries, so that exceptionally one notices that the fame of Charles Ritchie as diarist and award-winning author owes much to the initiative of Macmillan of Canada.[2]

Another part of the problem for the literary critic in approaching this sub-genre of literature has been an awareness of the mean status accorded diaries in the past. Even now they are too often regarded as the preserve of those who are interested in the work for their own special, if legitimate, ends. Thus, a social scientist may focus on a particular aspect of society as expressed through its diaries.[3] Furthermore, the approach may even be restricted to territorial or sexist concerns.[4] Yet again, diaries prized by local historians may be chock-full with facts about their community but otherwise dull and poorly written; similarly, genealogists seeking details of family history may enthuse over meagre trifles of prose; or the office or position of the writer may grant his diary an importance which is either ephemeral or false. Certainly, the diary of a somebody may disappoint just as easily as that of a nobody may please.

Diaries pose a special problem to readers because when published generally offer a filtered version of the original, and that resulting selection is invariably the result of another mind. So there is the critical problem of being able to study the published diary knowing only imperfectly how far the text is the result of the tact, finesse, skill (or guile) of the editor. What is offered for public perusal, then, may be a full or reasonably faithful rendering of the original, but for better or worse it may bear only a loose resemblance to, or even be a distortion of, the original manuscript. Writers who edit their own diaries for publication face severe temptations to delete the contemporary effusion, substitute the better phrase of hindsight, and otherwise mar the original diary's candour. This must be pressingly so where the essential task is one of condensing an overlong original. To amend would be all too human. And even editors, who are often descendants or family friends, may find that subtle strains of discretion lure them overpoweringly from scholarly rectitude. Such tinkering with original manuscripts by editors would be condemned where other art-forms are concerned; yet if the writer himself is making the changes, these may elsewhere (for example, in his poems or fiction) pass as desirable, manuscript revisions. But because the diary has such a special focus on the serial, day-by-day entries which constitute a form of autobiography, such meddling is unconscionable.

A fourth problem with the form, one which has confused readers and archivists alike, is the term and its imprecision. At one time a "diary" in English was considered a personal and private record, and a "journal" as a record of a more official kind. It may be tempting to keep the two words distinct, but in practice journals

and diaries have become interchangeable; one reluctantly acknowledges that nowadays one accessioning archivist's *journal* may be another's *diary*. The slipperiness of terminology is not the fault of archivists.[5] There could be nothing more personal than the gossipy *Journals* of Benjamin R. Haydon;[6] nor anything more impersonally official than the desk diaries, for example, of Joseph Frobisher, an early nineteenth-century Montreal businessman, which chiefly record where he dined out.[7] By contrast, Charles Darwin's *Journal of Researches into the Natural History and Geology of the Countries visited during the Voyage of HMS "Beagle"* is by no means the dry scientific treatise its title might imply.[8] It may not record with intimacy a pain in the left testicle (as Pepys does) or casual fruition on Westminster Bridge, "being so closely united with such a low wretch" (Boswell's phrase), but Darwin often includes delightful and amusing accounts of his own personal experiences during the voyage.[9] The point to be taken, as William Matthews acknowledged a generation ago, is that a useful distinction between "diary" and "journal" no longer exists.[10]

Nor is that the sole difficulty of terminology, for to compound the problem many allied terms impinge on the diary-journal category. There are many pretenders, many misnomers, yet all are works of diary potential whose existence is obscured by other nomenclatures. Consider these for a moment: letter-journals, desk-diaries, family diaries, appointment books, field-notes, scrap-books, aides-memoire, memoranda, reminiscences, almanacks, family histories, farmer's journals, and perhaps most capacious of all, the term "logs." In Canada there are fur-trade post logs, lighthouse keeper's logs, but above all, naval logs: admirals', captains', masters', ships' logs — all have their diary-like roles. Public Archives of Canada, for example, has copies of 413 volumes of Admirals' logs of Canadian interest kept between 1702 and 1911; these generally contain entries made under headings of a utilitarian kind: place of ship at noon; headings of orders and letters received and written; the number of signals made to and from the ship; and another column — which is of wider interest — for remarks and occurrences. Secondly, captains' logs follow these headings: winds, course, distance, latitude, longitude, bearings, distance at noon, and — of crucial interest again — remarks and observations. Thirdly, there are the masters' logs, which include entries under the usual headings; the ship's master was the official log keeper, but his entries were often made by a master's mate and checked by the master, or made by the first lieutenant at the end of each watch. In this category is the "log" of Lieut. Peter Puget, kept aboard H.M.S. *Discovery* in the Pacific with Commander Vancouver in the 1790s.[11] In addition to the expected log-headings, Puget often included fuller remarks and observations, such as this in early May 1792, concerning an expedition in the ship's boats "& Remarks on Port Discovery," while anchored in "Juan de Fuca Streights." The party of exploration was seeking a possible harbour on the coast: "Not far from this Situation our Astonishment was much excited by a Sight so truly horrid

that it awakened all those Ideas that naturally crowd on the Imagination; of the Savage Customs and Manners of the Indians who inhabit these [?]extensive Countries. A Long Pole & two others of smaller Size were put upright in the Ground each having a Human Skull on its Top, through which the Poles Penetrated; these appeared to have been lately put thus, as the Hair & Flesh still adhered to the Bone, & though I have heard & read of this mode of Punishment in England, for . . . capital offences where it was necessary as an Example, by such an ignominious testimony of the Crime committed, that it should have a public Exposal to deter others from falling into the same snare, but here ignorant of the Motives which had caused the present unhappy fate of these three persons, it was therefore attributed more to the Barbarity of the Manners and Customs of the Indians, than to any [word illegible: ?Monetic] Punishment — though they [i.e., the murdered men] might have been Enemies or might have forfeited their Lives to the particular Laws under which they were governed. But these Considerations were now totally out of the Question. The Effect was judged without Knowledge of the Cause. On this Point we stopped to Dinner. Of a pleasant Situation it was, at the Back of the Beach which was low and sandy, was some Quantity of Low Land, well covered with verdure & on which were plenty of Gooseberry bushes & wild Roses."[12] The range of comment here includes a blend of official and personal observations.

However, to dwell on "logs" thus is to illustrate the variety of possible diary-like materials. If the writer, even keeping his log or journal for official reasons, persistently manages to give the palimpsest impression that he is doing more than simply recording data — miles covered since yesterday noon, or even the number of pelts received at the fur-trading post — then there is the rudimentary diary. In other words, whereas the word "log" suggests an impersonal record, the diary element begins at the moment that the writer begins to involve his own feelings and sentiments. This is a useful critical litmus paper. Furthermore, it should be noted in passing that some components of the traditional diary's form are, nevertheless, technically objective; for example, that frequent human habit of remarking on the weather — "sunny at first but cloudy in the afternoon" — conforms with the rôle of log-recorder, and few diaries are without such remarks. Only by recognizing an acknowledged looseness of labelling and by being willing to consider related forms as specimens of potential diaries may one hope to encounter the fullest range of the Canadian (manuscript) diary.

ALL THE REFERENCES in this article so far have been to English-language diaries. Beyond present concerns and belonging to other traditions there are in Canada extensive holdings of manuscript diaries written in French, especially those kept by seafarers and explorers, trappers and traders, mis-

sionaries and soldiers, Oblates and Jesuits, priests and nuns. Apart from these, the English-language Canadian materials occasionally have multilingual dimensions. Some diaries are only partly in English. For example, among journals of Moravian missionaries to Labrador in the late eighteenth century one can find mixed entries of English and German. In our own century and on western shores, some diaries of the Canadian-Japanese population mingle Japanese and English entries, and there are may other such permutations to be found where new immigrants find the diary a useful way of providing themselves with exercises in the new language. A more dashing blend of two languages is provided by a certain judge in British Columbia who in the manner of Pepys rather deceptively (or is it self-deceptively?) switches into French when recounting his amours (presumably illicit). More versatile again was a Canadian woman on a European tour in the last century who switched to entries in French while in Paris and to Italian while in Rome.

As Ponsonby noted years ago about English diarists, travel is a great fillip to journalizing.[13] Since Canadians are tireless travellers, diaries kept in transit here or abroad have been plentiful. So impressions of the frontiers of the new land are by settlers on the banks of the Red River, at Canford Manor, at the Barr colony, or on Prince Edward Island, by opportunists in the Cariboo or Yukon goldfields, by surveyors of the 49th Parallel or the hinterlands of Ontario and Quebec, or again by scientists in the eastern or western Arctic. But many of the diarists are recording their experiences of the nearer sights and cities. There abound diaries kept by tourists abroad taking a fond look perhaps at the Scotland left behind in their own or in their forebears' childhood. Then again, there is that special category of travellers, Canadian soldiers, who fought in the Sudan, or in the South African War, or in two World Wars. Still extant are diaries kept by Canadians at the fall of Hong Kong, in German and Japanese prisoner-of-war camps, during the Normandy invasion, in the push through Italy, and at the struggle in the Ardennes. In short, one should recognize that what may otherwise appear to be "foreign" subject-matter may well have a strong Canadian component; such is the case with those diaries of officers in the Winnipeg Grenadiers who were responsible for the defence of Hong Kong in 1940, or among the journals of Canadian volunteers in the Royal Flying Corps serving in France. Whatever the reason for their travel, then, Canadians in past generations have been just as anxious to write down their impressions of distant provinces or other lands as contemporary Canadians are keen to record experiences of their own with cameras.[14]

Nevertheless, the monumental difficulty confronting the student of the diary is the lack of an adequate guide to those manuscript diaries which are extant. While it is true that with persistence one can find most diaries in print, unpublished diaries are seldom known outside the walls of their own repository.[15] One recent, positive step in aiding scholars who wish to know more about the holdings of Canadian

research institutions has been provided by the University of Calgary Press's "Canadian Archival Inventory Series"; so far, volumes have been prepared which describe the papers of Hugh MacLennan, Alice Munro, W. O. Mitchell, Joanna Glass, Robert Kroetsch, and Rudy Wiebe. These, of course, include far more than diaries. For the specialized interest, one may need to start with the pioneer work, *Canadian Diaries and Autobiographies*, compiled by William Matthews.[16] Matthews includes not only published and unpublished diaries but also narratives, reminiscences, memoirs, etc. But there are limitations, beyond the fact that he was collecting information forty years ago. The 'Preface' lists his exclusions: no French material prior to the Indian and French wars; no material relating to the old North-West or the Pacific Northwest (with some exceptions); no diaries of American visitors to Canada; no diaries of fur-traders who worked in what is now U.S. territory; no journals of world explorers or of Arctic explorers! Perhaps the largest limitation on Matthews's work, however, is that it appeared before the sense of Canadian nationhood, symbolized by its centennial year, had produced such a heightened awareness of the value of its manuscript heritage; in the intervening years archivists, local historians, amateur enthusiasts and the like, have been able to secure private chronicles which otherwise might have perished unread. Similarly, enlightened administration has allowed most federal, provincial and municipal archives better facilities, more space for storage, and positive policies of collection.[17] Enthusiasm obviously varies from region to region, but one especially admires the work of several agencies on the Prairies, which possess that special awareness of how close their pioneer history is and of how easily fragile materials might disappear, like topsoil in a thirties' dust-storm; that part of Canada has made notable efforts to secure the manuscripts and artefacts of its past. The upshot of similar collection policies is that throughout the country there are today many more diaries available for perusal than Matthews could have known about. By no means are all the post-centennial year acquisitions by the public domain contemporary manuscripts; many are from the last century, and others older still.

Since *Canadian Diaries and Autobiographies*, other more local guides have appeared to aid diary seekers. Most provincial archives have some in-house means of directing researchers to diaries among their manuscript holdings; often this takes the form of descriptive lists of personal papers in major collections, though to my knowledge none (alas) keep an up-to-date card or computer index. More published bibliographical works on particular regions, like Bruce Peel's descriptive index of sources for study of the history of the Prairies, would be welcome.[18] Probably the best general guide available currently is the series of volumes which make up the *Union List of Manuscripts in Canadian Repositories*.[19] Even there, unless it happens to be the sole subject of the entry, the presence of a diary may not be apparent among the descriptions of other manuscripts.

BEING INTERESTED IN THE HISTORY of the diary as a genre in Canada over the past centuries, I began several years ago to collect and sift information on manuscript diaries in my Canadian Manuscript Diaries Project, surveying more than three hundred years of diary-writing in English.

The range was kept wide to include early diaries which had content that pertained to Canada even though the writers might have been from other countries; so there were no limits imposed regarding early materials, though the ideal cut-off date among modern diaries caused much hesitation. The original intention was to omit diaries which began after 1960 on the grounds that they would be too recent and presumably closed. However, some repositories are collecting works written in the last decade, and not all of these are restricted. Furthermore, among responses to my public appeals for information about diaries or from diarists, a number have been from current journalizers who have had no qualms about my reading or even publicizing their work. Some of these diaries were actually started a very long time ago and have occupied their keepers ever since. Among the most voluminous of such diaries are two that may be mentioned here. First, the diary of Father Bobilier, O.M.I., of Dawson City; he was still at work as an Oblate parish priest (and diarist) when I visited him in 1982; he is a keen student of Yukon history and its lore, and has kept journals, often supplemented with photographs, for over forty years.[20] Secondly, there is the diary of Harold E. Escott, who died in the fall of 1979 in his 98th year; it is now deposited in the Special Collections Department of the Library of the University of British Columbia.[21] Entries begin when the young diarist was a soldier in India in January 1919, and the Curator told me that Escott was still journalizing in his nineties — clear testimony to the mania that is diary-writing. The overall result is that the Project has file cards on some diarists who are scribbling at this very moment.

Once flexible limits of chronology were determined, the Project was already in progress. It soon became clear that in Canada as elsewhere the diary has broadly a two-fold appeal. There is the extrinsic worth attached to the diary as a document, in the social-cum-historical sense of the word. Secondly, there is a potential intrinsic interest attached to the diary as a serial autobiography revealing the writer's personality.

Virtually all Canadian diaries have some extrinsic interest as sources of information. One thinks here for example of eyewitness accounts such as that provided by Henry Kelsey of the fall of HBC's Fort York to the French under Iberville in 1694, or those describing the seizure/defence of Louisbourg or Quebec in the eighteenth century. The North-West Rebellion engaged a number of the first Canadian soldier-diarists; both World Wars have produced a crop of diaries in our own century. But Canada's diaries are not wholly a matter of military diarists. One

might list a near-Homeric roll-call of explorers and fur traders whose diaries have survived: Sir Alexander Mackenzie (1764-1820), David Thompson (1770-1857), Simon Fraser (1776-1862), the Earl of Selkirk (1771-1820), Sir William Parry and Sir George Back. Likewise, to come closer to our own period, there are diaries of surveyor-explorers George M. Dawson or William Ogilvie, or of scientist-explorers like Vilhjalmar Stefansson and R. M. Anderson, or, to be more modern, the diaries kept by Inspector Henry Larsen during his command of the RCMP vessel *St Roch* as it made its successful voyage through the Northwest Passage in both directions during World War II.[22]

Gentlemen of the cloth provide a vast stratum of diaries; missionaries of many denominations kept semi-official or personal diaries — these are often relative gold mines for genealogists and local historians. Quiet lives, too, are recorded which allow one to experience (albeit vicariously) something of the lives of very ordinary people. Many are by women who wrote little else, and so their diaries are especially interesting sources for students of feminine sensibilities.

One of the fascinations of the form is, of course, that occasionally people who have written seldom and perhaps nothing more than letters, are found to have tried to express themselves, however humbly or haltingly, in daily entries. Thus in the diary of Christina Bogart, for example, one may recapture something of the isolation and loneliness experienced by an adolescent in nineteenth-century, rural Nova Scotia.[23]

By means of such diaries the social historian may reconstruct the minor details of life in past times. It is little wonder that in reconstructing Louisbourg, the Parks Canada historical unit amassed a large number of contemporary diaries (though mostly in xerox and microfilm). It is because state papers and other official, historical documents so often ignore the small, human details that older diaries are prized. Even the chit-chat of scandal found in some private diaries has some value.

By contrast, an approach which sees the diary as a literary object in its own right or as a distinct form of serial autobiography calls for degrees of subtlety. One may have to be alert to more than the surface story the diary tells; for example, the diary of Kenneth Chipman serving with the Canadian Arctic Expedition (1913-18) reports more than simply his workday life or the disaffection of the southern Party (under Dr. Rudolph Anderson) with Stefansson's leadership.[24] The attraction may lie, rather, in the personality of the diarist as he reveals it in what he records about himself and his friends, his own likes and dislikes, and the thousand and one petty incidents which make up the life of ordinary mankind.

A MORE SUBSTANTIAL DIARY altogether exemplary of the point is that kept by Canada's longest-serving Prime Minister — a later Gladstone

one might remark, since the English statesman was an avid diarist. After reading only a portion of Mackenzie King's diary, one almost knows him as a man, because King cumulatively recorded enough of the minutiae of his life to establish his own imprint.[25] Illustrating the virtues of an ample recording of events and reflections are Mackenzie King's early diaries in the 1890s, before he had become in any way famous. His diaries have the requisite length; the entries, though by no means uniform, are seldom less than two hundred words and often many more. While he was a student at the University of Toronto (and later at Harvard), he was a faithful recorder of his life's pattern, what he did and what he thought. The kaleidoscopic nature of his entries can only be sketched in the paragraphs which follow.

Mackenzie King as a young man noted his daily activities quite fully, so that one knows almost his hourly movements. One learns which lectures he attended at university, what reading he did for courses or for amusement; one learns of his recreations and sporting interests; one learns of his religious life and some of his internal conflicts.

In greater detail, this means that the reader can build up a sense of the diarist's life: King recorded which chapters of what books he was reading; he logged the progress of making extensive précis notes on textbooks and of discussions of key ideas with selected friends; he has left no doubt as to which professors are worthwhile, and after examination results had been posted he wrote of his disappointment with a second-class Honours, but later was pleased by an examiner's comments on his facility of written expression. In documenting his leisure reading, King specifies and reflects; thus one gathers that he was critical of Tolstoi's *Master and Man* and that he enjoyed George Eliot's *Romola*, finding the chapter about the old man and his daughter especially moving.

Furthermore, the diary shows a sporting side to King of which most people are unaware: his work-outs in the gym, enjoyment of swimming, attendance at rugger practices and matches in which he appeared in the 3rd XV. In the spring of 1894 he was elected first vice-president of the Varsity Cricket Club, though subsequent entries suggest his skill met with varied success: "I played cricket for the first time this year, bowled out first ball" (21 April 1894). The following month he was able to record an innings of 11 runs and the taking of "a good many wickets" — for once the specificity breaks down! His bowling may have been vicious, since in August that year in Muskoka he wrote: "I saw Prowse, the proprietor of the summer hotel . . . I gave him a black eye playing cricket at Bracebridge two years ago" (22 Aug. 1894). It is just possible (if less probable) that the black eye was accidentally caused by King's bat.

Gentler recreations at this time in his life include singing with the Glee Club, writing for the student magazine, dating girls and sometimes taking them on day excursions by steamer across the lake to Niagara. He also enjoyed the theatre, enthusing over a production of Tennyson's *Becket* starring Henry Irving and Ellen

Terry at the Grand Opera House. Being a keen actor, King actually played a small role in the production of *The Merchant of Venice*. He writes: "Did not get up until 11:15 this morning. Then I had a shave and had lunch after which I went down to the Grand Opera House to take a very subordinate part in *The Merchant of Venice*. I was a man in half-armour, appeared on the stage with Irving and Ellen Terry throughout the whole of the 4th Act. I had quite a pleasant little talk with Miss Terry. It is remarkable the ease of manner she displays both on and off the stage. I never saw such a splendid rendition of the part of Shylock as Irving gave. . . . It was well worthwhile being behind the scenes to see the way the scenes etc. were worked . . ." (21 Feb. 1894).

A persistent motif in the diary at this stage of King's life was his religious thoughts. He may have contemplated entering the ministry, but commonly the entries show a confessional nature as pure thoughts jostle with guilt. One Sunday in the Fall Term he wrote: "My present thoughts suggest that there is no life like a Christian's. I am going to seek to know more of Christ and try to live a better life" (15 Oct. 1893). Or again, this effusion at the close of 1893: "As I see the days of the year dying away I feel that my days are numbered. I hope to be able to do more for Christ, to love him more and more. I long for this above every thing in the world. I hope I may do much even before this year has run its course" (28 Dec. 1893). Such pious thoughts are interspersed with brief acknowledgements in the vein of "I committed a sin today which reminded me of my weakness" (26 Oct. 1893); or again, "I cried after coming home tonight. I felt very sorry for something I did last night. What sort of a man am I to become? is the question that is bothering me at present" (2 Feb. 1894). This conflict is unlikely to be simply a self-dramatized concoction of the diary nor is it necessarily a late sample of the diary being used as a spiritual account book in the Puritan tradition, whereby the diarist attempts a quasi-private breast beating. In King's case the struggle moves outside the diary, too; he threw himself into a number of good works, ranging from the attempted reform of a certain Mina Cameron on King Street to the frequent visits to the Sick Children's Hospital to read to the patients. The diaries also testify to the outward religious life, his church attendance, notes on sermons heard, praise for hymn-singing, and private Bible reading.

While King actively pursued "good works," the drama is heightened by the way in which he appears to practise temptation, too. The struggle continued for some time, and while in Boston for postgraduate work he maintained not only the good deeds, such as visiting a hospital in Cambridge to read to patients — an activity he specifically calls "good Christian Service" — but also the questionable habit of occasional visits to Turkish smoking dens and Chinatown, "to see how men and women were spending their lives" (22 Jan. 1898). The diarist addressed the problem in these terms: "There is no doubt I lead a very double life. I strive to do right and continually do wrong. Yet I do not do the right I do to make it a cloak

for evil. The evil that I do is done unwillingly, it comes of the frailty of my nature" (13 Feb. 1898). Here is one of the fuller accounts of an excursion into temptation: "Tonight I went with Edgell into Boston; we went to see the dark and seamy side; put in a while on Salem Street and then spent a good part of the time in the music halls on North Street. Went from there to Chinatown — nothing of interest, then to the Turkish casino and finally put in part of the time strolling about the streets. It was particularly sad to see so many bright and beautiful lives being destroyed, it was sad to see deplorable surroundings of the many poor. I felt a deep compassion for the poor and longed to be able to better their condition. Yet I was torn by other feelings, and was reminded I was as frail as any myself, I ran close to the edge of temptation but resisted. I did not fall, I came home feeling that evil was more hateful to me than ever and that somehow that good had gained the better part" (10 Feb. 1898). However Boswellian this may appear, one should not over-emphasize the tensions of the spiritual and the secular in the young Mackenzie King. With religious thoughts mingle the usual worries of a student, the details of work and play, so that cumulatively the diary does leave a many-sided, personal imprint, even though a very small segment of the diary has been sampled here.

Elsewhere in the journal there is evidence of the side of King's personality which is popularly known: his interest in phrenology and mesmerism, his careful noting of curious incidents and superstitions. May a last quotation from his early diaries suffice, an entry dealing with his political and social aspirations — which in the light of subsequent events reads like a mix of Elijah, Carlyle, and a Joycean epiphany: "This afternoon I got a copy of the *Life and Times* of Grandfather [i.e., William Mackenzie] from the library. I spent the hour after lunch reading it instead of going to cricket. I read over parts oh! with what intenseness! cry! How could I help it feeling his every thought in my own breast. I never felt it could be done before. I see it now. With Miss B—— [presumably his current love] at my side I can stand out against all the world and stand I will. His voice, his words, shall be heard in Canada again and the cause he so nobly fought shall be carried on" (26 Feb. 1898).

The case for Mackenzie King as a remarkable diarist is not a difficult brief to argue; to choose his writing to make a case for the intrinsic value of life-writing is easy enough. By contrast, most diaries found in archives lack the glamour of this extraordinary and famous figure. Very, very few of the several thousand diaries which are being perused for an annotated listing in the Canadian manuscript diaries project were ever intended for public viewing. Most diarists covered by the Project would have been surprised, even embarrassed, if they had been told that someone in the future was likely to direct attention towards their manuscripts. The majority of the diarists are unknowns — some indeed are now anonymous — and they are usually very local; they tend to be rural and brief of utterance; a

large number are unlettered, their memory temporarily assured only by their surviving pages.

To complement the King diary, consider the diary of James Reid, a pioneer in rural eastern Ontario.[26] A farm diary is very utilitarian, a sporadic testimony to a diurnal grind dominated by weather and work. This farmer lived all his life on Lot 15, west half, Concession #2, Dalhousie Township. His surviving diaries, 1861-1881, laconically record the major events on his farm and in his family, occasionally local events — these tend to be deaths and funerals — school meetings and church affairs, some local prices and details of produce yields; moreover, he rarely uses more than five lines for a day's entry. He was no village Hampden, but a man who served as township Treasurer for fourteen years and who was a locally respected judge of seed grains and farm produce. He was versatile: a farmer who mended shoes, repaired clocks, and who was instrumental in building the local school. The diary is repetitious, though cumulatively informative and not without its pathos. The March 15, 1881, entry reads: "Pretty hard frost this morning but another beautiful, clear, warm, sunny, spring-looking day." The next day's final words are, "I am still keeping better," but a later hand has added that that very day the diarist died of a paralytic stroke. Through the careful, dignified words of Reid's last entries one surely catches something of an indomitable, cheerful, pioneer spirit.

Not all of the shadowy diarists manage to leave such an impression, of course. But one *is* surprised by moments of telling utterance where the arresting words have been chosen, where the phrasing is felicitous, and the sentence lingers in the mind. At such times even the most untutored diarist has made his personal imprint.

It should now be clear why the diary ought to be more often seen in its manuscript habitat and why the archival respositories of Canada should be applauded for their active role in conserving the species. The achievement may not always be of the order that can confidently recall the diary of Malcolm Bradbury's phrase: "an existential confusion, a present-tense, hour-by-hour, emotion-by-emotion record of interaction with changing time, a tale of exposed intelligent life." Rather, the writing quality does vary; but an abundance of manuscript diaries does exist for those interested in enlarging their knowledge of the written, collective expression of Canadian consciousness. The goal of this manuscript diaries project is that the literary harvest of the Canadian self revealed should be bountiful. There is, of course, much dross and little enough gold among diaries; it may well be that sceptical readers will have suspected that enthusiasm in the preceding remarks has been akin to the alchemist's. Yet life-writing is surely worthy of a sustained investment of academic time and energy — it may even be poised to make gains in the literary stock-market!

NOTES

[1] *The Atlantic Provinces Book Review*, ed. Kenneth McKinnon, is a quarterly review of books published by St. Mary's University, Halifax; *The Saskatchewan Multicultural Magazine*, ed. Avra Watson, is published by the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan, Regina.

[2] Charles Ritchie, *The Siren Years, 1937-1945* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1977). Other published selections of his diaries are: *Appetite for Life, The Education of a Young Diarist, 1924-1927* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1981); *Diplomatic Passport: More Undiplomatic Diaries, 1946-1962* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1983); *Storm Signals, More Undiplomatic Diaries, 1962-1971* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1985).

[3] Paul C. Rosenblatt, *Bitter, Bitter, Tears: Nineteenth-Century Diarists and Twentieth-Century Grief Theories* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1983); his blurb records that "nineteenth-century diaries are valuable because they provide a more finely textured record than other research materials."

[4] To cite but two specimens of these special interest guides: *Planting the Garden: An Annotated Bibliography of the History of Women in Manitoba*, comp. Mary Kinnear and Vera Fast (Winnipeg: Univ. of Manitoba Press, 1986); Margaret Conrad, *Recording Angels: The Private Chronicles of Women from the Maritime Provinces of Canada, 1750-1950*, CRIAW Papers No. 4 (Ottawa: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 1982).

[5] Though this fault is not of archivists' making, someone at the National Library of Canada might look more closely at its computer-based DOBIS index, where under the subject-searches for diaries currently there appear a number of dairy reports!

[6] *The Autobiography and Journals of Benjamin Haydon, 1786-1846*, ed. Malcolm Elwin (London: MacDonald, 1950).

[7] Diaries of Joseph Frobisher (1740-1810): PAC, MG 19 A 5 vol. 4. (Originals at McGill University Library, Special Collections and Rare Book Room.)

[8] Charles Darwin, *Diary of the Voyage of H.M.S. "Beagle,"* ed. Nora Barlow (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1933).

[9] *The Diary of Samuel Pepys, A New and Complete Transcription*, 10 v., ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1970-83); *Boswell's London Journal: 1762-63*, ed. Frederick Pottle (London: Heinemann, 1950), pp. 255-56.

[10] William Matthews, *British Diaries: An Annotated Bibliography of Diaries Written Between 1442 and 1942* (1950; Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1967), p. xv.

[11] Peter Puget, "A Log of the Proceedings of H.M.S. *Discovery*" (4 Jan. 1791–14 Jan. 1793): PAC, MGF B 832. (Originals: PRO, Adm. 55/27.)

[12] Puget, "A Log," Monday, 7 May 1772.

[13] Arthur Ponsonby, *British Diarists* (London: Ernest Benn, 1930), p. 27.

[14] See, for example, Eva-Marie Kröller, "Nineteenth-Century Canadians and the Rhine Valley," in *Gaining Ground*, ed. Robert Kroetsch (Edmonton: NeWest, 1985), pp. 234-46.

[15] John S. Batts, "Seeking the Canadian Pepys," *Archivaria* 9 (Winter 1979-80), 125-39.

[16] William Matthews, *Canadian Diaries and Autobiographies* (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1950).

[17] A more sober account, with an international perspective, is given by Grace Maurice Hyam, "The National Manuscript Inventory," *Archivaria* 9 (Winter 1979-80), 195-207.

[18] Bruce Braden Peel, *A Bibliography of the Prairie Provinces to 1953* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1953). This work was revised and updated in an edition of 1973. Currently Alison Peel Nussbaumer (Library Science, University of Calgary) is creating a data base for a supplement.

[19] *The Union List of Manuscripts in Canadian Repositories*, rev. ed. (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1975); and there are now four *Supplements* (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1976-1985).

[20] Private possession of diarist, Rev. Bobilier, O.M.I., The Rectory, St. Mary's Church, Dawson City, Yukon.

[21] University of British Columbia Library, Special Collections Division, Harold Escott Papers, AXA 7/3 Boxes 1-8, 10.

[22] McGill University Library, Special Collections and Rare Books, the diaries of George Mercer Dawson (1849-1901); (2) PAC, MG 30 B 22, the diaries of William Ogilvie (1846-1912); (3) PAC, MG 30 B 81 vols. 1 & 2, the diaries of Vilhjalmur Stefansson (1879-1962); (4) PAC, MG 30 B 40 vol. 17, the diaries of Rudolf Martin Anderson; (5) PAC, MG 30 B 75 vol. 3, the diaries of Henry Asbjorn Larsen (1899-1964).

[23] PAC, MG 55/29 no. 80, the diary of Christina Grace Bogart, of Granville Ferry, Nova Scotia, 1880-82.

[24] PAC, MG 30 B 66, the diaries of Kenneth Gordon Chipman (1884-1974).

[25] PAC, MG 26 J 13, the diaries of William Lyon Mackenzie King, 1893-95.

READING

Susan Glickman

It was what I'd been waiting for almost forever, when the letters danced together to make sounds, the sounds I heard in my head, or anyone's. When I first realized I was doing it I thought I was cheating, borrowing the "ook" from "book" to make "took" and "look," like copying someone else's tree in my drawing instead of making up my own: central pillar, three branches, a pillowy crown, five apples. Shouldn't each word have its own special, its own personal letters? But there could never be enough letters, enough angles and curves and loopy loops, to make all the words I knew and those I didn't know yet but would. And so I learned the economy of language, to borrow and copy and make do, remaking meaning. Someone else's tree in my drawing, curly smoke from the chimney, two windows, tulips all around. "Look" what I "took" from the "book!"

REWRITING "THE IMPERIALIST"

Duncan's Revisions

Darlene Kelly

SARA JEANNETTE DUNCAN'S NOVEL *The Imperialist* (1904) has a central place in Canadian literary history. Alfred G. Bailey considers it an outstanding work and a valuable social history.[1] W. J. Keith sees it as the country's first significant achievement in fiction,[2] and Claude Bissell, while conceding its flaws, calls it one of Canada's best novels.[3] But this small masterpiece did not spring into print fully formed; on the contrary, between October 1903 and April 1904, four distinct versions of it appeared. The first, which was published in London's *The Queen, The Lady's Newspaper* between October 3 and December 26, 1903, overlapped briefly with its successor which ran in *The Toronto Daily News* from November 28 to February 17. Duncan had written to John Willison, the paper's editor, disparaging the first published draft of her story, but relatively few changes were made for the Toronto daily. The American edition brought out by D. Appleton and Company of New York in February 1904, however, contained an astonishing number of revisions. These changes, and more besides, were added to the final version printed by Archibald Constable of London in April 1904.

In rewriting *The Imperialist* Duncan aimed for greater realism, more appealing characters, and sharper political analysis. Between printings, for example, she minutely reassessed the accuracy of the novel's details. Her obsession with getting facts straight and choosing the right word — often a matter of very slight nuance — betokened her admiration for the period's great realists, especially Henry James and W. D. Howells, and indicated the considerable effort she made to apply their techniques to a Canadian theme. Her changes in characterization are of a different order: while various, collectively they improve the image of Lorne Murchison, the imperialist of the title, and that of his family. The more impressive group portrait that results may have been meant chiefly to enhance Lorne, and perhaps, by extension, to benefit his political cause as well. But if Duncan was thereby recommending imperialism to her readers it was only imperialism abstractly conceived, for other emendations stress the movement's practical difficulties. Notable in this regard is the criticism of Lorne's position expressed in the revised versions

by his father, John Murchison, a character whose importance critics have generally neglected.

Duncan's attempt to be more realistic can be seen in the trial for theft of bank clerk Walter Ormiston, the first scene that she revised extensively. "The case in court as it appeared in the *Queen* is laughable," she confessed to John Willison. "Please be sure to get these slips substituted for the corresponding matter you have in hand."[4] The court case is a milestone in the career of Lorne Murchison, whose astute defence of Ormiston makes him appear a good candidate to represent the local Liberals in the next election; yet none of her changes in this scene has anything to do with Lorne. Instead she concentrates on details touching the legal proceedings. It is difficult to see why the original version caused Duncan the embarrassment expressed in the letter to Willison, as the errors, if such they are, seem trivial. In *The Daily News*, as well as in the American and British texts, the evidence against Ormiston is given by witnesses and not, as in *The Queen*, by Ormiston himself. Originally the bank clerk is confronted by a document found in the vault-passage that has on it the combination to the safe. He concedes that the handwriting is his, but cannot account for the document's removal from his bedroom to the scene of the crime. In a second passage omitted from later versions, he denies any knowledge of the greasy scrap of paper inscribed "not less than 3,000 net." A third section, also found only in *The Queen*, features a cross-examination of Ormiston in which he admits to having lost at cards to Miss Belton and, worse, to his not having paid the gambling debt:

> Questioned as to the amount of his losses, Ormiston said it was three hundred dollars. He had not paid Miss Belton, but — here the defendant blushed deeply — he intended to do so.
>
> "You have paid Miss Belton nothing at all?" asked the counsel.
>
> "Nothing at all," Ormiston replied, and winced visibly. The slight pause which the lawyer permitted himself at this point accentuated the young man's reply, made it heavily significant. (24 Oct. 1903)

Duncan may have left out these passages because they make Ormiston more interesting than his lawyer. The trial is, after all, Lorne's first great professional triumph, yet he remains a shadowy figure throughout it. Never once, for example, does he actually say anything. It is as if Duncan, being unfamiliar with legal proceedings, does not trust herself to invent them.[5]

One other subject about which Duncan evinces uncertainty is what in a letter to John Willison she calls the "practical intricacies"[6] of imperialism. Living in India, where her husband worked as a curator in Calcutta's Indian Museum, she was remote from the lively debates about imperialism held in London and Toronto. Given her particular need to know what topics were being discussed in Canada, she asked Willison to send her any material that might be useful. As an example of what she had in mind she requested a week's issues of *The Globe*, of which Willison

was then editor, preferably those numbers dealing editorially with the question of imperial federation, and speeches on the same subject by Sir Wilfrid Laurier.[7] Although she researched the novel as thoroughly as resources in India permitted her to do, the wealth of details added to the last two versions of the text indicates that she became fully informed about political matters only during her visit to Canada in the autumn of 1903. That may be why many of her initial facts are rejected in favour of others presumed to be more accurate. In both periodicals, for example, Lorne speaks of the "cheap threshing machines" that the tariff would make available; in the American and British editions this becomes "cheap overcoats and tablecloths and a few odds and ends like that."[8] Similarly, his original assertion that under reciprocity with the Americans, Canadians could not get "an ounce of butter or an egg" across the border is emended in the London text to "a pine plank or a bushel of barley."[9] New material added to the final version is equally precise, as in the comment made by an Elgin Liberal that the Conservative Party would likely endorse reciprocity with the Americans in raw products and pass a tariff to match theirs on manufactured goods. His further observation that this policy would "shut a pretty tight door on British connection"[10] persuades a prominent Conservative to join the Liberal ranks. Again, it is only in the final London edition that the conversation between Lorne and a British friend deals specifically with "the policy urged by the Colonial representatives at the last Conference."[11]

DUNCAN'S ATTENTION to factual detail in *The Imperialist* was designed, in keeping with the realistic tradition in which she worked, to give the novel the particularity of lived experience. More important yet, however, were the changes which affected her characters, principally Lorne Murchison and his family who after revision assume a more pleasing shape. The Murchisons were modelled on Duncan's own family whom she was visiting when revising the novel; thus, she may have touched up their portrait out of deference to the feelings of her relatives. But she could also have wanted the Murchisons to appear more favourably in order that the imperialism which Lorne makes a key issue in his campaign and which his loyal family supports at the ballot box might rise in value along with them. Still, while imperial ideas such as the global unity of the Anglo-Saxon race made for stirring rhetoric, they were, as Duncan knew, largely impracticable, a point she emphasizes in revision chiefly by having John Murchison indicate his son's political handicaps.

In changing the Murchisons for the better, Duncan focuses more on personalities than on issues. The most amusing alteration of this sort makes Lorne more gentlemanly in certain remarks addressed to Dora Milburn, the woman he hopes to

marry. Dora tells Lorne how irked she was with her aunt for walking into her bedroom unannounced. Lorne starts to reply boldly, then falls silent. The emended version reads as follows:

> "Dora, would you like *me* to promise something?" he asked, with a mischievous look.
>
> "Of course, I would. I don't care how much *you* promise. What?"
>
> But already he repented of his daring, and sat beside her suddenly conscious and abashed. Nor could any teasing prevail to draw from him what had been on his audacious lips to say.[12]

He had gone further than this in the New York edition, checked there by an outraged Dora:

> "Dora, would you like me to promise something?" he asked, with a mischievous look.
>
> "Of course, I would. I don't care how much *you* promise. What?"
>
> "Never to come—"
>
> "Lorne Murchison!" she stopped him with outraged propriety, but perhaps more outrage than propriety. "And we aren't even engaged!"[13]

Only in *The Queen* (5 Dec. 1903) and *The Toronto Daily News* (20 Jan. 1904) do we see exactly what mildly indecorous comment Duncan thought it prudent to delete:

> "Dora, would you like to promise me something?" he asked with a mischievous look.
>
> "Of course I would. I don't care how much *you* promise. What?"
>
> "Never to come into your room without knocking."
>
> "Lorne Murchison!" she exclaimed with outraged propriety, but perhaps more outrage than propriety. "And we aren't even engaged!"

Inoffensive as Lorne's remark appears today, Duncan felt that it would not do for her own audience. She might have worried that readers might question her own delicacy in including such a scene, but she more likely excised Lorne's comment because it was out of character. Throughout the novel Lorne is portrayed as an idealist who breathes a purer air than others do. Afraid perhaps that even a hint of vulgarity might ruin his image, Duncan chooses in revision to make his moral behaviour unexceptionable.

In another move that reflects well on Lorne, Duncan raises the social status of his mother and married sister, Abby. The suggestion that Abby is inferior to her husband, for example, is deleted after its appearance in *The Queen*, where it is said to be "quite as likely that she would draw Dr. Harry down, if we may speak of depth in Elgin, as that he would buoy her up" (10 Oct. 1903). And never did those who only read *The Imperialist* in book form ever learn that Abby's friends had almost prevented her from marrying well: "Dr. Henry was a fine old figure

in the town, and Abby's chances, but for an obstinate affection for her old friends, were good enough."[14] Mrs. Murchison also moves a few degrees up the social ladder in her revised state. Originally she boiled a barrelful of soap out in the yard every spring; but in the book versions this image of her as a washerwoman gives way to that of mistress of the house who "had a barrelful boiled every spring"[15] by someone else. It was uncultured of Mrs. Murchison in *The Queen* and *The Daily News* to speak of the book that was always in Advena's hand "with a contempt for all literature"; her anger, however, is deflected from literature to her daughter in the revised version, where her contempt is elicited by "such absorption."[16] In the American and London editions her speech becomes more elegant as well. In expressing her displeasure over the relationship between Hugh Finlay and Advena, for example, she first says to her husband, "'It hasn't turned out as I expected, that's a fact, John, and I'm just good and mad.'" This colloquial phrase is emended to something more genteel: "'. . . that's a fact, John, and I'm just very much annoyed.'"[17] Duncan also prevents Mrs. Murchison, a staunch Presbyterian, from repeating the following uncharitable comment about newcomers of another faith: "'Wesleyans, are they?' Mrs Murchison would remark of the newly arrived, in whom her interest was suggested. 'Then let the Wesleyans look after them.'" The statement is retained in the American and British texts, but it is attributed to "a lady of Knox Church."[18]

Refining touches are also applied to the portrait of Lorne's unmarried sister, Advena. Although unconventional from the first version of the novel to the last, in the end she too becomes more respectable, if only slightly. After its appearance in *The Queen*, for example, Duncan suppresses the fact that "Things were said about [Advena], about her untidiness, and how she had been found doing her Latin grammar on the roof to escape the children . . ." (10 Oct. 1903). This description is varied in *The Daily News* to read, "She had every trick of the tom-boys; she was known to read novels in the hay-loft when there were more important things to do" (4 Dec. 1903). All that finally survives of this statement is a reference to Advena's hiding in the hay-loft with a novel;[19] the earlier indictments of her as tom-boyish and irresponsible disappear. Also deleted from the London edition are those irregular habits of Advena that prompt acquaintances to commiserate with Mrs. Murchison: "Mothers of daughters, when Advena was undergoing the penible process of growing up — she whistled, and wrote poetry in the local newspaper — sympathised in good set terms with Mrs Murchison. . . ."[20]

In contrast to Advena is her admirable father, John Murchison, whose demeanour is usually irreproachable. Yet in the final draft even he changes for the better, although the improvements to his character are minute. When he chafes one of his children, for example, in the London edition he does so "innocently," a more dignified alternative to the original "slyly."[21] His fairness is underlined in a passage added to the London edition in which his family pokes fun at the

aristocratic Englishman, Alfred Hesketh, specifically the dreadful speech he gives to drum up support for Lorne:

> "He seems to bring a frost where he goes," continued Abby's husband, "in politics, anyhow. I hear Lorne wants to make a present of him to the other side, for use wherever they'll let him speak longest. Is it true he began his speech out at Jordanville — 'Gentlemen — and those of you who are not gentlemen'?"
>
> "Could he have meant Mrs Farquharson and Miss Milburn?" asked Mr Murchison quietly, when the derision subsided; and they laughed again.[22]

As the laughter that follows his comment shows, Mr. Murchison's interpretation of Hesketh's words is humorous as well as fair, but scarcely derisive. And in another episode he reads his son's remarks as quoted in the local paper, not with the "proud" eye of the periodical versions and the New York edition, but rather with a "critical" eye that better emphasizes the good judgement that is supposed to be his distinctive feature.[23]

In revision Duncan stresses mainly the personal advantages, such as good manners and a respectable family, that seem meant to increase Lorne's stature. Her other changes have to do with his politics, or the new order that he envisions for Canada and the Empire. Once again she enhances Lorne by association with other characters, in this case British Colonial Secretary Fawcett Wallingham who is not only a source of political ideas, but also a model of how to propagate them. The fictitious Wallingham is modelled on Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain (1836-1914), the advocate of such proposals as tariff reform and common taxation for defence purposes which Lorne also defends. Duncan is often praised for presenting the imperial debate dispassionately, and for the most part she does so; but at one point in the novel her narrator clearly sides with Wallingham. The British working man voting in certain by-elections is described as an instrument used by Providence to bring about the fall of "arrogant empires," but the narrator undercuts this judgement by advising the reader either to seek refuge in philosophy or to embrace Wallingham's glorious, if doomed, endeavours: "Meanwhile we may look on and cultivate philosophy; or we may make war upon the gods with Mr Wallingham, *which is, perhaps, the better part*" (emphasis mine).[24] While this exalted view of Wallingham is found in the text from the original on, the religious imagery used to emphasize his visionary powers appears only later. In the London edition, for example, he is referred to for the first time as "support[ing] the disabilities of a right honourable evangelist with a gospel of his own [who] was making astonishing conversions."[25] In *The Queen, The Daily News*, and the New York edition it is said that Wallingham, wearing the imperial idea like a medal, "seemed to be courting political burial with it, except that

Wallingham was so hard to bury." But in the final London version this detail is changed, expanding on the religious motif:

> In England Wallingham, wearing [the imperial idea] like a medal, seemed to be courting political excommunication with it, except that Wallingham was so hard to effectively curse. The ex-Minister deserved, clearly, any ban that could be put upon him. No sort of remonstrance could hold him from going about openly and persistently exhorting people to "think imperially," a liberty which, as is well known, the Holy Cobdenite Church, supreme in those islands, expressly forbids.[26]

While excommunication is oddly described as a "curse," the thrust of the analogy is plain: to some Wallingham is a prophet but to others he is a heretic, a grim foreshadowing of the fate that his disciple, Lorne Murchison, will meet at the hands of his own party in Elgin, Ontario.

As in the revised version Wallingham is a more charismatic leader, so Lorne becomes his yet more ardent follower. The description in the serial versions of Lorne as a boy — "so true a democrat" — is altered in both books to "so intelligent a meliorist,"[27] as if the idea of improvement were more relevant to the reformist gospel that he preaches in manhood. When asked to be secretary to a group of Elgin businessmen travelling to London, he accepts the invitation with the zeal of a missionary: "'But it's the Empire,'" he says to them. In the London edition this reply is made "with a sort of shy fire."[28] That Lorne's idealism is his salient trait emerges in other changes as well. Its importance is signalled, for example, by Duncan's reworking no less than three times a passage which relates how free Lorne's economic ideas are from the self-interest that taints the business transactions of the Elgin merchants: "Only Lorne Murchison, whose soul was alive to the inrush of the essential, lifted up his heart," she writes in *The Queen* (7 Nov. 1903). This is altered slightly in *The Daily News* to read, "Only Lorne Murchison, a creature alive to the inrush of the essential, lifted up his heart" (30 Dec. 1903). The New York edition states that "Only Lorne Murchison among them was alive to the in-rush of the essential, — only he lifted up his heart."[29] But the final version of this passage is the most effective, enlisting as it does the rhythms of poetry to set the young imperialist apart from the businessmen: "Only Lorne Murchison among them looked higher and further; only he was alive to the inrush of the essential; he only lifted up his heart."[30]

Ironically Lorne's imperialism, high-minded as it is, causes the Liberal Party to get rid of him. Privately Duncan held the same views as her hero, but as a realist she was bound to convey the political situation in Canada, not as she wished it to be, but as it was. Thus many changes in the text point up deficiencies common both to Lorne and to the imperial movement itself. A case in point is Lorne's condescension toward non-English races, an attitude that is almost inevitable in an ideology founded, as imperialism was, upon a belief in Anglo-Saxon supremacy. Although his respect for the English is evinced in every version of the novel, only

the London edition has him praise them as fulsomely as when he says, "'They [the English] have developed the finest human product there is, the cleanest, the most disinterested, and we want to keep up the relationship. . . .'"[31] In another scene Duncan includes a diminishing remark about French Canadians made by Lorne. When a fellow Liberal reminds him that the Prime Minister drives a team comprised equally of French and English, Lorne replies, "'Yes . . . but he drives it tandem, and Johnny François is the second horse.'"[32] To a degree Duncan herself was guilty of the same bias. In another letter to Willison she described, for example, how she found Sir Wilfrid Laurier agreeable in spite of his nationality: "Sir Wilfrid . . . paid me the honour of a visit. He may be a politician *and a Frenchman* but he is a nice thing" (emphasis mine).[33] Yet in her authorial detachment she could see the unwholesomeness of feeling superior about one's race. When Lorne attacks the United States as a "light woman among nations, welcoming all comers, mingling her pure blood," the narrator virtually apologizes for the intemperance of the metaphor.[34] Moreover, in the London edition it is said that Lorne "went on hotly"[35] to make this statement, as if to underline his rashness.

Unappealing as Lorne's racial views are, a greater drawback to him as a politician is his inability to see the obstacles to imperialism. Duncan makes this weakness more pronounced in her revision of the scene in which Lorne addresses the voters of South Fox. His speech, which is an impassioned plea for his cause, puzzles his listeners. The magnificent place that he assigns Canada in the future Empire elicits a "fine burst of applause" in *The Queen* (19 Dec. 1903), as it does in *The Daily News* and the New York edition. But in the final London version Duncan pointedly substitutes "half-comprehending" for "fine," then adds a helpful gloss: "They would clap first and consider afterward."[36]

To the attentive reader Lorne's defeat at the hands of his own Party comes as no surprise. This is largely because the flaws in his approach to imperial questions are quietly but constantly presented in the novel by his father, John Murchison. Duncan's rewriting of the passages in which Mr. Murchison appears in each case strengthens his role as a political commentator, the value of which has never been fully assessed. She emphasizes, for example, the moral perspective from which he passes judgement on his son. Like Duncan's own father, Mr. Murchison was born in the Old Country whose pristine morality he embodies. In a passage added to the final versions of the novel Lorne tells the Scottish Hugh Finlay:

> "We're all very well, *but we're not the men our fathers were*. Look at that disgraceful business of ours in the Ontario legislature the other day, and look at that fellow of yours walking out of office at Westminster last session because of a disastrous business connection which he was morally as clear of as you or I! I tell you we've got to hold on to the things that make us ashamed; and I guess we've got sense enough to know it." (emphasis mine)[37]

The British politician in this story stands for a moral tradition that Lorne associates

both with England and with his father. Lapsing from this tradition are the Members of Parliament in the Ontario legislature who are guilty of some unspecified misdeed. Duncan may be hinting here at the scandal in the Ontario legislature in March 1903 when Robert Gamey, a member of the Conservative opposition, claimed to have been bribed by the ruling Liberals to switch parties. Duncan's mentor, John Willison, took a strong anti-government stand on the issue in *The Daily News*. "There is not in the history of Canadian politics a more shameful and sordid story," he wrote, "than that which has just been told in the legislature."[38] The government's subsequent handling of the charge was also censured by the press, and the controversy was kept alive well into the autumn of Duncan's visit to Canada.[39] Indeed, her contemporaries could hardly have read Lorne's comment without the Gamey scandal coming instantly to mind, predisposing them to concur with Lorne that Canada needed the moral guidance of the Mother Country and her progeny.

In order to ally Mr. Murchison even more strongly with England, Duncan alters yet another passage. Her original description of his books and papers includes such periodicals as *Once a Week*, *Good Words for the Young*, and *Appleton's Journal*: the first two were British papers, but the third was an American magazine put out, interestingly, by the American publisher of *The Imperialist*, D. Appleton and Company. In the London edition, however, Duncan replaces *Appleton's Journal* with two famous British periodicals, *Blackwood's* and *The Cornhill*,[40] thus suggesting the continuing influence of Mr. Murchison's native land.

DUNCAN'S OTHER EMENDATIONS stress Mr. Murchison's political sense. When, upon Lorne's scoring a small victory, his jubilant mother tells him, "'You'll be Premier yet, Lorne,'" Mr. Murchison is said in both periodicals to glance significantly at her, "frowning terribly." This is changed in the London and New York versions to "frowning and pursing his lips,"[41] as if quiet remonstrance better suited his character. Originally a man of few words, he becomes almost voluble in the revised editions where Duncan makes him express several new reservations about imperial policy. For example, when Lorne confidently proclaims, "'Common interest, common taxation for defence, common representation, domestic management of domestic affairs, and you've got a working empire,'" in both the periodical versions and the American text his father remains silent. In the London edition, however, he fully exercises his critical function, eliciting thereby the approval of Horace Williams, the editor of the local paper who happens to be present, and the qualified assent of his son:

> "Common interest, yes," said his father; "common taxation, no, for defence or any other purpose. The colonies will never send money to be squandered by the London

War Office. We'll defend ourselves, as soon as we can manage it, and buy our own guns and our own cruisers. We're better business people than they are, and we know it."

"I guess that's right, Mr Murchison," said Horace Williams. "Our own army and navy — in the sweet bye and bye. And let 'em understand they'll be welcome to the use of it, but quite in a family way — no sort of compulsion."

"Well," said Lorne, "that's compatible enough."[42]

Elsewhere, when Lorne argues that differences between members of the Empire will be resolved as amiably as those between himself and his younger sister, the group laughs; but in the final two versions of the novel this laughter is followed by Mr. Murchison's sobering comment, "'If they manage it, they will be clever.'"[43] In another passage added only to the London edition, he demonstrates a keen understanding of imperial trade: "'We won't see a duty on cotton, though, or wool either for that matter. The manufacturers would be pleased enough to get it on the stuff they make, but there would be a fine outcry against taxing the stuff they use.'"[44] And at the end of the same chapter Duncan emphasizes Mr. Murchison's prediction that the British will serve themselves with an interpolation that, once again, is found only in the final edition: "'They'll put up a fence and save their trade — *in their own good time, not next week or next year* — and when they've done that they'll talk to us about our big ideas — not before'" (emphasis mine).[45] Here, as in other passages added at the time of revision, Mr. Murchison alerts the reader to the problems in his son's imperial ideas. His importance as a commentator confers a new meaning upon Duncan's dedication of the novel to her own father, who may have been a main source of Mr. Murchison's incisive analysis.

The variants discussed in this paper are but a sampling of those made in *The Imperialist* after its debut in *The Queen* and subsequent publication in *The Daily News*, the New York edition, and the London text that contains Duncan's final revisions. They are the more significant changes, however, revealing the aspects of theme and character that the author wished to make more prominent. While collation is sometimes tedious, it can also illuminate in a striking way passages that have been either misread or ignored. Indeed, the study of these variants makes the reader a secret sharer in the creative process, questioning along with Duncan the accuracy of facts, reassessing character, and conceding the greater complexity of issues raised in the book. One does not always agree with her decisions: at a distance of over eighty years, for example, certain details seem equally plausible, and some of the warts removed from the Murchison family in the revised texts would, if left, have added a desirable piquancy to their character. Yet studying *The Imperialist* in its several forms is nonetheless fruitful. The difficulties of such a study, however, remind one that the lack of variorum editions is still the bane of Canadian criticism.[46]

NOTES

[1] "The Historical Setting of Sara Duncan's *The Imperialist*," in *Twentieth Century Essays on Confederation Literature*, ed. Lorraine McMullen (Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1976), p. 65.

[2] *Canadian Literature in English* (London: Longman, 1985), p. 49.

[3] "Introduction," *The Imperialist* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1971), p. ix.

[4] John Willison Papers, National Archives of Canada. Also quoted by Marian Fowler, *Redney: A Life of Sara Jeannette Duncan* (Toronto: Anansi, 1983), p. 263.

[5] As a realist Duncan aspired to model her fictional world as closely as possible upon life, but she shied away from references that were too particular. After revision, for example, Henry Cruickshank, the prosecuting attorney in the Ormiston case, is described in far more general terms, as if to avoid his being identified with an actual lawyer. In *The Queen* Cruickshank is called "the great Cruickshank, Q.C. Standing Counsel for the provincial government" (24 Oct. 1903). In *The Daily News* (18 Dec. 1903) he becomes "Cruickshank K.C." and trades his status as Standing Counsel for that of "the most distinguished criminal lawyer in the Province," a title qualified by "probably" in the New York edition (D. Appleton and Company, 1904) on pp. 139-40, and in the London edition (Archibald Constable and Co. Ltd., 1904) on p. 130. Duncan also deleted a potentially libellous comparison of Cruickshank to 'Rosebery . . . [by which] people meant to indicate more than a frivolous attitude toward responsibility" which had appeared in both *The Queen* (24 Oct. 1903) and *The Daily News* (18 Dec. 1903). The phrase was likely meant as a compliment to British Prime Minister Archibald Rosebery for his well-known defence of imperialism, although Duncan obscured the point by referring to the reputation for frivolity that his passion for racing horses and for yachting had earned for him, among his detractors at least. The "frivolous attitude" could also be an allusion to Rosebery's irascibility, an irascibility which was believed to have inspired his resignation when his government was accidentally defeated on a minor war vote in 1895. In the book versions, Rosebery becomes Renfaire, "a British politician of lofty but abortive views" (New York edition, p. 134; London edition, p. 130). The word "renfaire," in its closeness to *rien faire*, may be a pun on the do-nothing aspect of Rosebery's sixteen months in office. Yet, apart from this reference, Cruickshank in the revised versions is no longer controversial.

[6] John Willison Papers, National Archives of Canada. Also quoted by Fowler, p. 258.

[7] John Willison Papers, National Archives of Canada. Also quoted by Fowler, pp. 257-58. Although nothing is known of Willison's recommendations, a clue about what they were may exist in the reading done by Abby Murchison's father-in-law when trying to decide how to vote on the imperial question. He first studied such luminaries of the Manchester school as Cobden and Bright, and subscribed to the *Times* for six months; then he examined two proposals regarding Canada's political options, one advanced by imperialist George Parkin, whose biography Willison later wrote, and the other by Goldwin Smith, whose arguments for annexation to the United States would have been known to Duncan back in the 1880's when she wrote for his paper, *The Week*.

[8] *The Queen*, 28 Nov. 1903; *The Toronto Daily News*, 18 Jan. 1904; New York edition, p. 307; London edition, p. 302.

[9] *The Queen*, 19 Dec. 1903; *The Toronto Daily News*, 3 Feb. 1904; New York edition, p. 407; London edition, p. 402.

[10] London edition, p. 292.

[11] Ibid., p. 303.

[12] Ibid., pp. 322-23. The emphasis on "me" in line one may be an attempt to avoid the syntactical error of the serial versions, where "me" follows "to promise" instead of "like."

[13] New York edition, p. 328.

[14] *The Queen*, 10 Oct. 1903; *The Toronto Daily News*, 5 Dec. 1903.

[15] *The Queen*, 3 Oct. 1903; *The Toronto Daily News*, 28 Nov. 1903; New York edition, p. 12; London edition, p. 11.

[16] *The Queen*, 10 Oct. 1903; *The Toronto Daily News*, 1 Dec. 1903; New York edition, p. 42; London edition, p. 41.

[17] *The Queen*, 12 Dec. 1903; *The Toronto Daily News*, 26 Jan. 1904; New York edition, p. 358; and London edition, p. 353.

[18] *The Queen*, 17 Oct. 1903; *The Toronto Daily News*, 11 Dec. 1903; New York edition, p. 96; and London edition, p. 94.

[19] New York edition, p. 65; London edition, p. 63.

[20] *The Queen*, 10 Oct. 1903; *The Toronto Daily News*, 4 Dec. 1903. Duncan's stylistic changes in this paragraph are typical of her stylistic changes in the novel as a whole — bafflingly inconsistent. For example, her sacrifice of "penible process" is a good decision, first, because the alliteration is distracting, and second, because the exotic "penible" is more at home in French than English. But her changes do not always result in plainer diction. Both *The Queen* and *The Daily News* state that "Advena, bookish and unconventional, was regarded with suspicion." In the American and British editions Duncan's weakness for elegant phrasing leads her to replace "suspicion" with the less familiar "dubiety." Even more curious is her tinkering with proper names. Except for the shift from James Finlay to Hugh Finlay in the book versions, all of these changes have to do with characters so minor that they are little more than names. In *The Queen* and *The Daily News*, for example, Mr. Murchison purchases the Bennett business; this becomes the Playfair business in the New York and London editions. The Murchisons' servant girl is called Jennie in the first two versions of the novel, but Eliza in the last two. Grocer Thomas Weyms defects from St. Andrew's to Knox Church in both periodicals; he later becomes Thomas Wilcox. Duncan initially names John Finlay as one of the parishioners to receive a visit from the minister; but in the New York edition, perhaps in order to avoid the reader's confusing him with the minister, Hugh Finlay, Duncan changes John Finlay to John Morse; then, unaccountably, in the London edition, she changes John Morse to John Flint. One could multiply examples. Either some names came to sound better than others, or she was avoiding names that might have had some public or private significance.

[21] *The Queen*, 5 Dec. 1903; *The Toronto Daily News*, 25 Jan. 1904; New York edition, p. 351; London edition, p. 345.

[22] London edition, p. 345.

[23] *The Queen*, 21 Nov. 1903; *The Toronto Daily News*, 9 Jan. 1904; New York edition, p. 258; London edition, p. 254.

[24] London edition, p. 387.

[25] Ibid., p. 216.

[26] *The Queen*, 19 Dec. 1903; *The Toronto Daily News*, 1 Feb. 1904; New York edition, p. 391; London edition, p. 386.

[27] *The Queen*, 3 Oct. 1903; *The Toronto Daily News*, 28 Nov. 1903; New York edition, p. 3; London edition, p. 3.

[28] London edition, p. 146.

[29] New York edition, p. 199.

[30] London edition, p. 194.

[31] Ibid., p. 162.

[32] Ibid., p. 388.

[33] John Willison Papers, National Archives of Canada. Also quoted by Fowler, p. 265.

[34] London edition, p. 406.

[35] Ibid.

[36] *The Queen*, 19 Dec. 1903; *The Toronto Daily News*, 3 Feb. 1904; New York edition, p. 403; London edition, p. 399.

[37] London edition, p. 232. The same passage is found on p. 236 of the New York edition, but with the following variants: the word "legislature" is capitalized, and the phrase "you or I" reads "I am."

[38] As quoted by J. Castell Hopkins, F.S.S., *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs* (Toronto: The Annual Review Publishing Company Limited, 1904), p. 135.

[39] John Willison and others demanded that Gamey's allegation be investigated by the legislature; but, in what appeared to be a self-protective measure, the Government appointed a Commission instead. The Commission's exoneration of the government shortly afterwards was greeted sceptically by the press; and charges brought against Gamey on other grounds in the autumn of Duncan's visit to Canada were construed by those hostile to the government as a covert attempt to discredit him further. For a full account of this incident, see J. Castell Hopkins, F.S.S., *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs* (Toronto: The Annual Review Publishing Company Limited, 1904), pp. 126-48.

[40] *The Queen*, 10 Oct. 1903; *The Toronto Daily News*, 1 Dec. 1903; New York edition, p. 39; and London edition, p. 37.

[41] *The Queen*, 10 Oct. 1903; *The Toronto Daily News*, 1 Dec. 1903; New York edition, p. 46; London edition, p. 45.

[42] London edition, p. 217.

[43] London edition, p. 217. This sentence is varied to "If they manage it they'll be clever" in the New York edition, p. 223.

[44] London edition, p. 219.

[45] Ibid., p. 225.

[46] This article was submitted before the publication of Thomas Tausky's edition of *The Imperialist* (Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1988).

POEMS

Stephen Scobie

In the kitchen at Rue de Fleurus, Alice is setting down a stock of tea-dishes on the draining board. They rattle gently together, clearing their throats to speak.

Hermit, used as a verb, meaning: to wait, invisible, at the mouth of a cave. As in: she used to hermit all day on the shore near Tofino.

An old hardcover book, the binding broken, the dry glue cracking like twigs in autumn. The pages make their break for freedom, leafing out into random order as if they wished to become an experimental novel. Drifting down from the ferry's deck, flotsam to the shores of Galiano. Monodromos.

The prisoner escaped, at prairie midnight, follows the railway tracks home. Up ahead, a woman is laying dimes on the tracks, to be flattened by the morning train. Omens, the only way she knows of praying against his return.

What it amounts to, what it comes back to; what is over, what remains. The mark a flower made, ages ago, quoting this rock.

Guillaume (by that I mean, Apollinaire) always insisted that his bed be perfectly made. The blankets and sheets pulled tight. Visitors were not allowed to sit on it. The bed of the poet, he said, is sacred. Le lit du poète, with the pun on "lit." The bed he read is all lit up. It wasn't me who said that. That was Apollinaire, Guillaume.

You look at the word pencilled, graffiti-like, eye-level on the washroom wall. The single word "trout." Fictions of motivation form around it. Your own hand reaches towards a pen and pauses above it, waiting, like a hook.

Tilting at windmills, you said, looking around for some windmills to tilt at. But you were caught in the Cariboo, the hillsides too steep for your old nag to tackle. So where does that leave you, Don Coyote?

FROM MANUSCRIPT TO PRINT

Stephen Leacock's "The Transit of Venus"

Vishnu R. Chopra

AS LEACOCK'S ONLY PUBLISHED ATTEMPT at a serious short story, "The Transit of Venus" stands apart from the rest of his work in that, unlike his other funny pieces, his chief aim here was to tell the story. However, being Leacock, he could hardly help injecting small explosions of humour, which occur throughout.

Although this story was first published in 1926 in *Good Housekeeping*,[1] Leacock, surprisingly, did not get around to recycling it in any of his annual collections until 1942.[2] That he intended to write not one, but a series of short stories "dealing with college professorial life," is evident from the title he recorded in his journal, "Annals of Concordia College," on September 9, 1914,[3] shortly after completing *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich*, chapters of which were still appearing in *The American Magazine*.[4] However, his journal entries until June 14, 1918, the last of which contains sketchy notes, and reference to the character of Dean Elderberry Foible, indicate that he had been unable to make much headway in writing these stories; and until November 12, 1925, this project remained in the category of incomplete items. But sometime before May 1925, Leacock wrote and forwarded the opening part of "The Transit of Venus" to his literary agent[5] in New York to ascertain the appeal of such stories to magazine editors. The agent, mistaking it for a finished piece, sold it to the editor of *College Humor*.[6] To avoid impairing the integrity of his work, or prejudicing the sale of the series, Leacock responded:

> I send you back herewith your letter and cheque for $180.00. I am sorry to say there has been a mistake here. I thought I had written to you already to say that I am completing this story and that it will run to four or five thousand words. I have it now well under way. In the literary sense I could not bear to have a piece of it substituted for the whole and in the commercial sense I could not bear to sell it for $200.00.
>
> My own recollection is that I sent you this not as a completed story, but only as the beginning of a story in which an editor might be interested. I may say further that I have a very strong hope of doing not one but a little string of them dealing

with college professorial life. I have a great many notes, plans and characters. These stories when completed — if they ever are completed — will make a volume. I do not want to prejudice the whole enterprise by breaking off a piece and thus spoil the prospect of selling the full length stories.

Please convey to the editor of College Humour my very sincere regret and throw on my shoulders just as much blame as your own kindly conscience will permit.[7]

The "beginning" in question is extant in two versions: a fourteen-page holograph and in the sixty-two-page completed draft of the story, only the first seven pages of which, incorporating the holograph and the ones sent to the agent, are typed.[8] They describe that fateful opening day of the semester when Professor Poynter lectured to a co-ed class, for the first time in his sixteen-year teaching career at Concordia College. Although not yet conscious that he has fallen in love with his student, Irene Taylor, the universe about him becomes more wonderful: "And that night, in the College Observatory, where Professor Pointer, on a revolving stool, gazed at the heavens through a huge telescope, the stars appeared of a brilliance and a magnitude never before witnessed. And astronomy itself seemed more than ever the noblest and grandest of sciences, and there was such a sweep to the celestial orbit of the moving earth that you could almost hear the heavens humming in glad unison to the rushing movement of it."[9] While the professor is thus enraptured, the world goes on, and Leacock reminds us of this in the concluding lines of the segment: "And that same night, while the professor gazed into the sky, Mr. Bill Johnson, of the College football team, took Miss Marty and Miss Taylor to a fifty cent vaudeville show."[10]

Given its unity and the suggestion of irony at the end, not unlike some of Leacock's other short pieces, it is not surprising that an editor bought as a complete story what was only its opening part.

In "Annals of Concordia College," conceived as an offshoot of *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich,* Leacock was resurrecting the original small college, which had been "filled with generations of presidents and professors of the older type with long white beards and rusty black clothes,"[11] before it was transformed by its hustler president, Dr. Boomer, into "not merely a university, but a *universitas* in the true sense, and every one of its faculties was now a *facultas* in the real acceptance of the word."[12] Judging from the tenor and substance of "The Transit of Venus," this series, had it been completed, would have presented a picture far different from the morally bankrupt world depicted in *Arcadian Adventures,* whose sharp practices had vitiated its life and contaminated its religious and educational institutions.

Leacock's changes, in the manuscript, to the title and subtitle of the story in some ways chronicle its evolution. He began with "Annals of Concordia College" as the title of the series, and since at this stage the core of this story consisted of the

professor's rather unusual love letters, he titled it "The Love Letters of Professor Poynter." But by the time he received the typed copy of the first segment, the scope of the story had widened considerably. Therefore, the title, having become inadequate, was crossed out and replaced by "The Transit of Venus," one of his best titles. Subsequently, Leacock became less certain of writing other stories in the same vein, as is evident from his note on the title page of the manuscript, "If several stories are written on this line a general title might be used, as: 'Annals of Concordia College.'"

Leacock had considerable difficulty choosing an appropriate name for the principal character. Initially, he called him Poynter. But halfway through the segment he realized that, spelling notwithstanding, the name Poynter for a professor of astronomy, who falls in love with a student while pointing out stars in the firmament, would be inartistic. He therefore started leaving blank spaces for the name and asked the typist to do likewise, "I am not sure of the professor's name: better leave it blank perhaps."[13] Since the name had been variously spelled in the manuscript as Pointer and Poynter, the typist, ignoring Leacock's note, simply regularized it to Pointer. After receiving the typed copy, Leacock changed the name twice on the first page — first to Pram and later to Arthur Pram — before settling on Arthur Lancelot Kidder. Although this name embodied his mockingly indulgent attitude toward the "little man," it was hardly an improvement on Poynter, the Jonsonian name Leacock had first tagged him with. While the Christian names, Arthur and Lancelot, suggest bravery and chivalry, notions Leacock alludes to humorously in depicting the professor's demeanor toward Miss Taylor, the name Kidder undermined them in the most obvious fashion. Hence, in a subsequent revision, not extant, he altered the name from Kidder to Kitter. This slight change contributed significantly in that the new name no longer suffered the limitations of his earlier choices. Also dropped at this stage was the reference, in the story's subtitle, to a particular college.[14] Even though the final draft is not extant, the differences between the published text and the extant draft are, for the most part, small; some of the changes are important while others are mechanical.

THIS MANUSCRIPT illustrates the way Leacock generally composed his humorous pieces. In the initial draft, here as well as in his other manuscripts, his main concern was recording the flow of ideas, in numerous short paragraphs, paying little attention to grammar and mechanics, which he corrected once the material was typed. The following excerpt from the holograph fragment, reproduced exactly, but without the use of *sic*, is an instance in point:

> And now gentlemen, — that is — ladies and gentlemen," concluded Professor Poynter with a slight blush, "having considered the general nature of the Copernican

System and the principles underlying it, we shall in our next lecture pass in review the motions of the individual planets with especial reference to Kepler's law and the mathematical calculation of their orbits"

Little Mr. Pointer, professor of mathematical astronomy at Concordia College had delivered this elegant sentence in much the same form for sixteen years, — at the close of each opening lecture of the course, — and had never been seen to blush over it.

But this time he did so. The pink suffusion of his cheeks was visible even without a spectroscope.

Now there is nothing in the Copernican System to cause a scientist in these enlightened days, even if he is a batchelor and close on forty, to blush for it.

It must have been something in the class itself.

There were only six students in the class.

There was one on the professor's right with a pale face and long hair who held a scholarship and had been covering sheet after sheet with mathematical formulae. Professor Poynter had taught him for four years. So it couldnt have been him.

There were two students with ruddy faces and long ears who took astronomy as a 'Conditioned Subject', and wrote notes in diligent despair like distressed mariners working to keep a boat afloat.

Then there was Mr Bill Johnson, otherwise known as Buck Johnson who took astronomy as a way of qualifying to play half-back on the college football team. Football men at Concordia very often took astronomy. It was considered almost as big a 'cinch' as the Old Testament or the president's lectures on Primitive Civilization. All of these were recommended by the trainer.

So Buck Johnson had joined the class and had sat looking at Professor Pointer with the hard irredeemable look of a semi professional half back, and wondering if he had been wise to take the stuff.

But the blush was not for him.

The reason of it was that for the first time in sixteen years there were women in the class. Professor Pointer had never lectured to women before. He did not even know whether to refer to them as 'women', 'girls', or ladies.

To the debonair professor of English literature who wore a different tie every week, college girls were as familiar as flowers are to the bees. To the elderly dean of the faculty they appeared as if merely high school girls. But into the calm precincts of mathematical astronomy no woman had ever wandered before.

Yet there they were, — two of them, — sitting on the front bench, writing notes and making diagrams of the planets. How daintily their little fingers seemed to draw! Even from Professor Pointer's desk, he could see that when Mr. Johnson drew the moon he drew it in a great rough circle that even a carpenter would be ashamed of.

But when Miss Irene Taylor, the girl with the blue serge suit and golden hair, drew it, it came out as the cutest little moon that ever looked coquettishly across its orbit at the neat earth.[15]

Leacock's revision of these paragraphs, inasmuch as they required little or no rewriting, also illustrates his general reworking of the manuscript. For example, the last three paragraphs of the excerpt reappear in the published text, with minor mechanical changes, as one paragraph. The first and twelfth paragraphs are also

reproduced without any significant alteration. The remaining ten he rearranged into four; in so doing, he made more emphatic the key idea, the reason for the professor's blush in class. Other revisions are of a different order. For instance, in the published text he slightly altered the description of the boy who sat alone on the professor's right, "held a scholarship," and took copious notes; instead of the stereotypical "pale face and long hair" of the original, he gave him "a pale face and a head shaped like a bulb." Whether Leacock meant it to represent an electric or a botanical bulb, this injection of humour enabled him to suggest more vividly the boy's potential. Elsewhere, in pruning the lengthy explanation of how Mr. Buck Johnson came to be in a class in mathematical astronomy, he eliminated verbiage. Although the number of paragraphs in the printed text has been drastically reduced, the number of words in the two versions underwent only a slight change, from 535 to 529.

In many cases, revisions entailed rewriting to develop fuller and sharper descriptions and explanations, when the first attempts were inadequate or embryonic. His explanation of why men "show off" when in love is an example of such a revision. Ever since the day Professor Kitter had blushed in class, owing to the presence of female students, and been fascinated by Miss Taylor's little fingers drawing "the cutest little moon," he had done all he could to impress her: "projected beams of light" at the incredible speed of 186,000 miles per second (185,000 in the extant draft), and solved monstrously long equations "with the rapidity of a conjurer." Not content with these feats, he, usually unmindful of dress, bought himself a whole new wardrobe, and, in wearing some items of it felt particularly "saucy." All these efforts Leacock attributed to man's inherent instinct to show off, and pretended that it could be traced to its source through various stages of human evolution. To present this concept with scientific authority, he began, "We are told by the evolutionist," which he abandoned for, "Only three class rooms away down the corridor there was a lecturer on evolution who was fond of explaining to his class." From these he forged the following pseudo-scientific paragraph: "We are told by those who know about such things that the male human being when in love likes to 'show off.' It appears that this tendency has been evoluted in him then through countless ages of his ascent from the earth worm to the scientist. The male bird displays his brilliant feathers. The nightingale sings. The savage displays his strength. The athlete jumps over a tape."[16]

If, in the heat of composing, an idea did not come to Leacock well expressed, he recorded it as it occurred, then crossed it out and rephrased it as he went along, but did not allow this editing to interfere with the flow of composition. If, however, the rephrasing turned out to be unsatisfactory, he first completed the passage he was writing before attempting further alternatives. The following paragraph, describing the professor's endeavours to be near Miss Taylor as often as possible, is an example. In quoting it, the matter he crossed out has been enclosed within slashes / /, and

is followed by his rephrasings, which have been placed within parentheses ( ), to indicate the stage in composition:

> During this same period of time the professor, by a process of rejuvenation similar to his change of dress had appeared at various college /teas and had not or at least seen Miss Taylor among those present/ (functions such as he). He had sat half frozen at a hockey match looking at Miss Taylor, seated beside Mr. Johnson, across the rink. He had attended a college play, at which he had also observed Mr. Johnson seated between Miss Taylor & Miss Marty: and he had /attended/ (handed round tea at) a perpendicular reception at the presidents house from which he had the pleasure of escorting Miss Marty to the women's dormitory while Mr Johnson walked beside Miss Taylor. From all of which things Professor Kidder, who prided himself on being an observant man, concluded that Mr. Johnson was very greatly improved from what he had been in his lower years, and showed a commendable desire to mingle in society.[17]

As the first of these rephrasings (functions such as) was unsatisfactory and thus left unfinished, Leacock returned to it after completing the paragraph and wrote the following alternatives on the back of the page, "functions at which he had not been present since he was a junior lecturer fifteen years before and had to attend everything that happened." And "more than once he had stood beside her at these functions holding up a tea cup and talking about the sun." Finally, he chose the first of these.

In describing another of the professor's overtures, through his unusual love letters, Leacock first wrote, "During this same period Professor Kidder wrote to Miss Taylor no less than three separate set letters. In point of the sentiment that was behind them they were love letters, the first and the last that ever came into the life of the little man. But in form they were far from it."[18] Unhappy with the first sentence, perhaps because it repeated the opening words of the preceding paragraph in the text, he attempted another beginning, in pencil, at the top of the page: "Nor was this social intercourse the only in which professor's"; having now found a suitable opening, he elaborated it into the following alternative on a separate page, numbered it 19 (even though he already had a page 19 in the MS) and inserted it just before page 20, the page to which this alternative pertained: "Nor was social intercourse the professor's only outlet of expression. He wrote to Miss Taylor during this period no less than three separate letters."

Since "astronomy had sunk in too deep," not only was the professor's conversation with his students outside the class merely a continuation of his lecture; even his love letters turned out to be absurd, being only elucidations of points he feared he had not adequately explained.[19] Despite many opportunities, the professor, incapacitated by shyness, was unable to proclaim his love. And as the semester approached its end, he feared that if he did not act soon, he might never have another chance to propose.

> Thus the college year threatened to end with Professor Kidder's love unspoken. But as the day of graduation — the end of all things — drew near, its very nearness gave him resolution. There appeared in prospect a particular occasion when he knew that at least he would have his opportunity, and he meant at every cost, to use it.
>
> Now the occasion in prospect was this. It had long been the custom of Professor Kidder to invite his class, hitherto consisting of men, to visit once a year at evening the Observatory of Concordia College.[20]

Although Leacock retained this description, he also wrote the following, in which he attempted to create the same effect in a single paragraph, recording it on the back of page 36: "Humiliated by so many defeats Professor at last came to the conclusion that he would, absolutely and without fail, propose marriage to Miss Irene Taylor on the very next occasion that offered itself. And the occasion, as the college year drew to its close was presented ready to his grasp. He determined in other words to propose to Miss Taylor on the occasion of the annual evening visit of the class in mathematical astronomy to the Observatory tower."

As the critical day neared, the night of the class visit to the observatory, the professor, having rehearsed many times the words he had been unable to utter to Miss Taylor, was tense and so on edge that even the students noticed his awkwardness as he apologized needlessly for everything. When the moment arrived, as he came down the stairs, determined to ask Irene Taylor to be his wife, his overwrought imagination played a trick on him. In the darkness of the landing he saw Miss Taylor and Mr. Johnson together and mistook his recounting of his marriage proposal to Miss Marty, made earlier in the day, for a proposal to Miss Taylor. Seeing them together was enough to trigger in the professor's mind an echo of the speech he had been rehearsing and was planning to make to Miss Taylor. Believing his hopes of marrying her to be dashed, he returned to the observatory and retreated to the security of his routine existence, until the day the old Dean began a tirade against "child" marriages in the faculty committee room, referring to Mr. Johnson's impending marriage. Not wanting to hear any more on that painful subject, the professor left the room.

On the day of the wedding he encountered Miss Taylor on her way to the ceremony. Sensing his limitations, having waited a full year for him to say something meaningful to her, she took charge and retrieved him from his sterile existence; she "put her hand on the little professor's arm and turned him in her direction,"[21] metaphorically as well as literally. The following excerpt is Leacock's initial description of this important encounter:

> But on that day he was walking up the avenue among the elms, and as he walked he encountered fully and fairly and unavoidably Miss Irene Taylor. Even a professor's eye could see that she was dressed as for any occasion.
>
> He would have raised his hat & passed but she stopped him. It was plain that she meant to stop him.

"Why Professor Kidder," she exclaimed. Aren't you coming to the wedding?

The professor stammered something —

"Did you mean to say that you didn't know!" Miss Taylor went on. The professor muttered something to the effect that he had heard something.

"Oh, I thought everybody knew. Why Maggie Marty and Mr. Johnson are to be married at three o'clock, and you know it's just lovely. He's come into quite a lot of money from some forgotten uncle or somebody and they are going to go to Paris and both study over there — I forget what it is they are going to study — but they say that there are ever so many courses you can study now in Paris. Oh, really you must come down to the church any way even if you don't go to the house. Maggie said they wrote and asked you — Do come."

And with that she put her hand on the little professor's arm and turned him in her direction.

What Professor Kidder said as they went down the avenue is not a matter of record. It may have concerned the altitude of the sun, which seemed all of a sudden to have leaped to a surprising height and brilliance or it may not. But at least it was effective, and when after the wedding & the ceremony that went with it the two walked away together under the elm trees it was understood that Miss Taylor, after an interval shorter than anything ever heard of in astronomy was to become the professor's wife. And it transpired further that she had kept all her notes in his class from the very start and that she had copied a whole equation off the board because he wrote it and that his letter about the proper motion of the sun had seemed to her the sweetest letter she had ever dreamed of.

All of which things rapidly become commonplace. Especially as Miss Taylor, is now Mrs. Arthur Lancelot Kidder, and attends college teas, and reads little papers on Chinese Philosophy at The Concordia Sigma Phi Society, and, in fact, acts and behaves and seems much as any other professor's wife.[22]

On rereading this segment, Leacock realized that he had unwittingly left out an important piece of information, and to remove the confusion he added, on the back of the page, the following explanation of the situation which had misled the professor. After telling Professor Kitter that Mr. Johnson and Miss Marty planned to study in Paris, Leacock had Miss Taylor add: "Why didn't you know? He asked her [to marry him] on the way over to the observatory that night and he told me all about it going down the stairs as we went out."[23]

IN CONSIDERING THIS MANUSCRIPT, I have discussed some representative Leacock revisions. He rewrote passages to develop inadequately expressed ideas, pruned the text of surplus material, moved portions of it from one place to another, made lexical changes and realigned paragraphs for effectiveness. Some of his most interesting changes, however, are those in which alterations are ostensibly slight; for example, replacing "a pale face and long hair" with "a pale face and a head shaped like a bulb" is pure Leacock. In another instance, by sub-

stituting a comma for a period in the published text, to produce a one-sentence paragraph describing the entranced professor, near the end of the first segment, Leacock skilfully enhanced its tempo: "And that night, in the college observatory, where Professor Kitter on a revolving stool gazed at the heavens through a huge telescope, the stars appeared of a brilliance and a magnitude never before witnessed, and Astronomy itself seemed more than ever the noblest and grandest of sciences, and there was such a sweep to the celestial orbit of the moving earth that you could almost hear the heavens humming in glad unison to the rushing movement of it."[24] A different though important small change noted elsewhere, achieved after considerable revision, is the name of the professor, from Pointer to Kitter.

Instances of such revisions are evident in his other manuscripts as well. For example, the initial title of Chapter III of *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich* was "The Blasted Philanthropy of Mr. Tomlinson." By replacing "Blasted" with "Arrested," Leacock eliminated the ambiguity that "Blasted" might have occasioned in this context. And since the initial title for Chapter V, "The Amateur Polygamy of Mr. Peter Spillikins," was not only inaccurate but also lacked taste, he substituted an ironic title, "The Love Story of Mr. Peter Spillikins."[25]

In describing a "valuable" toddler, a "merchant prince," wheeled about on Plutoria Avenue by an "imported" nurse, Leacock had first written, "Nearby is a child in a blanket suit and a Canadian tuque and a tassel nodding beside his ear that represents the merger of two trunk line railways."[26] But mindful of the hostile reaction *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* had caused among Orillians who recognized themselves clearly behind his thinly disguised characters, he was determined to prevent any such identifications in this book. Sensing that he had given more information than he wished concerning the locale, he revised the description, outfitting the child in perfectly neutral clothes: "Nearby is a child of four in a khaki suit who represents the merger of two trunk line railways."[27] This seemingly minor change acquires greater meaning when viewed in concert with other examples in which Leacock deliberately planted misleading information. For instance, Dr. Slyder, an expert at divining the wishes of his patients, who are not suffering from any ailments, advises Mr. Rasselyer-Brown, knowing his propensity for alcohol, to take a holiday in Nagahakett, on the Atlantic coast. When Mr. Rasselyer-Brown asks in horror if it is in Maine, "'Oh, dear no!' answered the doctor reassuringly. 'It's in New Brunswick, Canada; excellent place, most liberal licence laws; first class cuisine and a bar in the hotel. No tourists, no golf, too cold to swim — just the place to enjoy oneself.'"[28] Nor is this the only example in which Leacock gives such information to conceal the book's setting.

Candidly assessing his ability to create character, and conscious of his limitations in plot construction, Leacock had this to say concerning the writing of *Sunshine Sketches*:

> I wrote this book with considerable difficulty. I can invent characters quite easily, but I have no notion as to how to make things happen to them. Indeed I see no reason why anything should. I could write awfully good short stories if it were only permissible merely to introduce some extremely original character, and at the end of two pages announce that at this point a brick fell on his head and killed him. If there were room for a school of literature of this kind I should offer to lead it. I do not mean that the hero would always and necessarily be killed by a brick. One might sometimes use two. Such feeble plots as there are in this book were invented by brute force, after the characters had been introduced. Hence the atrocious clumsiness of the construction all through.[29]

The evolution of "The Transit of Venus," documented earlier, illustrates Leacock's creative process as outlined above. He began with an "extremely original character" in Professor Poynter and his absurd love letters. Considering that the central conflict is the professor's incapacitating shyness in matters of love, Leacock's inability to construct action-packed plots did not hamper him in writing this story. In fact, his plot, with its apparent lack of action, became an apt vehicle for the resolution of the conflict.

Given the professor's repeated failure to proclaim his love to Miss Taylor; his determination to grab what seemed to him to be the last chance to propose marriage; and his intense preparation for the occasion, repeating the marriage proposal so many times that he had it by heart; it is not surprising that his overly tense mind aided destiny to rob him of the opportunity he had prepared for so thoroughly. Had he been able to pay closer attention to what was being said, which is asking more than most are capable of in such circumstances, he might not have been misled. For Buck Johnson's actual words were, "I can't tell you what *it* means to me, Irene. Till now I never thought of marriage—." When this is set beside the professor's own little speech, the difference becomes perceptible: "I can't tell you what *this* means to me, Irene. Up till now I never thought of marriage, but now my whole life seems changed"[30] (my italics). Notwithstanding similar phrasing, the *it* in Johnson's speech refers to the inheritance which suddenly made it possible for him to marry and go abroad; whereas *this* in the professor's proposal refers to Irene's acceptance of him. Considering that this distinction was made in the final revision, for it is not in the extant draft, it demonstrates the precision with which Leacock used language when such precision was important.[31]

Although the climax, in which Professor Kitter seems to have lost out to Buck Johnson, surprises the reader caught up in the story, one need only look back to see the constant stream of suggestions Leacock planted in the text throughout, creating in Mr. Johnson an unconscious and unrecognized antagonist to the professor, who, notwithstanding his claim to be observant, is hardly capable of noticing anything meaningful. Thus, for a number of reasons, Leacock's use of surprise in the climax is neither arbitrary nor mechanical; it is conditioned by the elements of the story — Professor Kitter's character and the plot — and is dictated by the design of a happy

ending, which required a dénouement to unravel the complication created in the climax.

In "The Transit of Venus" Leacock attempted a serious short story, and considering that it was first published in 1926, had he persevered and completed the series, "Annals of Concordia College," he might have left another notable contribution to his canon.

NOTES

[1] *Good Housekeeping*, 82 (Jan. 1926), 78-81.

[2] Stephen Leacock, *My Remarkable Uncle, and other Sketches* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1942), pp. 243-63.

[3] Leacock's Journal #84, Leacock Memorial Home Files, Orillia, Ontario; excerpts reprinted with the permission of Mrs. Barbara Nimmo.

[4] Although all eight chapters of the book were completed by August 5, 1914, only the first five appeared in *The American Magazine* during July and November of that year. The last three were withheld for inclusion in the book, which was published on November 25, 1914.

[5] Paul Revere Reynolds (1864-1944).

[6] This Chicago magazine was "a digest of humor appearing in humorous publications of the collegiate world."

[7] To Paul Reynolds, dated May 7, 1925, Leacock Memorial Home Files. In quoting Leacock's correspondence and manuscripts, unless otherwise indicated, small obvious errors have been silently corrected in the interest of readability.

[8] "The Transit of Venus" manuscripts, Leacock Collection, McGill University, Montreal. Henceforth the complete manuscript is cited as MS, and the holograph fragment as Fragment. Manuscript quotations are printed with the permission of McGill University, McLennan Library.

[9] MS, p. 6.

[10] Ibid., p. 7.

[11] Stephen Leacock, *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1965), p. 39.

[12] Ibid., p. 40.

[13] Note on the title page of the Fragment.

[14] From "A Story of Concordia College" to "A College Story."

[15] Fragment, pp. 1-5.

[16] MS, pp. 9-10.

[17] Ibid., pp. 18-19.

[18] Ibid., p. 20.

[19] The first of these love letters read:

Dear Miss Taylor,

I fear that I made a rather ridiculous slip in my lecture of this morning in speaking of the proper motion of the sun. I implied that there was a drift of the solar system towards the star Arcturus. I trust that you did not gather from this that there was

the least fear of collision. Let me hasten to correct this error in case it has led to any misunderstanding on your part.

Yours very faithfully,
Arthur Lancelot Kidder.

[20] MS, pp. 35-36.

[21] Ibid., p. 60.

[22] Ibid., pp. 58-61.

[23] Ibid., reverse of page 60.

[24] Stephen Leacock, *My Remarkable Uncle, and other Sketches* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1965), pp. 144-45.

[25] *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich* manuscript, Leacock Collection, McGill University, Montreal, title pages of Chapters III & V.

[26] Ibid., Chapter I, p. 2.

[27] Ibid.

[28] *Arcadian Adventures*, p. 84.

[29] Peter McArthur, *Stephen Leacock* (Toronto: Ryerson, n.d.), p. 136.

[30] *My Remarkable Uncle*, pp. 153 and 151.

[31] The same care is evident in many of his other manuscripts. One instance in point is his rephrasing of a single sentence numerous times in *The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice*; commenting on the lack of trust between capital and labour in the aftermath of World War I, Leacock rewrote the following sentence until he was satisfied that the final version — "The warning cry of 'back' is challenged by the eager shout of 'forward'!" — would not be misconstrued by either party. See Chapter I, p. 7 of the manuscript in the Leacock Collection, McGill University, Montreal.

MAKING FUN OF TRAVELERS

Deborah Eibel

Whenever the travelers returned,
They tried to tell long stories
About the interesting people
Who had helped them
Find their way.

But some one always stopped them.
"How can we expect you
To know what to look for,
If you always depend on
Midwesterners-at-large.

Coming from flat country
They cannot possibly
Have a feeling
For beauty."

RETIREMENT

Deborah Eibel

Early or late
The midwesterners in our midst
Retire,
So that they can do
The things
They have always wanted
To do.

You can find them
At Art Gallery lectures —
For the first time.
They may recognize you
And wave to you
But they will never leave a lecture
To talk to you outside.
You used to make fun of them —
They were not good travelers.
Now they can find in pictures
What they could not find
Outside.

THREE NEW POEMS BY MALCOLM LOWRY

Kathleen Scherf

THE LOWRY PAPERS housed in the Special Collections Division of the University of British Columbia Library contain approximately 350 individual poems. I am currently preparing these poems for a collected edition; in the process I have located several poems which were missed or ignored by previous editors. In most cases these new poems are extant in holograph drafts; the third poem here, "Sun, Aeroplane, Lovers," is a notable exception, as only a typescript survives.

The first poem, "Midnight denies poursuivant of the dawn," survives in two holograph drafts.[1] The first draft contains many emendations and marginal notes; the second is a fair copy which has obviously undergone a further round of revisions: the bulk of the manuscript is written in black ink, and the revisions are pencilled in. Both versions are written on 8 x 10″ white, blue-lined paper which has been torn from a notebook. The poems "Curse" and "Be patient for the wolf is always with you" appear on the same kind of paper and share the same retrospective, romantic tone.[2] The poems in this notebook were probably composed in 1938, as the draft letter to Nordahl Grieg, written in Mexico during that year, appears on the same notebook paper. The poem is typically Lowryan: in it, as in *Ultramarine*, the author combines an autobiographical unhappy adolescent with imagery of ships and shipping. In addition, the allusions to Melville connect this poem with Lowry's early work, especially *Ultramarine* and *Lunar Caustic*.

The second poem, "I met a man who had got drunk with Christ," also survives in two holograph drafts. As with "Midnight denies poursuivant of the dawn," one is clearly an earlier version, but in this case the drafts appear on different notebook papers.[3] The early draft shares a sheet with an unidentified letter fragment which does not appear in the correspondence, but which is presumably addressed to Conrad Aiken, and in which Lowry mentions that he has finally taken the addressee's advice and sent *Under the Volcano* to "Linscott's" after receiving it back from Whit Burnett. On 25 November 1940 Linscott, an editor at Houghton Mifflin, writes Lowry a rejection letter regarding *Under the Volcano*.[4] November 1940

is then the poem's terminus ad quem; given the war references in the poem, the September 1939 outbreak of World War II is a safe terminus a quo. The hypothesis that the poem dates from this early Dollarton period is supported by the notebook paper used for its second version: this 7x9¼" white, blue-lined, pink-margined paper appears in Lowry's outgoing correspondence for 1940.[5] Lowry wrote a number of war poems, the best of which is possibly "Dream of the departing soldier" (titled "Midtown pyromaniac" by Earle Birney) which was also composed during the first Dollarton period.[6] Like "I met a man who had got drunk with Christ," this poem describes a dramatic scenario which suggests a connection between the fires of war and the disruption of universal order. This motif re-surfaces in those sections of *Under the Volcano* which deal with the fate of the German officers captured by the Consul during World War I.

The title of the third poem, "Sun, Aeroplane, Lovers," is Lowry's, as are the titles of approximately one half of the poems; before 1940, while he was still trying to assemble *The Lighthouse Invites the Storm*, Lowry tended to number, rather than title, most of his poems. It is impossible to determine precisely when this poem was composed as there is no extant manuscript. The poem was typed on paper which can be assigned to 1947 through its appearance in the outgoing correspondence for April and May, when it first appears in letters posted from Dollarton.[7] This is also the paper used for the typescript collection of 54 poems which Lowry sent to Albert Erskine of 7 November 1947. As the Lowrys again left Dollarton on that date, it is probable that this version of the poem was typed between April and November of that year. In this poem Lowry somewhat mischievously experiments with the possibilities of punctuation, as he does in "He plays piano with a razor" (titled "The Comedian" by Birney).[8] Lowry's innovative use of language and form is more evident in his prose fiction; in his poetry he leans toward highly structured forms, particularly the sonnet.

None of the following three poems contains any silent emendations, nor have any substantive changes been made. The incomplete nature of at least one third of Lowry's poems forces upon the editor a certain amount of necessary accidental emendation. However, such emendations in accidentals are restricted to correcting obvious errors such as misspellings or missing apostrophes. The editorial policy aims at presenting not what Lowry eventually intended, as his intentions are now unascertainable, but rather at presenting and making accessible the latest extant authorial version of a poem.

NOTES

It is a pleasure to acknowledge Mrs. Priscilla Woolfan and the U.B.C. Library for their kind permission to publish the poems, and Professor Victor Doyen of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven for his help with the transcriptions.

[1] Lowry Papers, file 4-17.

[2] "Curse" remains unpublished; "Be patient for the wolf is always with you" was published in *X: A Quarterly Review*, II.2.

[3] Lowry Papers, files 5-35 and 4-20.

[4] Lowry Papers, file 1-31.

[5] Lowry Papers, file 1-79.

[6] *Selected Poems*, p. 60.

[7] Lowry Papers, file 2-10.

[8] *Selected Poems*, p. 56.

[Midnight denies poursuivant of the dawn]

Midnight denies poursuivant of the dawn.
And dawn denies finality of twelve
What shall we regenerate for time
to shake our fool equation alive?
how shall we balance unbalanced childhood
with some fixed decency with an even tune,
to some certainty, to its holiest decembers?
when days that seem now full, upright as tulips
raged in horrible circles like cyclones:
the hyacinths flattened in the wood
then we forgot that tempestuous spring
which sinks the lost ship now in cold calm of order:
forget too we had seen the white whale
which now appears scarred at the other pole
its passage under ice our adolescence,
that engineering taught us at first hand
trigonometry failed to teach us
the magnets of the rich were clogged with sand
that machinery of Zenith's obsolescence
questioned clear loyalty to the cotton cities
eased on heart's trial hill the gear slipping
for those who dived for moons into the river.

Textual notes
poursuivant] porsuivant
Zenith's] Zeniths

[I met a man who had got drunk with Christ]

I met a man who had got drunk with Christ.
And this is what he told me Christ said.
"Trust no man who is not always drunk.
And always ready to be drunk.
There is no excuse for sobriety.

But one. That is war
And I who say that, envy
The knocking knees of the years,
Get off my cross, return to my hotel."
That was in Oberammergau, before the war, —
Before the fires came spirit cleft again.

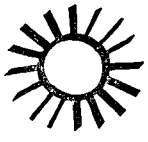
Textual notes

. . . to my hotel."] ms. omits end quotation mark
Oberammergau] Obergammerau

Sun, Aeroplane, Lovers

When the sun goes in a shadow flies over.
When the sun goes in, a shadow flies over.
When the sun goes in a shadow, flies over.

When it comes out again it is fiery.
When it comes out again, it is fiery.
When it comes out, again it is fiery.



"ROSE AND JANET"

Alice Munro's Metafiction

Helen Hoy

"'That Rose you write about? Is that supposed to be you?'"[1]

I. The Genesis of Who Do You Think You Are?

Before Alice Munro's *Who Do You Think You Are?* appeared in the fall of 1978, her anticipated new collection of stories was announced as *Rose and Janet*.[2] The first reviews, although about a book entitled *Who Do You Think You Are?*, described a collection unlike the one soon available in bookstores, the one we know. In *Books in Canada*, for example, Wayne Grady discussed the mirror stories of twin heroines, "Rose, who grows up in West Hanratty, Ont., the child of a defeated father and a powerless but compassionate stepmother named Flo; and Janet, who is from Dagleish [*sic*], Ont., the child of an equally ineffectual father and a somewhat non-existent mother."[3]

This was what sent me, in early 1979, to the offices of Macmillan and Company where, with Alice Munro's permission, I was able to examine the final draft and the page proofs of the "Rose and Janet" manuscript. (Munro subsequently dismantled the proofs in order to revise some of the discarded stories further for her next collection, *The Moons of Jupiter*, so that the "Rose and Janet" page proofs no longer exist as an intact manuscript in the University of Calgary collection of Munro's papers.) Doug Gibson, Munro's editor, explained Munro's sudden decision to revise the book when she realized that Rose and Janet were the same person, a decision which meant literally stopping the presses one Monday morning in mid-September while Munro, who stayed in Toronto overnight, revised, copy-editors proofread, the press rewrote the flap copy,[4] and the printers ordered more paper. *Who Do You Think You Are?*, as we know it, with ten third-person stories about Rose, was off to press two days later, in time for its November 18 publication deadline. The decision cost Munro $1,864, about $550 less than expected.[5] "Even if it

had cost me twice as much I would have done it," Munro said later. "You see, I knew all along the book wasn't right."[6] To Carole Gerson, she explained, "Having two sets of linked stories in one book would just frustrate the reader."[7]

"Rose and Janet" contained six third-person stories about Rose, all retained in the published collection, and six first-person stories about Janet, three of which — "Connection," "The Stone in the Field," and "The Moons of Jupiter" — were deleted and published in *The Moons of Jupiter*.[8] It did not include "Simon's Luck."

"Rose and Janet"	*Who Do You Think You Are?*
Rose	
"Royal Beatings"	"Royal Beatings"
"Privilege"	"Privilege"
"Half a Grapefruit"	"Half a Grapefruit"
"Wild Swans"	"Wild Swans"
"The Beggar Maid"	"The Beggar Maid"
"Spelling"	"Mischief"
	"Providence"
Janet	"Simon's Luck"
"Connection"	"Spelling"
"The Stone in the Field"	"Who Do You Think You Are?"
"Mischief"	
"Providence"	
"The Moons of Jupiter"	
"Who Do You Think You Are?"	

In her most lengthy discussion about the changes, in an interview with Tim Struthers, Munro indicated the existence of an earlier arrangement:

> there were some of the Janet stories in which . . . I *had* originally used a Rose heroine. The point is that we couldn't do a book with two-thirds of the stories about one heroine and one-third about another. So I very foolishly decided to do half and half, meaning that I had to change Rose into Janet for half of the book. . . .
>
> And then, suddenly, in September, with the book already in galleys, I saw that I could do two new Rose stories. "Who Do You Think You Are?" and "Simon's Luck" just came like that. And then I had enough for a book of Rose stories. So then we could jettison the stories that obviously weren't about Rose at all. And the stories that I had changed from Rose into Janet could be changed back to Rose — "Mischief" being one of them, "Providence" being another, and probably "The Beggar Maid." I'm not sure.[9]

When Struthers suggested here that "The Beggar Maid" had always been a Rose story, Munro agreed that this was possible.

The correspondence and manuscripts in the Alice Munro Papers at the University of Calgary reveal an even more complicated editorial history for this collection, within the outlines just sketched. The tension between a Rose version of the material and a "Rose and other stories" arrangement, which almost culminated

in two independent Norton and Macmillan publications, manifested itself time and again during the editing process.

Two early manuscripts, one in first-person narration, the other in first- altered to third-person, provide partial collections indicating one early direction for the book. Both are comprised solely of Rose stories, including those which eventually appear, in the same order, as the first seven stories in *Who Do You Think You Are?* In the first-person draft, "Spelling" precedes these stories;[10] more intriguingly, in the third-person draft, the segments of "Spelling" form interludes between each of the stories, creating a secondary narrative concentrated on Flo, connecting and supplementing the central narrative.[11] So, "Privilege," say, on Rose's adaptation to public school, is followed by the episode of the senile woman spelling, in the County Home where Flo is institutionalized; and the collection concludes, after the final story "Providence," with Rose's beguiling visions of solicitous patience, during Flo's decline. In subsequent revisions of the latter draft, after Munro deleted the "Spelling" material and consolidated it into a separate, reorganized typescript,[12] she seems to begin the process of dividing the collection in two by renaming the characters of the last few stories, not, initially, Janet and Richard as suggested in the Struthers interview, but Laura and Patrick in "The Beggar Maid," Frieda and Richard (and daughter Margaret) in "Mischief," and Claire and Dennis in "Providence."[13] The manuscripts are difficult to date, though internal evidence establishes them as prior to other collection manuscripts in the archives. Disconcerting as it is to find such early evidence of a well-advanced Rose collection, when much subsequent arranging took quite different directions, they bear out Munro's contention of a predominance of Rose stories sometime early in the collection's history.

In the first dated discussion of the book's organization, a letter dated 7 October 1977, Munro's agent Virginia Barber suggested two sections, the first composed of five "Flo and Rose stories," including all the Rose stories in "Rose and Janet" except "The Beggar Maid," the second composed of apparently unrelated stories including "The Beggar Maid," "Mischief," and "Providence."[14] Barber even raised the possibility, half-heartedly, of excluding the Flo and Rose stories from this collection, on the grounds that there might be more on these characters later. She did not allude to the status of the three last-mentioned stories as originally or potentially Rose stories.[15] Barber's letter also included the only reference to "Mr. Black," among the miscellaneous stories, possibly an early title for "The Stone in the Field." And it listed the original three-part version of "Simon's Luck," whose first part, entitled "Emily," would not be perceived as potential Rose material and part of the solution to Munro's problem until later.

A phone call from Munro to Ginger Barber, two months later, on 12 December 1977, held out the promise, instead, of a united volume, of ten Rose stories in a collection to be entitled "The Beggar Maid." Perhaps this was when Munro

experimented with the Rose collections just described. The anticipated stories included a Rose version of "Simon's Luck" — ". . . I'm sure she's bound to meet Simon — that's Rose's luck," wrote Barber in her response to the phone call — and, tantalizingly, an otherwise unmentioned story "Sisters."[16] Nevertheless, despite these very early glimmers of the final collection, the first manuscripts received by Macmillan and by Norton, in the late spring of 1978, are closer to the arrangement proposed in Barber's 7 October letter above. An incomplete consecutively paginated draft of one such version of the collection, expanded at this point by two more stories, can be pieced together in the Munro papers. It is labelled by the Calgary library archivists "Macmillan Mss."[17] but corresponds also to a Table of Contents with annotations in the handwriting of Sherry Huber, Munro's Norton editor.[18] (Munro was released from her contract with Norton on 1 December 1978, after Huber's departure to another firm, and she eventually published in the United States with Knopf under the title *The Beggar Maid.*[19]) On the basis of which stories are noted to be forthcoming and which already have a publication source and date added beside them, the Norton Table of Contents can be tentatively dated April/May 1978.

"Royal Beatings"
"Privilege"
"Half a Grapefruit"
"Characters"
"Wild Swans"
"Accident"
"Simon's Luck"
"Chaddeleys and Flemings"
"The Moons of Jupiter"
"Spelling"
"Mischief"
"Providence"
"The Beggar Maid"

The first five stories, including the uncollected "Characters" (*Ploughshares*, Summer 1978) focusing on Flo's prickly relationship with Rose's tiresome high-school teacher Mr. Cleaver, are Flo and Rose stories in the third person (with handwritten changes into first person). Five of the stories — if we count as two stories "Chaddeleys and Flemings," later divided into the linked stories "Connection" and "The Stone in the Field" — did not ultimately appear in the collection, four being eventually published in *The Moons of Jupiter*. While the impetus for a single-heroine collection was present, these four, plus "Simon's Luck" with its three separate protagonists, resisted incorporation into an homogenous collection.

At about this time, on 28 April 1978, Doug Gibson of Macmillan wrote welcoming Munro to Macmillan's, proposing the title "True Lies" for the collection ("The Beggar Maid" struck him as too "Hans Christian Anderson-ish" [*sic*]) and suggest-

ing the division of "Chaddeleys and Flemings" in two, the omission of "Characters" on the grounds that it duplicated material on Mr. Cleaver in other stories, and the placing of the "Rose" stories last in the volume to avoid disappointing the reader. He also argued against "anonymizing" some of the Rose stories: "The heroine of The Beggar Maid, for example, is clearly Rose; I suggest that you should think twice before plucking too many Roses."[20] At this stage, then, only the first stories in the collection were confirmed as Rose stories. Although the last four stories in the "Macmillan Mss." described here employ Rose as heroine (in third-person narration, revised to first, as in the first stories),[21] Gibson's letter suggests that the publishers first worked with the possibility of Frieda, Claire, and Laura versions and that the substitution of Rose, seen in this manuscript, the rounding off of the collection with a return to the protagonist of the opening stories, took place slightly later.[22] The problem of too few or too many "Roses" was making itself felt.

Within weeks, Munro was formulating the "Rose and Janet" solution, and her correspondence with Sherry Huber at Norton captures her thinking as it evolved. Indeed, we have two separate letters from Munro to Huber written 19 May 1978, with her ideas changing within and between letters.

Oddly enough, Munro seems to have come close to the final version of *Who Do You Think You Are?* here, and to be arguing against it. All the pieces of her final arrangement were present, including a Rose version of "Simon's Luck" and — eventually — the newly composed "Who Do You Think You Are?" but the fit was not right. Having tried all the stories in the first person, Munro found that "The idea of connections did not work. It would make the book seem like a failed, fallen-apart novel."[23] Instead, she identified a group of Rose stories as flowing together naturally and being obviously about one person. "Then — something happens," she argued, "the character in *Mischief* and *Providence* is not Rose. What's wrong, too, is that these later stories are repetitive of certain tones of *Beggar Maid* & the latter part of the book, including the revision of *Simon's Luck*, just would trail off making the same pale points leaving a sense of dissatisfaction. Also, *Simon* works far better in its original three-part form."[24]

The arrangement Munro suggested, then, one already worked out with Macmillan, involved a tripartite structure, with the Rose and Janet sections separated by "Accident." The latter story, "which Doug Gibson likes a lot," was clearly unsuited for assimilation into either narrative because of its focus on a turn of fate altering the entire direction of the protagonist's life. "Simon's Luck" was omitted. "The Beggar Maid" was now — and in all subsequent arrangements — perceived as a Rose story, making the position of "Spelling" "a bit of a problem." Munro shifted it from before to after "The Beggar Maid" between her two letters. And "Who Do You Think You Are?," "a story I'm just finishing," was not yet seen as the capstone to the volume, being placed early in the Janet section. Here is Munro's arrangement in her second letter:

Rose

Royal Beatings
Privilege
Grapefruit
Characters(?) — 3rd person
Swans
Beggar Maid
Spelling

Accident

Janet

1st person:
Chaddeleys & Flemings
Who do you think you are?
Mischief
Providence
Moons of Jupiter[25]

The extent of Munro's uncertainty can be seen in her treatment of "Simon's Luck" and of the general question of narrative perspective. After finding the revisions of "Simon's Luck" unsatisfactory and excluding it from the collection in her first letter, Munro added a postscript: "I think I'll send you 'Simon' rewritten in one woman's story form. I meant it to be Rose; I think it could be Janet if the acting was changed to writing. You might want that instead of *Accident*?"[26] The second letter was sent to accompany a new draft of the story:

> I also sent along [with the first letter] the version of *Simon's Luck* that I had put into 1st person, suggesting that with some fixing it might be a Janet story.
>
> No sooner had I sent it than I thought no, its a Rose story, and I went through & did it all in 3rd with Rose and I happen to think it works that way. It could go after Beggar Maid & Spelling or — flash! — instead of Accident. Thats if we need more adult stories & I think we do.[27]

As we have seen, neither first-person nor third-person version, neither Janet nor Rose version of "Simon's Luck" eventually made its way into "Rose and Janet."

The original three-part version of "Simon's Luck," which Munro initially found superior to her single-heroine draft and from which she would finally sculpt the story in *Who Do You Think You Are?*, juxtaposes, in incremental sequence, stories of three women's pain over Simon.[28] Part One, "Emily," is Rose's story much as we have it in *Who Do You Think You Are?*, except that, in the earlier version, Emily experiences, rather than merely anticipating, Simon's apparent abandonment. The section ends with Emily's flight to the west coast and sturdy resilience. (This is the

only part of "Simon's Luck" to be published in story form, appearing in *Viva* in August 1978.) Part Two, "Sheila," narrates a camping trip of Sheila and Simon's and their encounter with some neighbouring children, focusing on Sheila's absolute and disquieting susceptibility to Simon's alternating moods of distaste and benevolence, her memory of a frantic purchase of make-up in response to a casual remark of his, her ill-conceived hiding of his wallet in a playful gesture which threatens to re-awaken his hostility. Uncertainty is the prevailing mood: Simon could "delight, as if there were no other people in the world and no other place for him, then just drop everything and go away and never come back."[29] The closing lines of the section dwell on Sheila's inability to risk the truth about the wallet and her determination that Simon suffer at least some "scratch, a bit of a jag in the memory" about this day, if only his mistaken suspicion of "those children holding out on him, having designs of their own."[30] Part Three, "Angela," tells of a visit to Simon's rich, sophisticated friends the Callenders, in which Angela, a young bookstore clerk and former student of Simon's, is baited by Caroline Callender. In the conclusion, she flees to a train (and Winnipeg, rather than her original destination of Parry Sound) taking Caroline's wallet and Simon's car keys, after discovering that Simon is in bed with Caroline.

The last pages of the three-part version juxtapose postscripts to each of the three stories.[31] Emily, meeting a former acquaintance while being filmed on a B.C. ferry, faces the disconcerting news, not of Simon's death, as in *Who Do You Think You Are?*, but of his heartbroken response to her departure. Sheila, training to be a speech therapist in Montreal, attempts to exorcize Simon by telling her women's group the story of the make-up, though not of the wallet. And Angela, running into Keith Callender in Ottawa, hears of Simon's alarmingly eccentric behaviour in London, evidence of a breakdown or perhaps simply of one of his adventures. The final lines of the entire story are non-committal: "She did not doubt that Simon would put on socks, and give up eating hard-boiled eggs, and come back, and tell stories. Or one time, he wouldn't."[32] The cumulative effect of three stories of Simon's loves is to reinforce a sense of female vulnerability and of Simon's insouciance — or worse. (Emily's desperate phone call to Simon's Classics department, intercepted by Sheila, the department secretary, who presumes the unknown woman to be "the wife of his friend in Ottawa, with whom he had been having a long-term, sporadic, indolent, affair" — Caroline Callender, in other words — reveals the three stories to be concurrent and so underlines the disparity between Simon's and his lovers' need for one another.[33]) This is quite different from the final use to which Munro puts the story in *Who Do You Think You Are?* There, the focus is more on Rose's own ambivalence, her flight from love's transformation, which "removes the world for you, and just as surely when it's going well as when it's going badly," and her responsibility for a problematic decision.[34]

The manuscripts include a draft of "Simon's Luck" amalgamating Emily, Sheila,

and Angela into a single, first-person heroine (with handwritten changes into third-person narration featuring Rose as protagonist and with references to Flo and Anna), presumably the draft Munro discusses with Huber.[35] Of necessity, it deletes the flight — and indeed everything after Rose's delighted anticipation of the change Simon brings — from "Emily." Perhaps to counteract the imbalance in sympathy created by having Rose endure both Sheila's anxious pain and Angela's betrayal, Munro makes her final decampment more equivocal:

> I left Simon because he slept with his friend Caroline . . .
>
> I left Simon because leaving is easier, and I like leaving.[36]

Rose receives Emily and Angela's communiques, about Simon's broken heart and his bizarre behaviour, and is left puzzling over which ending to anticipate, Simon's return home to tell stories or Simon's deterioration in the park: ". . . she had never got the pieces of Simon to fall together to give her a revelation, plain as a buzzard or a flower. If that had happened, Simon would be coming home . . ." — and here the last paragraph launches into an extended, lyrical, and wry finale, swelling into ". . . declaring that from now on everything would be wine and oysters, warm beds, styrofoam insulation, apple-wood[,] sheep manure; and deep spring nights with the frogs singing."[37]

Munro's indecisiveness about this version and her final decision to omit it from "Rose and Janet" are understandable. The juxtaposition of parallel entanglements was the source of the originality of the initial story. Some of the ironies and reverberations thus created are lost here, along with that rueful awareness of the larger picture provided by the reader's privileged access to all three lives. On the other hand, the succession of betrayals in the three-part version might have invited too pat a reading of Simon as villain. Emily's, Sheila's, and Angela's stories do provide Rose's story with its own (perhaps too predictable) structure: the ecstatic beginnings, muddled middle, and impetuous ending of a single love affair. The painful ironies created by the repeated, abrupt transitions between hope and humiliation, ending with yet another devious manifestation of hope, provide a different but still striking illumination of love's imperiousness. And Munro is beginning, in this draft, to explore the appeal of flight, "an addiction like love itself, but with love you feel you're on top of something, borne up, floating and sipping, and with this other you feel you're right down on the hard rock, everything clea[n?] and sane and silent; what a relief," in a passage anticipating Rose's grateful, convalescent contemplation of ice-cream dishes in *Who Do You Think You Are?*[38] Despite revisions regarding Rose's need to escape love and the concentration on just one woman, however, the single-heroine version does not yet achieve that focus on her inner life (rather than on the mystery of Simon) which gives the story in *Who Do You Think You Are?* its power — and also makes it suitable for inclusion in a story sequence devoted to a single heroine.

Even after the publication of "Simon's Luck" in *Who Do You Think You Are?*, omitting the Sheila and Angela material, Munro continued to redraft the story for the American edition, although the final Knopf version remained very close to the Macmillan version.[39] Eventually, she introduced parts of "Angela" into "Hard-Luck Stories" in *The Moons of Jupiter*, in the narrator's account of her visit with her lover to Keith and Caroline's. And in a 1982 interview with Geoff Hancock, she expressed a lingering interest in redoing "Simon's Luck," because it belonged to a vein of open-ended stories she was still working.[40]

At the time of her 19 May 1978 letter to Sherry Huber, as Munro moved towards a "Rose and Janet" arrangement of her stories, narrative perspective also remained a vexed question. "Now, the problem of first or third person," she wrote. "The Janet stories have to be in first person. (I no sooner wrote that than I thought why? — maybe they could be done third.) And if the Janet stories are in first person, then the Rose stories can't be, because the voices are too similar, so we'll probably have to go for a third/first, with nagging possibilities of a third/third *or* a first/third."[41] Huber circled "first/third," as apparently her choice, but Munro's initial suggestion prevailed for Macmillan's "Rose and Janet." And the third-person/first-person perspective chosen does seem the best choice, promoting the verisimilitude of the portrait of a writer, Janet, speaking at some remove from her fictional creation, Rose, and more personally about her own life.

Between May and August of 1978, Munro decided on the final shape of the Macmillan "Rose and Janet," with the deletion of "Characters" and division of "Chaddeleys and Flemings," as Doug Gibson had proposed, but also the deletion of the obtrusive "Accident" and the shifting of "Who Do You Think You Are?" to final position in the volume. The result was the brief-lived, two-part *Who Do You Think You Are?*, for which page proofs appeared 11 August[42] and advance reviews in October.

Norton was moving in another direction, making earnest attempts to turn the same material into a novel. As early as 20 June 1978, when the Norton and Macmillan contracts were signed, the editors were assuming the publication of two quite different collections, with Sherry Huber resolute about excluding material extraneous to Rose's story.[43] Her letter of 12 September proposed a table of contents corresponding to a consecutively paginated typescript in the Alice Munro Papers:

THE BEGGAR MAID by Alice Munro

{Chapters}

One: Royal Beatings
Two: Privilege
Three: Half a Grapefruit
Four: Characters
Five: Nerve

Six: The Beggar Maid
Seven: Mischief
Eight: Providence
Nine: True Enemies
Ten: Simon's Luck
Eleven: Spelling[44]

Although this may look rather different from the eventual *Who Do You Think You Are?*, it is not, in fact, apart from the inclusion of "Characters" and the omission of "Who Do You Think You Are?," written four months previously. "Nerve" is simply Huber's preferred title for "Wild Swans"; she liked the progression from privilege to nerve to providence and luck in Rose's perception of life. "True Enemies" is the last, three-page section of "The Beggar Maid," depicting the aftermath of Rose's decision to renew her engagement to Patrick. It was moved after "Providence" in the interests of chronology. The tidying up of chronology is consistent with other changes Huber recommended in her letter and in the typescripts, such as the deletion of the last sections of "Privilege" and "Half a Grapefruit," describing changes to the school after the war and Rose's return to a school reunion as an adult.[45] Uncomfortable with narrative gaps and discontinuities, Huber also suggested conventional transitions. Between Rose's first glimpses of Simon at a party and their later conversation in bed, in "Simon's Luck," for example, she inserted the blue-pencilled addition, "That night Simon told me that . . ."[46] As this quotation suggests, the entire novel is in first person.

Norton's never-published novel "The Beggar Maid" — its conventional structure deservedly abandoned — was the catalyst for Munro's sudden decision to stop the presses at Macmillan. Here, for the first time, we have the final version of "Simon's Luck" (giving Emily's story to Rose) and the omission of "Connection," "The Stone in the Field," and "The Moons of Jupiter," usually assumed to be part of the collection. We also have "Providence" and "Mischief" as Rose stories. Yet, despite these resemblances to Macmillan's final, published *Who Do You Think You Are?*, plans for Norton's novel, focusing on a single character, Rose, actually preceded the printing of "Rose and Janet."[47] Munro has indicated that the more urgent publication deadline was Macmillan's.[48] (At the same time, Doug Gibson has stressed that Macmillan — unlike Norton, apparently — was scrupulous not to pressure her to produce that more marketable commodity, a novel.) Having created the "Rose and Janet" arrangement to meet the exigencies of deadlines, Munro was propelled towards her dramatic revision of the collection by her more leisurely mulling over of the single-heroine version she was working on for Norton.

The 18 August version of "Simon's Luck,"[49] using only Emily material, was pivotal. "After you said you liked *Simon's Luck*," Munro wrote Sherry Huber on 19 September, from Macmillan's office where she was scrambling at the eleventh hour to revise the Macmillan proofs, "I got more and more convinced that the

series of Rose stories was the only way to do this book & that the Macmillan book was a dreadful awkward waste of good material and I *couldn't* let them do it. (I couldn't have reached this decision any earlier because I didn't have *Simon's Luck*). Upshot of this was I came down here and put my case."[50] Although Munro had used Rose as narrator in the Norton draft, third-person perspective was constrained, in the Macmillan revision, by the need to conserve the opening stories as already typeset. "Who Do You Think You Are?" was not originally part of Munro's proposal to Macmillan — the revised collection was to end simply with "Spelling" — but, since the book's dust jacket was already designed and in production, she agreed to rewrite the title story as a Rose story, working overnight, and was pleased with the result.

The evolution of *Who Do You Think You Are?* had been tortuous. From Barber's proposal for a Flo-and-Rose sequence followed by miscellaneous stories, from the "Macmillan Mss." of miscellaneous stories framed by Rose stories, and from the Rose/"Accident"/Janet arrangement, all culminating in the Macmillan "Rose and Janet" page proofs, from an early plan for ten Rose stories and from a partial, interleaved Rose-and-Flo manuscript, culminating in Norton's novel-in-progress "The Beggar Maid," Munro had finally created the arrangement she felt to be artistically right. It was chance — the unexpected opportunity to get back to work on "Simon's Luck" earlier in August then anticipated[51] — which had allowed her to forestall at the last moment the publication of two substantially different books, one of which she ultimately judged to be misconceived. Understandably, she resolved, "Never again will I write two versions of anything."[52]

Several conclusions can be drawn from the extremely complicated publishing history, involving one agent and three editors and publishing companies, which produced *Who Do You Think You Are?* (The Macmillan edition can be accepted as definitive, since the 1979 Knopf edition, *The Beggar Maid*, despite considerable attempted revision of "Simon's Luck," contains mainly editorial changes, some of them, like the title itself, concessions to an American audience.[53]) Clearly, the collecting of short stories which even hint at connections one with another can entail extensive creative effort by the author, long after the stories themselves have been completed. In some cases, a story artistically successful in its own right, such as the three-part version of "Simon's Luck" here, must be dramatically altered in order to fill its new function within the collection. Even where no revision is necessary, the sequencing of the stories and their consequent interrelationships necessitate difficult artistic decisions. Chronology may provide some assistance, as with the first four Rose stories which maintain the same order over more than a year of editorial rearranging. But multiple time-frames and dislocation of chronology are familiar narrative strategies in Munro's fiction: of the four stories just mentioned, only "Wild Swans" does not end with a flashforward. The overlapping and intersecting time frames make decisions less inevitable, as with the alternating order of "The

Beggar Maid" and "Spelling," portraying Rose's courtship (but with a jump forward to an episode after her divorce) and her visits home to Flo, respectively. Over the course of the editing process, at least four stories — "The Beggar Maid," "The Moons of Jupiter," "Who Do You Think You Are?" and "Spelling" — were seen as possible conclusions for the volume, each with quite different final effects. And fortuitous factors extraneous to the individual, completed stories — the need for variety in narrative point of view; the presence, early on in the collection's planning, of a handful of stories about the same heroine; the inclinations of editors — may influence the direction of artistic revision and experimentation.

Most intriguingly, the manuscripts cast a different light on the author's subjective experience of an abrupt and thoroughgoing flash of insight, the bathwater-displacing Eureka moment of revelation. "And then, suddenly," she says, "in September, with the book already in galleys, I saw that I could do two new Rose stories." With hindsight, we can see Munro edging close to this solution as much as four months earlier. One of the two stories, "Simon's Luck," written for well over a year,[54] had been proposed as a Rose story in December of 1977 and rewritten as such, though with all three parts, by May. In its final truncated version, it appeared as part of the Norton novel in mid-August, and here all that was missing was "Who Do You Think You Are?" And that story, the other "new" Rose story, had been written since May, though days too late, apparently, to be part of Munro's experiment then with a first-person, single-heroine collection. In December, in the following May, and in late summer, then, we see Munro attempt the hurdle several times, each time acquiring new resources. As with the overabundance of evidence which Thomas Kuhn argues must precede a paradigm shift in the sciences, the moment of insight here is overdetermined. Hence, no doubt, the conviction, sense of inevitability, and facility of the final creative leap.

II. "Turning Dalgleish into Hanratty"

> I felt very odd about being identified as a writer in the midst of what was, so to speak, my material. I was conscious of having done things that were high-handed and thoughtless, turning Dalgleish into Hanratty, easing out certain complications and commonplaces, though I had not meant to do anything of the kind. It seemed to me very strange and somehow unfair that people in Dalgleish should have read things I had written; it was confusing, as if they had escaped from Hanratty and turned around and read about themselves; I was embarrassed.[55]

So reads an early draft of "Who Do You Think You Are?," the first draft to link the Rose and Janet short stories. The device, of making one character the fictional creator of the other, is not new; Audrey Thomas, Munro's friend, uses it in *Munchmeyer and Prospero on the Island* (1971), to cite only one, Canadian example. But it gives "Rose and Janet" an organic structure and a richness of implication not

suggested by Munro's repudiation of the arrangement. Indeed, "Rose and Janet" has an artistic coherence which compels and repays examination of the collection as a finished work in its own right.[56]

Janet, whose significance as author of the Rose short stories emerges unexpectedly in the last pages of "Rose and Janet," transforming all that has gone before, shares features with her fictional creation. As a child, Janet lives at the end of the road in Dalgleish; Rose, over the bridge in West Hanratty. In the first Janet story, we learn of the worsening arthritis, and ultimate early death, of her mother, just as, in the first pages of the Rose section, we learn of Rose's father's early death, and, thereafter, of his lung problems, his cancer. Janet marries Richard, a company lawyer for B.C. Electric, who deplores her Huron County background and snubs her Cousin Iris, while Rose marries Patrick Blatchford, heir to a British Columbia department-store chain, who is equally appalled by his visit to Dalgleish. Both heroines divorce, and leave British Columbia for Ontario, Janet for a place in the country, Rose for Toronto. And both achieve some national prominence as a writer and an actress respectively, eking out a living and a career meantime, Janet writing for newspapers and television, Rose touring with a small company and acting as a television interviewer. Despite a sister Peggy (married, with three little Sams), as an adult Janet faces alone her father's final hospitalization with a deteriorating heart, just as Rose, despite a half-brother Brian (married, with four daughters), bears the responsibility for finding a nursing home for her senile stepmother, Flo.

The two sections differ, however, not only in perspective — the immediacy of Janet's first-person voice, the distancing of Rose's third-person — but also in their emphasis and atmosphere. Janet we see as an adult, despite considerable attention to her childhood memories of her mother's cousins and father's sisters in the first two stories.[57] Although all stories in the collection are in past tense and all advert to subsequent revelations, the preponderance of childhood and youthful experiences in Rose's section gives shifts to later periods the effect of flashforwards, compared with the flashbacks of the Janet section. (Only the second Janet story, "The Stone in the Field," has a similar weighting towards early life.) Apart from brief glimpses of future developments — Hat Nettleton interviewed at 102, changes to the public school during the war, the high school reunion, Patrick's hate years after the divorce — only "Spelling," on Flo's deterioration in old age, explores the mature Rose. Perhaps as a result, only one, passing reference is made to Rose's having any children, whereas we observe Janet's concerns about her daughters Nichola and Judith even into their own adulthood.[58] Janet's sexuality is a mature one — the attempted adultery of "Mischief," the thwarted rendezvous of "Providence"; Rose's a developing one — the abusive sexuality of the schoolyard and neighbourhood, the schoolgirl crush of "Half a Grapefruit," the wandering fingers encountered on her first independent train trip, Patrick's bewildering courtship.

The structure of the book, as with Munro's other story sequences, is discontinu-

ous, composed of connected fragments, with leaps ahead and backtracking and provocative gaps within and between stories; but there is something else here. Each of the two sections is circular, and yet somehow incomplete. The opening of Rose's section, "Royal Beatings," jumps to Flo's final state, mute and defiant in her crib at the Wawanash County Home, and so anticipates and completes the final Rose story, "Spelling," just as the second Janet story, "The Stone in the Field," gives glimpses of her father's hospitalization and death, the subject of the penultimate "Moons of Jupiter." (The final story, "Who Do You Think You Are?," though something of an epilogue, also returns us, through Milton Homer, to the gratified childhood vantage point of the first Janet stories.) Nevertheless, the telling silences about Rose's life before and after divorce leave something wanting. As a narrative, Janet's section is even more scanty and scatty: vignettes of Janet's mother's high-spirited cousins and of a marital quarrel, of Janet's retiring paternal aunts, of an extra-marital affair and its belated consummation, of an attempted romance as a single parent, of final visits with her father, of a childhood eccentric and his mimic. Chronology is less consistent, principles of selection less evident. Taken together, however, the two sections interlock, making one complete narrative, some in the original key, some modulated into fiction. Suddenly, connections — to use a recurring Munro word here — are everywhere. Janet's section, in particular, gains a new coherence as the foundation for, adjunct to, extension of the Rose stories. Janet's rich family history, for instance, counterbalances Rose's deficiency there; her drama of adult life picks up where Rose's account leaves off. (The complementary nature of vignettes and lacunae, tenon and mortise, is, of course, underlined by the readiness with which much of the material dovetails into a single narrative in *Who Do You Think You Are?*)

"Rose and Janet" is a more writerly collection than *Who Do You Think You Are?*, requiring more engagement in deciphering the silences. Much of what happens takes place between the stories — both in the gap between and in the interaction between one story and another. Particularly suggestive is the relationship between the two sections, the tacit transmutation of Janet's experiences into Rose's, of Dalgleish into Hanratty. "Who do you think you are?," the challenge of public-school teacher Hattie Milton to Janet's intellectual complacency, becomes Flo's infuriated attack on Rose's supercilious insubordination. Janet's father's ambivalence about her success — "Fame must be striven for, then apologized for"[59] — is transformed and developed, over several pages in "Half a Grapefruit," into Rose's father's perverse humility, gratified and appalled by her gaudy ambitions. Janet's nervousness about Richard's unfriendly superiority towards her father in "Who Do You Think You Are?" becomes Rose's strangled shame at the collision of Patrick and Flo. The County Home to which Janet learns Milton Homer has been consigned turns into the Wawanash County Home in which Rose must deposit Flo. The violence of Janet's marriage — razor-blade scars, night-time tearing up of

handfuls of grass — becomes the violence of Rose's — the beating of her head against the bedpost, the smashing of a gravy boat through a dining-room window.

In the epilogue to *Lives of Girls & Women*, Munro describes ironically Del Jordan's plans to turn Jubilee into "black fable": "It became an older, darker, more decaying town . . . People in it were very thin, like Caroline, or fat as bubbles. . . . their platitudes crackled with madness. The season was always the height of summer — white, brutal heat, dogs lying as if dead on the side-walks . . ."[60] In less ironic and exaggerated fashion, Rose's story is a darker, more fantastic version of Janet's. (And, like Del's gothic novel, it raises questions about the process of fictionalizing, about "the whole mysterious and as it turned out unreliable structure rising from . . . a few poor facts, and everything that was not told."[61])

Although Janet's father works in a factory and her mother's antique dealing is unsuccessful, their world is almost genteel beside the poverty, bad taste, ignorance, meanness of Rose's working-class environs. Public school for Janet means Miss Hattie Milton, memory work, lantern slide shows; for Rose, it means the teacher barricaded in the school during recess, "lunchpail robbing or coat-slashing or pulling down pants,"[62] Shortie McGill fucking Franny McGill in the entryway of the Boys' Toilet. The eccentrics of Dalgleish — Janet's pathologically shy aunts; queer Poppy Cullender with his lisp, stammer, and rolling eyes; leering, bullying, clownish Milton Homer — are tame beside the grotesques of Hanratty — dwarfish Becky Tyde, with her big head and twisted neck, rumoured victim of child beating and incest, her father horse-whipped to death; squinting, sluttish Ruby Carruthers, duped into accepting a second sexual partner under the veranda; snuffling, drooling, battered Franny McGill, sexually abused from an early age and repeatedly impregnated. Even Flo, wiry, caustic, irrepressible, has an intensity absent in the low-key Janet section. We see Janet, as a child, enjoy family visits; Rose, stagy family beatings. Familial differences express themselves in Janet's father's belated and understated reproof regarding her divorce — "'I never said anything when you left Richard. . . . But that doesn't mean I was pleased'";[63] in Flo's unrestrained outrage, invoking shame and Rose's dead father, over Rose's television appearance as a bare-breasted Trojan woman. Janet's father adopts a scoffing tone to excuse his quoting of poetry; the same enjoyment and self-consciousness appear in heightened form in Rose's father's private vice, the bizarre fragments of Shakespeare and strings of nonsense words — "'Macaroni, pepperoni, Botticelli, beans—'"[64] — issuing from his hideaway in the back shed. Janet and Richard amicably negotiate the custody of their children; Patrick, by contrast, defies the conventions of civilized behaviour, making a public face at Rose nine years after their divorce, "a truly hateful, savagely warning, face; infantile, self-indulgent, yet calculated . . . a timed explosion of disgust and loathing."[65]

A postscript to "Privilege," describing the difference between West Hanratty during the war years and before, could equally define the difference in spirit be-

tween the Janet and Rose sections: "it was as if an entirely different lighting had been used, or as if it was all on film and the film had been printed in a different way, so that on the one hand things looked clean-edged and decent and limited and ordinary, and on the other, dark, grainy, jumbled, and disturbing."[66] (These are relative differences, only. As inevitably in Munro, Janet's world contains its own dark corners of estrangement, marital tension, sexual mischief, and unanchored misery.) In the later *Who Do You Think You Are?*, not only does Rose's story lack the heightening created by juxtaposition with the more subdued Janet stories, but the incorporation of some of these stories into Rose's narrative tones down its overall effect. As with Munro's paradoxical vision elsewhere, the decent and disturbing become part of a single life. Patrick, for example, is both reasonable and savage; he both negotiates custody *and* makes a hateful face. In "Rose and Janet," on the other hand, the daylight of Janet's section and the shadows of Rose's oppose and highlight each other.

"A thought I've had — what do you think of using *Who Do You Think You Are?* for a title, rather than *Rose & Janet.* In which case this story, which is slight but important, could come at the very end. What do you think of its revelation that Janet has written the Rose stories? If we used that, the mirror & slight edge of reflected as well as real woman in Pratt's picture would be good," wrote Munro to Doug Gibson, referring presumably to the Christopher Pratt painting "Young Woman with a Slip" used eventually, instead, as a dust jacket for *The Moons of Jupiter.*[67] The recognition of the connection between the Janet and Rose sections, the clean-edged and the grainy stories, as that of face and mirror image, positive and negative of the same photograph, came well into the arranging of "Rose and Janet." In this, "Who Do You Think You Are?" resembles the epilogue to *Lives of Girls & Women*, which was added when that book was in galleys and which metamorphoses the earlier details of Del Jordan's development. In Munro's words, "Up until now [*Lives of Girls & Women*] was not the story of the artist as a young girl. It was just the story of a young girl. And this introduced a whole new element, which I felt hadn't been sufficiently prepared for. And yet, I found eventually that the book didn't mean anything to me without it."[68] Just as the epilogue transforms *Lives of Girls & Women* into a *künstlerroman*, foregrounding what was previously inconsequential, so "Who Do You Think You Are?" belatedly transforms the parallel stories of Rose and Janet into metafiction.

As Munro readers know, the question of authorship has long preoccupied her, inspiring profound uneasiness. "I sometimes feel just *tormented* by the inadequacy and impossibility," she has said.[69] The stories which she considers most successful in *Something I've Been Meaning To Tell You* — "The Ottawa Valley," "Material," and "Winter Wind" — all investigate the task of the writer.[70] The scruples of the narrator of "Winter Wind," about tricking out and altering the lives of the people around her to suit her own purposes, about actually knowing what she claims

to know, like the impotence of the narrator of "The Ottawa Valley," for all her literary skill, to capture and so exorcize her mother in fiction, reappear in more disquieted form in "Who Do You Think You Are?" The uncollected short story "Home," published four years earlier, perhaps comes closest to "Rose and Janet," laying side by side a fiction and its author's reflections on the artificiality and inadequacy of her attempt to do justice to reality. "*I would like you to see through this parody, self-parody* [of country dialects], *to something that is not lovable, not delightful. I can't get it, I can't quite bring it out,*" she confesses, and later, "*And something happened which I did not put in the story. I was ashamed. . . .*"[71] Like "Rose and Janet," "Home" conveys both the worth and limitations of writing. The narrator rejects a contemplated conclusion which contrasts favourably a stepsister's practical ability with her own retreat into words. She dismisses this as too easy and not honest, as seeming "*to value what I am doing now less than I must really value it.*"[72] The speculative "*must*" in the previous line, though, renders the affirmation tentative. And the final lines are uncertain and self-conscious, apprehensive:

> *You can see this scene, can't you, you can see it quietly made, that magic and prosaic safety* [of an early childhood memory] *briefly held for us, the camera moving out and out, that spot shrinking, darkness. Yes. That is effective.*
>
> *I don't want any more effects, I tell you, lying. I don't know what I want. I want to do this with honour, if I possibly can.*[73]

The pursuit of the honest and honourable in art is a *leit-motiv* running through Munro's fiction and interviews. It is no coincidence that "Home" is dedicated to John Metcalf, whom Munro characterizes elsewhere as "one person who can tell where the soft spots are, what's shoddy, what's an evasion, maybe even mark the place where a loss of faith hit you, not momentously like an avalanche but drearily like a dry trickle of clods and stones."[74] The ineluctable, concomitant awareness of the artifice of art expresses itself in the recurring word "tricks," most notably in Munro's often-quoted characterization of good writing, in "Material," as "[l]ovely tricks, honest tricks."[75] Faith, and tricks. The desolated note, sounded lightly in the last lines of "Home," breaks out more urgently in "Who Do You Think You Are?" regarding this unlikely alliance, regarding Janet's disheartened sense of failure as a writer.

Early drafts of "Who Do You Think You Are?" do not deal with writing (the emphasis is more on identity and assumed identity, leading up to the climactic question posed in the story's title), but they do involve audiences, performances, imitations, and notoriety.[76] Along with Milton Homer, the buffoon, and Ralph Gillespie, storyteller[77] and mimic (and even Janet's father, imitating Ralph imitating Milton), they introduce an exuberant, elderly, female[78] Mongoloid named Jean, resident of the County Home, who communicates through a farcical pantomime — as a mechanical doll, a dancer, a seductress. "Who is she imitating, where

are her models?" Janet asks. "More important, where is her audience?"[79] While recognizing the benefits of the Home's protective cocoon, Janet nevertheless expresses an empathy about Jean's restricted opportunities: "There is just a question left as to whether anybody might miss the loneliness and the notoriety that is possible outside; the audience to entertain and outrage and sometimes to bully; the whole world — that is, the whole town, — to bash against; what Milton Homer had."[80] (In the final draft of "Rose and Janet," the sentiment is applied to Milton Homer himself, now a resident in the Home.[81]) Janet similarly senses an uncomfortable likeness in Ralph Gillespie, both as a schoolchild — "it wasn't just the forgetfulness, the sloppiness, the improvidence; it was something touchy and secret, a bit of flamboyance, restlessness, unwillingness to take things as they are, hard to describe but easy to recognize if you have it yourself . . ."[82] — and as an adult — "I don't mean that I think I might fall downstairs at the legion Hall, drunk, on a Saturday night; but a life spent working on an imitation — more & more an obsession, a ritual, a necessary mistake — I can always understand."[83]

Unexpectedly enough, these mavericks share something else along with their single-mindedness, their flamboyance, something else linking them with the writer: power. Milton Homer, whose reputed indecent exposure can be read symbolically, is described in one early draft as performing a service in Dalgleish, forcing the finest ladies "to acknowledge, every time they crossed the street to miss him, something they pretended never to think about." His correct and subdued behaviour in the presence of his aunts — "Milton would behave like the rather dull young nephew they would normally have had . . . as if he had put down his *powers*, far far down out of sight, out of mind" — is presented as a comedown.[84] Watching Ralph's first attempts as a comedian, Janet feels nervousness, relief, and elation.[85] By the time of *Who Do You Think You Are?*, this has become, more explicitly, Rose's apprehension over Ralph's early Milton Homer impressions and "a shaky sort of longing. . . . She wanted to fill up in that magical, releasing way, transform herself; she wanted the courage and the power."[86] Through her Rose stories, of course, Janet achieves just such a magical transformation — and the power, like Milton Homer, to confront Dalgleish with itself. Given this perception of the natural fraternity of clowns, mimics, and writers (actresses, too, for that matter) — shared temperament, audience, material, power — it is not surprising that Munro's revisions of the story led her to introduce and put increasing emphasis upon Janet's condition as a writer.

The central passage in "Who Do You Think You Are?," quoted earlier in another version, concentrates in its final form less on the social awkwardness of being a writer and more on Janet's tormented sense of literary malaise:

> My father introduced me to the wife of one of his friends . . . and she said, "Oh! You're the writer!" I was not very comfortable about being identified as a writer in the midst of what was, so to speak, my material. I was aware of having done things

> that must seem high-handed, pulling fictions up like rabbits out of hats; skinned rabbits, raw and startling, out of such familiar old hats. I knew that some of my inventions, my oblique, still humiliating, explanations, must be seen as puzzling and indecent. Whenever I came back I had to put what I had written out of mind, else I would be ashamed to see how I had eased out certain complications and commonplaces, though I had not meant to do anything of the kind. It seemed to me, sitting in the Legion, that there was a tone, a density, a truth, I ached to and could not get, that all I had got, really, was the antics.[87]

The final sentence is a last-minute revision to the page proofs, replacing "I would see how badly I had done by the place, in quite a different way than the people there might think." The phrases "my oblique, still humiliating, explanations" and "be ashamed to" are also belated additions, underscoring Janet's unease.

The same enervating, amorphous shame is also inspired, in "Rose and Janet," by social charm — indeed the two sources of discomfiture are sometimes linked — and the comparison is instructive. Promoting plays on local television, leading into her anecdotes in a "puzzled, diffident way . . . as if she was just now remembering, had not told them a hundred times already," Rose is "deeply, unaccountably ashamed," and, back in her hotel room, shivers and moans feverishly.[88] She is unable to remember the people with whom, on her tours, she has shared intimate revelations. (Although not in "Rose and Janet," "Simon's Luck" explores the same phenomenon, in the disarmingly quizzical and indulgent expression Rose "puts on" when confronted at a party and in her solicitous and charming warmth towards students whose names and conversations she then cannot recall.[89]) This disjunction appears more dramatically in "The Beggar Maid," where, for all her "good will, her smiling confession of exhaustion, her air of diffident faith in civilized overtures," Rose remains Patrick's true enemy.[90]

Rose's suspect charm corresponds to Janet's in "Who Do You Think You Are?," where "what elsewhere might have been considered an amusing, slightly confidential, recognizable and even reassuring style" falls flat with Ralph Gillespie.[91] The scene follows that of Janet's chagrin as a writer and comments on it. As Janet explains why communication is impeded — "by my social conversation with its habitual meaningless edge of flirtation, by his reticence, and by the very nature of our feelings, now and in the past" — we begin to see the parallel with writing: "It seems as if there are feelings that have to be translated into a next-door language, which might blow them up and burst them altogether; or else they have to be let alone. The truth about them is always suspected, never verified, the light catches but doesn't define them, any more than it does the memory of lantern slides, and Milton Homer, diabolically happy on the swing."[92] The social exchange not only shares with writing a dangerous ability to beguile with false candour, but also, like writing, exposes the gulf between apprehension and expression. Truth remains elusive, antics all too ready a substitute.

The "Rose and Janet" version of "Who Do You Think You Are?" lacks the

equivalent of the passage in *Who Do You Think You Are?* in which Rose remembers a wave of unspoken sympathy and forgiveness from Ralph Gillespie which eases her chronic shame about her acting and her life. In its place, we have simply the less explicit reflection on Janet and Ralph's unsatisfactory conversation, on feelings too sensitive to be spoken: "Yet there is the feeling — I have the feeling — that at some level these things open; fragments, moments, suggestions, open, full of *power*."[93] This attestation (itself another last-minute addition to the page proofs), partial and tentative though it is, displaces not only the shame of social insincerity but also the more daunting fear of literary futility. Like the affirmation in "Winter Wind" — "Without any proof I believe it [the narrator's perception of her grandmother], and so I must believe that we get messages another way, that we have connections that cannot be investigated, but have to be relied on"[94] — it is an act of faith in personal communication and, beyond that, in the writer's undertaking. The final lines in the story, on Janet and Ralph's special affinity, on his life "close, closer than the lives of men I'd loved; one slot over from my own,"[95] ratify this rare and revitalizing glimmer of shared understanding. Ralph's remoteness in Janet's life and the image of separate slots, though, like the nebulousness and hesitancy of Janet's perception itself, make the affirmation less substantial than that, say, in "Winter Wind." Temporarily assuaged, an aching disquietude about writing, new in its intensity and pervasiveness, remains the focus of this story, encapsulated in the challenge of its title.

Quite apart from its transformative, metafictional effects on the other stories in the collection, the "Rose and Janet" version of "Who Do You Think You Are?" is a strong story, as strong as the final version published in *Who Do You Think You Are?* (The greater kinship between Ralph's mimicry and Rose's acting is, admittedly, a virtue of the latter version.) And "Rose and Janet" is a provocative and complex arrangement, with an entire subtext, enacting the writer's transmutation of life into art, which is necessarily absent from the final single-heroine arrangement. Implicitly, too, the intricate system of correspondences and divergences between Janet's world and Rose's conjures up, in Chinese-box fashion, the figure of yet another writer at work upon her material, raising and answering the question, "That Janet you write about? Is that supposed to be you?" Why, then, did Munro choose to discard this sophisticated text?

Munro described the "Rose and Janet" arrangement as the kind of deliberate cleverness to be eschewed, as "just too fancy." "I liked the idea," she said. "But it was one of my ideas from the top down and I eventually rejected it. . . . It was a little bit pretentious or precious . . ."[96] Increasingly, she has favoured the artless or, rather, the seemingly artless in her work. Reconsidering the structure of her early short story "The Office," for example, she commented, "I'd like it more open, less pointed, even less contrived; I would like it to seem all artless and accidental . . ."[97] What impressed her in James Agee's *A Death in the Family* was the "transparent"

technique, "the long scenes where nothing much seems to be happening," just as what she admired in Agee and Evans' *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* was the appearance of simply having taken pictures of people, of not imposing a point of view or a message.[98] In her own work, she said, "what I most admire is where the fictionalizing is as unobtrusive as possible."[99] Here, as in her commentary on "The Office" where she identified her desire for greater naturalness as "another fashion," she hastened to acknowledge the artifice of such artlessness, adding, "But I'm not so naïve as to suppose that even this, of course, is not trickery." In keeping with Munro's sense of life's haphazardness,[100] though, the trickery must be transparent, the artist consciously shaping the appearance of shapelessness. However random-seeming its component fragments, the hinged structure of "Rose and Janet," with its mirrored portrait, was too deliberate for Munro's aesthetic of indirection.

In the second place, "Rose and Janet" may have seemed to oversimplify the distinction between fiction and reality. Much of Munro's fiction is directed to an increasingly complex investigation of the elusive nature of reality, painstakingly differentiated, through contradictions, retractions, and provisional reformulations, from various plausible illusions, including those of convention, fantasy, and art. It is a fiction of incompleteness and tentativeness, more confident in its withdrawal of authority from particular perceptions — "So she thought" recurs, in various forms — than in its positing of alternative realities. In "Rose and Janet," with the unexpected revelation of the Rose section as a fictional construct, the previously equal ontological status of the two sections gives way to a hierarchy of artifice and "real-life" source. Yet as her use of the phrase "true lies" suggests,[101] Munro resists any simple dichotomy between reality and illusion, truth and fiction. The risk of seeming to relegate the dark emotions and extremes of Rose's section to the realm of fiction, to the status of Del Jordan's gothic fable, may have been one factor in her decision to rework "Rose and Janet."

And, finally, Munro has shown a growing impatience with overt metafictional strategies. Of her "farewell to writing" in "The Ottawa Valley," she reported recently that "now I think I'm disillusioned with the disillusionment," and, of "Home," that she would like to rewrite it deleting the self-reflexive commentary, which was a great relief at the time but now strikes her as a tired device. Acknowledging in this interview that a distrust of writing is still with her, she added, "but I think if you're going to go on doing it you should just shut up and go on doing it."[102] In the collections after *Who Do You Think You Are?*, metafictional self-consciousness is less frequent and more buried; Munro looks less at the literal fictions to be made out of our lives and more at the extent to which lives are themselves already self-created fictions.

In November 1978, then, the collection which appeared on bookstore shelves presented a single heroine, rather than Rose and Janet, and raised questions about the writer's enterprise only indirectly, through Rose's apprehensiveness about a fail-

ure of perception in her acting. What we were not privileged to read was an equally interesting arrangement in which Munro displayed not only the startling, skinned rabbits produced by the writer/magician, but also the ordinary, old hats out of which such rabbits might be conjured.

NOTES

[1] Alice Munro, "Who Do You Think You Are?," Alice Munro Papers, Special Collections Division, University of Calgary Library, MsC 38.4.11.f13. Quotations from Munro's papers are printed with the permission of Alice Munro and the Special Collections Division, University of Calgary Library.

[2] *Globe and Mail Weekend Magazine*, 17 June 1978, p. 3.

[3] Wayne Grady, "Alice through a Glass Darkly," *Books in Canada*, 7, No. 8 (Oct. 1978), 15; see also Sheila Robinson Fallis, rev. of *Who Do You Think You Are?*, *Quill & Quire*, 44, No. 14 (Oct. 1978), 43; Jocelyn Laurence, "Munro, Exploring Disguises," *Chatelaine*, 51, No. 11 (Nov. 1978), 116.

[4] "In the final story, 'Who Do You Think You Are?', Janet binds the entire collection together in a sudden and surprising way," read the original flap.

[5] R. J. Stuart, Vice President Trade Division, Macmillan, to Alice Munro, 10 Nov. 1978, MsC 38.1.75.5a; Howarth and Smith invoice, MsC 38.1.75.5b.

[6] Martin Knelman, "The Past, the Present, and Alice Munro," *Saturday Night*, Nov. 1979, p. 16.

[7] Carole Gerson, "Who Do You Think You Are? Review-Interview with Alice Munro," *Room of One's Own*, 4, No. 4 ([Winter] 1979), 3.

[8] The collection title "Rose and Janet" was changed to "Who Do You Think You Are?" in the summer of 1978, at Munro's suggestion, but, for clarity, I will refer to it as "Rose and Janet" throughout. Alice Munro to Doug Gibson, n.d., Alice Munro file, Macmillan of Canada archives.

[9] J. R. (Tim) Struthers, "The Real Material: An Interview with Alice Munro," in *Probable Fictions: Alice Munro's Narrative Acts*, ed. Louis K. MacKendrick (Downsview, Ont.: ECW, 1983), pp. 30-31.

[10] Alice Munro, "Who Do You Think You Are?" collection, MsC 37.12.29 and "Providence," 37.12.30. Munro subsequently experimented with deleting story titles and, as in MsC 37.12.24-37.12.25, interweaving episodes from "Spelling" (including additional, never-published material on Flo's relationship with the adult Rose) with the stories in this typescript but abandoned the effort halfway through. Munro, "Who Do You Think You Are?" collection, MsC 37.13.1-37.13.4.

[11] Munro, "Who Do You Think You Are?" collection, MsC 37.12.24 and "Spelling," 37.12.25.

[12] Munro, "Spelling," MsC 37.12.25.

[13] Munro, "Who Do You Think You Are?" collection, MsC 37.12.24. The changes might be assumed to have been made for periodical publication — some of these names appeared in the *Viva* (April 1978) version of "Mischief" and the *Redbook* (Aug. 1977) version of "Providence" — but a note attached to clean copies of the revised stories elsewhere in the archives suggests that they were intended for a short story collection. (Munro, "Who Do You Think You Are?" collection, MsC 38.4.1.) Other revisions made to "Providence" in MsC 37.12.24 do not appear in *Redbook*.

[14] Ginger Barber to Alice Munro, 7 Oct. 1977, MsC 37.2.47.18. Files of further correspondence between Munro and Ginger Barber, which are now housed at the Virginia Barber Literary Agency in New York and which might clarify the process of

compilation, are unfortunately closed to researchers, although they will become part of the Munro archives some time in the future.

[15] "The Beggar Maid" had already appeared with Rose as protagonist (*The New Yorker*, 27 June 1977), but had provided her with a different background, with an aunt and uncle in place of Flo and Billy Pope.

[16] Ginger Barber to Alice Munro, 12 Dec. 1977, MsC 38.2.63.9a.

[17] Munro, MsC 38.4.2-38.4.5.

[18] "Table of Contents," MsC 38.2.64.1.

[19] Donald S. Lamm (Norton) to Virginia Barber, 1 Dec. 1978, MsC 38.2.64.12; Sherry Huber, conversation with Helen Hoy, 22 Feb. 1988.

[20] Doug Gibson to Alice Munro, 28 April 1978, MsC 37.2.20.7a-7b. Printed courtesy of Douglas Gibson.

[21] Presumably this is true of "Mischief," for which no collection typescript exists here.

[22] In "Providence," the name "Rose" is typed into spaces originally created by a six-syllable name (presumably "Claire"); a similar procedure takes place in "The Beggar Maid," with the name "Laura" overlooked on the last page and replaced later. MsC 38.4.5.f1-f24, f25-f68.

[23] Alice Munro to Sherry Huber, 19 May 1978, MsC 38.2.64.4a. It is tempting to identify this attempt at connected stories with the undated and abandoned Rose manuscripts discussed above. What complicates matters is that the Rose manuscripts provide earlier drafts of the stories than the "Macmillan Mss." which is itself superseded by proposals in this 19 May letter. Quotations from this correspondence are printed courtesy of Sherry Huber.

[24] Munro to Huber, 19 May 1978, MsC 38.2.64.4a-4b.

[25] Alice Munro to Sherry Huber, 19 May 1978, MsC 38.2.64.5a.

[26] Munro to Huber, 19 May 1978, MsC 38.2.64.4f.

[27] Munro to Huber, 19 May 1978, MsC 38.2.64.5a-5b.

[28] Alice Munro, "Simon's Luck," MsC 38.4.1.4.f1-f40; see also "Sheila," MsC 37.11.23, pp. 1-11.

[29] Munro, "Simon's Luck," MsC 38.4.1.4.f27.

[30] Ibid.

[31] For periodical publication, Munro experimented with creating three separate, linked stories, with each postscript appended immediately after its respective story: Munro, "Simon's Luck," MsC 38.4.3.f1-f61; Charles McGrath (*The New Yorker*) to Alice Munro, 5 Dec. 1977, MsC 38.2.63.9b; Ginger Barber to Alice Munro, 7 Oct. 1977, MsC 37.2.47.18.

[32] Munro, "Simon's Luck," MsC 38.4.1.4.f40.

[33] Munro, "Simon's Luck," MsC 38.4.1.4.f23.

[34] Alice Munro, *Who Do You Think You Are?* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1978), p. 170.

[35] Munro, "Simon's Luck," MsC 38.3.16.f1-f31.

[36] Munro, "Simon's Luck," MsC 38.3.16.f28. These lines are crossed out, in the revisions into third-person narration.

[37] Munro, "Simon's Luck," MsC 38.3.16.f31.

[38] Munro, "Simon's Luck," MsC 38.3.16.f28. One word runs off the page.

[39] See correspondence with Ann Close of Knopf, 13 Nov. 1978–27 April 1979, MsC 38.1.3.5, 38.1.3.6a-6b, 38.1.3.7, 38.1.3.9.

[40] Geoff Hancock, "An Interview with Alice Munro," *Canadian Fiction Magazine*, No. 43 (1982), 84.

[41] Munro to Huber, 19 May 1978, MsC 38.2.64.4d.

[42] "Who Do You Think You Are?" collection, MsC 38.4.9-11, printer's dating.

[43] Ginger Barber to Alice Munro, 20 June 1978, MsC 38.2.63.12b; Sherry Huber, conversation with Helen Hoy, 22 Feb. 1988.

[44] Munro, "The Beggar Maid" collection, MsC 38.5.4.f5. Cf. Sherry Huber to Alice Munro, 12 Sept. 1978, MsC 38.2.64.10a.

[45] Huber to Munro, 12 Sept. 1978, MsC 38.2.64.10b; Munro, "Privilege," MsC 38.5.1.f33, f52-f54; "Half a Grapefruit," MsC 38.5.1.f78.

[46] Munro, "Simon's Luck," MsC 38.5.5.f119.

[47] The draft of "Providence" used in the "Rose and Janet" typescript, for example, bears the original pagination of the Norton typescript, pp. 212-38, superseded by its own pagination, pp. 273-300, and contains, but in clean copy (p. 301), Munro's handwritten revisions to the Norton ending. Munro, "Providence," MsC 38.5.3.f1-f27, 38.4.7.f100-f128.

[48] Gerson, p. 2; Struthers, p. 30.

[49] Alice Munro to Sherry Huber, 18 Aug. 1978, Alice Munro file, W. W. Norton and Company.

[50] Alice Munro to Sherry Huber, 19 Sept. 1978, Alice Munro file, W. W. Norton and Company.

[51] Munro to Huber, 18 Aug. 1978, Alice Munro file, W. W. Norton and Company.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Munro, "The Beggar Maid" collection, MsC 38.6.1-3; Ann Close to Alice Munro, 19 Jan. 1979, MsC 38.1.3.6.f1; Struthers, p. 29.

[54] The first reference to "Simon's Luck" in the archives is in a letter from *The New Yorker*: Charles McGrath to Alice Munro, 3 Aug. 1977, MsC 37.2.30.4.

[55] Munro, "Who Do You Think You Are?," MsC 37.12.11.f3 verso.

[56] The only sustained attention to this manuscript is in the appendix to an M.A. thesis: Linda Leitch, "Alice Munro's Fiction: Explorations in Open Forms," M.A. Guelph 1980, pp. 150-71.

[57] The final section of "Connection" in *The Moons of Jupiter*, returning us to Janet and her sister as children, regaled with the cousins' singing, is absent from "Rose and Janet," which concludes with Cousin Iris's impact on Janet's marriage. Alice Munro, "Connection," MsC 38.4.7.f23.

[58] Janet's daughter Judith becomes Rose's Anna when "Mischief" and "Providence" revert to Rose stories in Macmillan's *Who Do You Think You Are?*

[59] Alice Munro, *The Moons of Jupiter* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1982), p. 219. Where the manuscript of "Rose and Janet" does not differ substantially from the published text in *Who Do You Think You Are?* or *The Moons of Jupiter*, I will quote from the latter sources, for greater accessibility.

[60] Alice Munro, *Lives of Girls & Women* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1971), pp. 247-48.

[61] Munro, *Lives of Girls & Women*, p. 251.

[62] Munro, *Who Do You Think You Are?*, p. 28.

[63] Munro, *The Moons of Jupiter*, p. 228.

[64] Munro, *Who Do You Think You Are?*, p. 4.

[65] Ibid., p. 96.

[66] Ibid., p. 37.

[67] Munro to Doug Gibson, n.d., Alice Munro files, Macmillan of Canada archives.

[68] Struthers, p. 25.

[69] Struthers, p. 28.

[70] Struthers, p. 27.

[71] Alice Munro, "Home," in *74: New Canadian Stories*, ed. David Helwig and Joan Harcourt ([Ottawa]: Oberon, 1974), pp. 142, 150.

[72] Munro, "Home," p. 152.

[73] Ibid., p. 153.

[74] Alice Munro, "On John Metcalf: Taking Writing Seriously," *Malahat Review*, 70 (March 1985), 7. See also Hancock, pp. 78, 97.

[75] Alice Munro, *Something I've Been Meaning To Tell You* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1974), p. 43. See also Munro, *Something I've Been Meaning To Tell You*, pp. 124, 246; Alice Munro, "The Colonel's Hash Resettled," in *The Narrative Voice*, ed. John Metcalf (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1972), p. 182; Struthers, p. 6.

[76] See, for example, Munro, "Who Do You Think You Are?," MsC 37.12.8.f1-f15.

[77] In adding "*Another thing, [Ralph's] a prime story-teller. He's got all the characters in town in his head*" to her text, Munro explained to Doug Gibson, "I think that is needed to balance Janet's story telling." Alice Munro to Doug Gibson, 10 June 1978, Alice Munro file, Macmillan of Canada archives.

[78] In very early drafts, the Mongoloid is male. Munro, "Who Do You Think You Are?," MsC 37.12.8.f11-f12.

[79] Munro, "Who Do You Think You Are?," MsC 37.12.10.f13.

[80] Ibid., MsC 37.12.11.f4.

[81] Ibid., MsC 38.4.11.f16.

[82] Ibid., MsC 37.12.10.f9.

[83] Ibid., MsC 37.12.9.2.f4.

[84] Ibid., MsC 37.12.8.f14, f15; italics added.

[85] Ibid., MsC 37.12.11.f1 verso.

[86] Munro, *Who Do You Think You Are?*, p. 200.

[87] Munro, "Who Do You Think You Are?," MsC 38.4.11.f13.

[88] Munro, *Who Do You Think You Are?*, p. 177.

[89] Ibid., pp. 155, 157.

[90] Ibid., p. 97.

[91] Munro, "Who Do You Think You Are?," MsC 38.4.11.f14-f15.

[92] Ibid., MsC 38.4.11.f15.

[93] Ibid., MsC 38.4.11.f15; italics added.

[94] Munro, *Something I've Been Meaning To Tell You*, p. 201.

[95] Munro, "Who Do You Think You Are?," MsC 38.4.11.f16.

[96] Hancock, p. 88.

[97] Alice Munro, "On Writing 'The Office,'" in *Transitions II: Short Fiction*, ed. Edward Peck (Vancouver: CommCept, 1978), p. 261.

[98] Struthers, pp. 6-7.

[99] Struthers, p. 6.

[100] Hancock, pp. 89-90, 102.

[101] Munro, *Who Do You Think You Are?*, p. 133.

[102] Douglas Freake *et al.*, "Alice Munro," *what*, No. 6 (September/October 1986), 8.

MARKETPLACE

Anne Cimon

"Wisdom is sold in the desolate market
where no one comes to buy."
— WILLIAM BLAKE

She wears a bonnet of illusions
and frequents the crazy market
where men and women shout
their prices too high to pay.
With her basket full of stolen eggs

she returns to her candy-colored house
filled with broken chairs
and infants asleep with mouths open.
Apron on, she cooks
cracked eggs on the stovetop.

At night, crouched in her husband's shadow,
she brushes her long thin hair
and counts silently her one hundred lies.

WIDOW GAZING AT LAKE MICHIGAN

Cornelia C. Hornosty

Voracious, we blue-eyed women
understand when the wind blows,
flakes off bldgs of glass and steel,
when it carves waterfalls of dark marble
laced with white foam in a lake
who longs to lie flat and calm,
a horizon of blue on blue

Our sweeping skies
buffet the lives of somber men
who peer and wend their way slowly
into twisting black caves
and hold up swaying lanterns
throwing great shadows
which make them shudder,
stop, then begin again

We steadily watch their journey,
suck up their lessons, sighing,
weeping over their misfortunes;
our tears lash their bodies
as they struggle out of the darkness
into the grey light and safety
of the curved shoreline

EPIPHANY

Gail Fox

Bright-flecked islands, floating in sunset . . .
Here, as we passed all too quickly.
And then, sky exploded and here was song —
our attention not on that, but on the road.

But to wrestle the mind back there, numb,
incredulous, years slipped by, and still
no mention of that shattering, splintering
of light as we passed, intent on getting somewhere.

Saw something, then forgot, remembered only
when age overtook us. Then, begging for memories,
we returned, perhaps a quibble of snow and ice
triggered it off, or limbs slowly heaving.

Or even that declining centre, calling for help,
and then, perhaps, our eyes seeking it out,
because that was finally all we lived for:
bright-flecked islands, floating in sunset . . .

ATTIC SHAPES AND EMPTY ATTICS

Patrick Anderson — A Memoir

Patrick Campbell

"I rose politely in the club
And said, 'I feel a little bored
Will someone take me to . . . a pub?'"

THE SPEAKER IS G. K. CHESTERTON, not P. Anderson. Yet it reminds me irresistibly of Patrick. Not just because pubs were, for him, indispensable institutions but because we first met socially in a Bloomsbury hostelry called "The Duke of Marlborough" where he had asked me to join him. It was the winter of 1962. Patrick was only an occasional migrant there, preferring the nearby watering holes of a Fitzrovia still haunted by the ghost of Dylan Thomas. But "The Marlborough" was a convenient rendezvous — apparently within walking distance for Patrick and just down the road from the British Museum where I was embattled with a thesis.

I was keen to meet him informally not because I knew much about his books — I didn't — but because I had just secured a lecturing post at Trent Park College where Patrick was deputy head of the English Department. There someone had confidentially ventured the opinion that Patrick could be "unpredictable," and I was in vigorous agreement after an interview in which he asked me, with much arching of bushy eyebrows, what I understood by "baroque." Over the years I learnt that "baroque" was one of his "buzz" words, embracing everything from Rococo architecture, Bach concertos, grandiloquent lectures and highly ornamented prose. But in the interrogation cell of the interview room the word had come like a bolt from the blue and panicked me into jibbering confusion. Anyway, here he was "at home" surrounded by clouds of smoke and an audience of actors and students; holding forth in an elegant upper-class drawl punctuated by the odd short vowel that hinted at a transatlantic experience. Everyone took turns to buy

Patrick a pint of bitter — that seemed to be an unspoken house rule — and his own final ritualistic gesture before "Time, Gentlemen Please" was to ask the barman to fill a large willow-pattern jug with draught beer so selected invitees could continue the conviviality at his place.

There the compulsive process of self-exposure was enacted for the first of many times, warts and all. It didn't seem to matter that we had only just met. The talk was of his beloved mother, so convinced of her son's genius she had written to headmasters declaring with utter conviction "my son is a poet"; his sadistic beatings from one such sinister and lisping head ("Anderson, take your twousers down"); his gilded youth at Oxford where as an undergraduate he had reached the heights of President of the Union ("with Ted Heath my unpaid secretary"), just missed the Newdigate Prize for poetry, spent an evening as host to Winston Churchill, flirted with left-wing politics, been awarded a Commonwealth Fellowship at Columbia University, and helped found two influential literary magazines in Canada. He also regaled us with details of last summer's cataclysmic trip to Greece with the Grand Dame of Movement Studies at college, a lady of Wagnerian proportions and voice who had deserted the cultural caravanserai for a village post-master in Thessaloniki. There were tales of lethal riots and narrow escapes in Singapore, a near-arrest for innocent exposure in Montreal. Dark undertones pervaded stories of boys in Alexandria and gypsies in Granada, scandal about Maurice Forster, Wystan Auden, Dylan Thomas, and the painter Francis Bacon, with all of whom Patrick was apparently on first-name terms. These Rabelaisian confessions reverberated round a basement flat "on the fringes of Soho" with walls the colour of tobacco stained fingers and whose impedimenta is catalogued in *The Character Ball*'s opening tale: ". . . the brocaded curtains . . . the studio couch untidy with cushions . . . the Regency chair, mirrors and ornaments, the papers on the table where I had been writing . . . the marquetry table stranded between the electric fire and the studio couch."[1] On that same couch cross-legged and bare-footed, sat Patrick's companion, Orlando, impassive and Buddha-like, only interrupting in a gravelly voice when Patrick's flights of fancy left "terra firma" far behind.

I have probably amalgamated a number of Andersonian soirées in this description. Twenty-five years can play tricks on the memory. But even if these stories had a habit of resurfacing on different occasions, such was the skill of the raconteur that we always greeted them like old friends.

MANY OF THESE VERBAL SALLIES were about his adventures abroad. Stories of Greece predominated but he could wax equally eloquent about the "menus gastronomiques" of France or El Greco's Toledo. This apparently insatiable appetite for travel and for writing about it was a life-long preoccu-

pation, and perhaps in the final analysis Patrick's accounts of these perambulations may stand as his major literary achievement. In *Snake Wine* he had already written about Malaya, and as he was later to say he would be "almost ritualistically putting passages about Canada into every prose book where they were at all possible."[2] That very year, 1962, had seen the publication of *Dolphin Days*, a "sun-drunk book" about a physical and literary journey from Venice to Athens. It focused on the contrasting personalities of Ruskin and Byron and as the prefatory note states, "was written on a wave of excitement after my second summer in Greece in 1958, and re-written hardly less excitedly during the next two years after further visits."[3] *A Literary Companion to Greek Travel* was in galleys and was to appear in 1964 as *The Smile of Apollo*, a work in which he had been "careful, sober and formally academic."[4] Certainly the range of literary allusion was vast. I know because I handled the copyright clearances.

In a very real sense Patrick undertook these European sojourns in the spirit of "The Grand Tour," an Englishman's response to the Mediterranean "genius loci." He felt that in recording his experiences, exploring his own personality and digging up literary cadavers "en route" he was continuing the tradition of those celebrated forebears. Indeed later Patrick was to write *Over the Alps* (1969) in celebration of the peregrinations of Boswell, Beckford, and Byron. It is a typically rich blend of erudition and personal soul-searching, but his emerging capacity to empathize with his subjects is in evidence from the initial skirmish when he takes us back to Horace Walpole and Thomas Gray as they embark in "The Grand Tour" in 1739. Not that Patrick's own personality is long absent from the action. Travel was for him not just a procedure for getting from place to place, or from present to past; it was a means and a metaphor for self-discovery. Everywhere the book is illuminated by passages in which a twentieth-century sensibility confronts its own obsession with the quest:

> Travel can be a kind of second life freed from routine and the compromises it necessitates, having shed a good deal of responsibility and perhaps acquired rather grander spending-habits than are normal at home, the traveller assumes a less inhibited and even a hazardously free personality. He is, after all, out for experience, which can scarcely be said of his daily trips to the office; and the experience he lays himself open to may contain elements rarely present in his ordinary life.[5]

In a conscious autobiographical aside on the same topic Patrick averred that

> Travel has, I think influenced most of the stages of my life, for I have spent something like sixteen years away from England, in Russia as a baby, in the United States and Canada at the beginning of manhood, in the Far East in my early thirties, and exploring Southern Europe, especially Greece, with approaching middle age.... I go towards and across the Alps in search of the beautiful, curious and diverting.... I enjoy looking at buildings and their embellishments of sculpture and painting, although I prefer my works of art in an organic setting (church or palace, courtyards, gardens, townscape) rather than in an [*sic*] museum or art gallery.... I do like,

above all, to be hammered and dazed and intoxicated into sensuous animal life by a really strong sun.[6]

Less dramatic but more enduring, Patrick had, in 1964, undertaken a shorter but more significant journey — this time on a one-way ticket. He and Orlando had decided to forsake the Gosfield Street basement for what they hoped would be the bucolic pleasures of a home in the East Anglian countryside. For weeks they went on reconnaisance patrols in his ancient blue Bedford van to the "green belt" beyond the metropolis and every Monday brought new tales of desirable properties and not so desirable estate agents. It is worth speculating why this complex man decided on such a drastic step. Certainly, Orlando's love of gardening ("a passionate but frustrated gardener") had rubbed off on Patrick. And Orlando's enthusiasm had run not only to stealing "old suitcases of soil from Fitzroy Square" but, even more improbably, to scampering from the van to scoop up horse droppings, dust-pan style, in *The Guardian* newspaper, all in an effort to turn "the grey-black area outside the kitchen" in that Soho basement "into a nest of green."[7] Orlando's talents needed to burgeon away from the sour soil and polluted air of canyon-like Gosfield Street.

There were other more personal if less paraded reasons. It was at this age that Patrick's hero-poet Yeats had purchased his only piece of real estate, Thoor Ballylee, and in like fashion Patrick saw some symbolic and mythic significance in an artist's acquisition of a rural fortress. Yeats's rather grand feelings on the subject might have been secretly shared by our hero. "I like to think of that building as a permanent symbol of my work plainly visible by the passers-by. As you know, all my art theories depend upon just this — rooting of mythology in the earth."[8] More obviously Patrick undoubtedly fancied playing the part of the country squire, all tweeds and bonhomie as he visualized himself quaffing pints with admiring farmhands in his local pub. And, at the very least, such a permanent dwelling would provide a dignified retreat for approaching old age, a quiet place for study and a repository for all those "objets d'art."

Twenty-three houses later he chose a small and somewhat unprepossessing cottage in mid-Essex, remote by the standards of our tight little island and fully four hours' drive out and back from London. It was on sale for the princely sum of £600. By a strange irony, the name of the village was Gosfield — the same name as the London street he was about to leave. To stave off the prospect of an irksome journey by decrepit van, he bought an Austin Mini.

Once installed Patrick started to stamp his image on the interior with his customary enthusiasm, while Orlando tackled the tangle of roses and thickets of elder in "that battlefield of a garden." But it is through Patrick's prose that the house leaps into view both before and after its transformation, at first a near derelict cottage of white painted lath and plaster, "like the ideogram of a house, three

windows on top, two below with a door between them very small and upright, very taut and even prim. . . ."[9]

Eight years on when Patrick had created his own little Arcadia, he described the transformation of man and mansion in loving detail as he concluded. There was, he said, now an "incredulous joy of possession" for a man "who never had a proper bedroom upstairs from 1938 to 1963." How, he asked, could

> such a houseless, rootless, stairless creature — slave of the bedsitter, occupant of the promiscuous studio couch — actually own this small sedate-seeming house which on entrance turns out to have its share of curiosities and extravagances, strange colours (doors recently of violet smoke), exotic objects (fetishes, cherubs), intriguing, bewildering and shameless smells, not to speak of walls of books, a few fair paintings, some furniture of classical austerity.[10]

Of course the tone *is* a bit smug, as Patrick admitted when describing his "self-satisfaction" at tending a garden of nearly one thousand varieties of plant. But the passage demonstrates his catholicity of taste; his absorption in all the senses (especially, like Orwell, in smells) and his magpie instincts for collecting bizarre bric-à-brac. Here Patrick was "at home" in a fuller sense than before, nurturing the late flowering of both garden and talent. Titles of poems such as "On Buying London Paving Stones For The Garden," "The Cupboard" with its reference to "my house so precise and thin," "Advice to Visitors" and "An Essex Lake" would later announce themselves as products of his Essex maturity.

But one aspect of this rural idyll could not have been predicted — a sudden consuming interest in wild animals. Those "intriguing, bewildering and shameless smells" emanated from a menagerie of creatures, owls, a rabbit, hedgehogs and jackdaws, in temporary residence, but above all from the more or less permanent inmates — two ferrets and, at different times, three foxes. If they rarely put in an appearance, they certainly let you know they were there! In the distant past, Patrick had kept a pet gibbon "like a fur pear"[11] in Malaya and a magpie in Dudley, but the scale of this enthusiasm made one speculate that these new friendships were born of a growing disenchantment with humankind. It was undeniable that Patrick now sometimes wore the new mask of recluse and as he lurched towards his sixtieth year, those four arduous hours of stop-start driving cramped into a Mini increased his reluctance to continue in the ranks of Auden's "dense commuters."

So while *Foxed* is replete with fresh observations about the countryside, a naïve townee's response to the natural world, it is also clear that the book hints at a deliberate policy of splendid isolation, a conscious withdrawal into a world of plants, animals and one trusted human being.

If I have referred to *Foxed* in some detail, it is also because I warm to its homely charms, because it became the quarry for quite a lot of late poems and because it was conceived, gestated and born during the years of our academic co-operation

and friendship. The book was in fact published by Chatto and Windus a mere three-and-a-half years before Patrick retired from Trent Park.

I HAVE BARELY MENTIONED Patrick's Trent Park role as teacher and educator, but that does not imply that it was in any way unremarkable. Until he grew disillusioned, he ran his show with great éclat, especially once he became Head of Department. Impatient of the minutiae of administration or the tedium of committees, he conceived his role as that of leader by example, inspirer and enspiriter. He was the head prefect, we were the sub-prefects and the students school boys and girls of varying levels of maturity and promise. Some disciples were worth saving, others emphatically were not. Written exhortations were delivered like salvos when he sensed morale was slipping, or we just needed a kick up the backside. The analogy with Auden and his acolytes in the thirties — Spender, Day Lewis and company — is hard to resist. I am sure it occurred to Patrick, whose manners were becoming increasingly Audenesque and whose face was developing a striking resemblance to that "wedding cake left out in the rain."

One manifestation of this paternalism was an oft-expressed wish to listen to and join in other tutor's seminars. Surprise arrivals in class were not unknown. I recall glancing up one day while delivering an obviously tedious lecture on Conrad to see Patrick, head on desk and conspicuously asleep in the back row. He could upstage people unmercifully. Lead-off man in a joint lecturing enterprise with me, he repeatedly referred, in passing, to matters which he assured his audience I would be dealing with expertly and exhaustively. Needless to say, I was not expecting to deal with these points at all. He was capable of withering one-liners and short, sharp character assassinations. A world-famous professor who incurred Patrick's disdain by confiding that "footnotes were his favourite reading" became "that little Sealyham of a man"; one colleague was "corduroyed and colourless." It is a pity that this sardonic wit does not sparkle more often in the poetry. "Among the Progressives,"[12] a trenchant satire on the jargon-ridden conversation of his fellow educators was about as far as he would venture in this direction.

More often the written cannonades took the form of confidential instructions to the troops. One such salvo was fired across the bows on 1 July 1970. It was entitled "A Message to My Colleagues" and encapsulated most of Patrick's aims and achievements as a teacher of literature. One of his own verdicts on himself, it began: "I have always wanted us to be open and copious in our discussion of books, plays, poems and the ways of teaching them." This, from first to last remained a cardinal point of the Anderson creed and in my view an utterly laudable one. Literature was Patrick's life — or most of it — and he expected us to be voracious readers, writers and talkers. In this he led by example, but it was a hard act to

follow. He went on to urge the development of "written focal points for discussion," a department document "where we should be challenged to set down our ideas on language, poetry and so on, and to attempt practical criticism like our students."[13]

In this last context, I still possess a whole series of critical analyses of unattributed poems which we wrote and discussed à la I. A. Richards at departmental meetings. He was invariably keen to generate an atmosphere of intellectual enquiry and was anxious that the rest of the institution should be aware of it. Under the heading "The Department and the College," he referred to two Anderson-inspired displays in the foyer — one on "The Greeks," one on "Autobiography" — and the promotion of successful meetings with such writers as the playwright Arnold Wesker and the poet Ted Hughes. Elsewhere he spoke of his influence on a college magazine and the appearance of *New Obelisk* poetry "with its quite unusual mingling of the work of staff and students and the real seriousness and scholarship of some of its contributions."[14] Self-congratulation apart, Patrick's influence on the creative life of the place was profound. There were "Writers Workshops" every week, poetry readings and visits to galleries, pubs, and museums. During this fecund period Trent Park produced at least one dramatist of note (Peter Nichols) and any number of published poets. There's no doubting the catalyst in all this activity. Not that Patrick needed encouragement as a self-publicist. His "Humane Values in a College of Education" certainly struck a sonorous Andersonian chord with its thesis that "education should be having life and having it abundantly." But the conclusion reverberates with another and discordant note, that of the tension and alienation experienced by that Janus figure, "the Writer Head":

> . . . the practice of literature sometimes seems very different from the practices of an English Department. The one intensely personal and emotional, maybe tremulously quiet, a listening upon silence, often concerned with the subtlest discriminations in character, scene and atmosphere, and frequently, I am afraid enormously self-absorbed; and the other a bluff, outward-going relatively crude if kindly hugger-mugger and rubbing along of eagerness and busyness, schedules to complete, papers to mark, committees to attend and students to jolly along. No wonder that hybrid, the Writer-Head, sometimes winces — what a nag he feels as he looms in the S.C.R. trying to catch someone's eye, with his message to deliver or his form to fill in.[15]

I have quoted the conclusion verbatim for it shines the spotlight directly on Patrick, with its eloquent idiosyncracies of language and its growing preoccupation with what he saw as his schizoid life-style, a sensitive artist trapped in an environment of agendas and memoranda. One of the magi, he was conscious that there were now all too many "alien people clutching their gods."[16]

On mature reflection I believe that Patrick was at this time in the throes of an artistic crisis. It was doubtless convenient to blame extraneous factors but not entirely convincing. The "visionary gleam" had apparently deserted him. And even the prose source — and prose unlike poetry could "hesitate, qualify, try again" —

was drying up. Could some new stimulus spur him into song? On cue, Canada re-entered his consciousness. "America's Attic," "the empty room," was tenanted by people beckoning to him across the water and the years.

To recapitulate for a moment. If Greece had been the epicentre of Patrick's old world, rediscovered in the fifties long after the ritual steeping in the classics at Sherborne and Oxford, then Canada had previously occupied that position during the forties. But Canada had suffered usurpation; for many years Patrick had gone through the motions of erasing Montreal from the memory, aware, I suspect, that the *Preview* moment could never be recaptured. Now in 1970, however, things began to change. During our chats over a pint in the college bar, I sensed his need to confront the Canadian experience again. He wanted to hear my enthusiastic reminiscences of UBC and Vancouver once more. This resolution was fuelled if not sparked off by good vibrations from those distant shores. Baffled for so many years by what Patrick felt was Canadian critical indifference to his work, he was discovering that his reputation as a Canadian poet was not so moribund as he had feared.

Excitedly, he showed me letters from McGill and elsewhere — research students and professors were on the *Preview* trail. He was to be the subject of an M.A. thesis at the University of Alberta; he heard somewhere on the grapevine that Northrop Frye had long since been favourably impressed by *The Colour As Naked*. Halls of Academe were showing an interest in his manuscripts.

That kind of academic respectability appealed to Patrick (he was, for example, to mention *The Bush Garden* review by Frye many times subsequently), especially in view of the fact that most of his prose memoirs were out of print or had been remaindered by publishers. There was melancholy evidence of that in the English library at college where rows of pristine copies stood on the shelves accumulating dust. However, flattery and fame were always the spurs that pricked the sides of Patrick's intent. Now he was aware that "there were still Canadians, both old and young, interested in my work."[17] Such recognition stimulated in him a sudden appetite for things Canadian — as though he had regained the taste for sockeye salmon. As he observed in the preface to his last collection of poems, "the turning point — the start of much examination, reinterpretation and revision — was my discovery not only of this Canadian interest but also of the new Canada itself."[18] Now he wanted to write poetry again. Canada was there to provide not only the impetus and incentive, but also the subject matter — a rediscovered "country of the mind."

True he had never stopped writing what he called "occasional verses" during a period he now felt was imaginatively fallow, but his last collection, with that

Thomas-like title of *The Colour As Naked*, was a distance behind him. Now the interminable wrestle with words was to be fought once more on the canvas of poetry. And poetry and Canada were together again in a close embrace. Later, in interview, he confided: "I figured I should cultivate again a sort of country of the mind" which had released my imagination and which was still, especially after I had re-visited it, a place I was glad to have adopted. I mean I genuinely like, even love Canada, and I have never felt especially English."[19]

Patrick's colleagues and students were made abundantly aware of this rekindled enthusiasm for poetry. Why, he hectored, weren't we all writing verse? Duplicated sheets of newly minted offerings appeared; sometimes he would try out a piece on students without admitting he had written it. I still have stapled photocopies of "Selected Poems" which appeared in three typed instalments. Part Three, containing "several new or newer" pieces, opens with "On First Getting Reading Glasses." It is a revealing piece both in terms of a characteristic language that combines a studied elegance and a conscious modernity, and in its neat encapsulation of Anderson the teacher. He comes before me as I read:

> They brought me a new manner
> a hint of lecturer's baroque
> as I dangled them from my finger
> to stir a hiatus up
> or pushed them into my hair
> with the bright bewildered look
> of someone glad to be back
> from a ton-up round literature.[20]

Getting reading glasses was for Patrick quite a step, an acceptance that the ageing process was taking its toll. He no longer resembled that slender, I imagine rather dandified, figure of his youth, with a Wildean sense of the sartorially outré. Now he cut a homespun figure in his baggy trousers and Harris tweed jackets. The face was dew-lapped and creased, a sedentary life-time of saloon bars and tobacco had left him leaden-footed and squeezed for breath. Yet the blue eyes were still curious and searching, and the desire to find compensation for physical decline drove his new-found muse ever harder. Yeats, the supreme poet of old age, became Patrick's oft-quoted protagonist and anti-mask as he dragged his own "battered kettle at the heel"[21] along the corridors of Trent Park. The gyres of time were moving outward and upward and the ascenting staircases drained his strength as he reached his attic office, and gave him an air of frailty. But was there not "Sailing to Byzantium" and "The Tower" to trumpet the triumph of art over decay?

Such a preoccupation with the late poetry of Yeats was, I suggest, also instrumental in his desire to revisit old poems and old places. Just as Yeats did the poetic round of youthful haunts, so Patrick's late flowering was in part the result of a profound longing for a country he had at worst forgotten, at best neglected. Should

he get the chance to return, he felt he could do poetic justice to the landscape of Canada, especially now he had served a rural apprenticeship in the "agricultural limbo" of Essex, an experience he later explained had "helped freshen my eyes" and allowed him "to draw strength from nature."[22] It is significant that one of these anticipatory poems, "My Lady of Canada" (*c.* 1970), about the love-hate relationship of the poet and his muse and taking its central metaphor of "immoderate snow" from the Canadian winterscape, reverberates with echoes of "The Circus Animal's Desertion." Like Yeats, Patrick was taking a long if recollected look at the sources of his earlier poetic inspiration.

In 1971, Patrick finally made up his mind to return to Canada after a twenty-year self-imposed exile. I recall his intense, school-boyish enthusiasm at the delicious prospect of meeting old friends. He had already renewed acquaintance with Frank Scott on 5 September 1970, the exact date derived from a letter Patrick sent me at the time:

> At 11.30 Frank Scott arrived from Canada — all thirteen honorary degrees of him, spry and witty at seventy — to beguile me with his plans that I should go over there this term and lecture over the resurrected corpse of my poetic reputation. I drove him to luncheon here (Essex) and the immediate past fell away.[23]

Frank Scott gave Patrick the impetus he needed and in October of the following year he set sail on the QE2 with an invitation in his pocket from the Canada Council. He was determined to do the thing in style, to wring the last drop of nostalgia from the visit. Hence the sea voyage. We sent him a telegram "en route." He replied from the McGill Faculty Club.

> I was pleased and really very touched to get your splendid Greetings Telegram on the QE2.
>
> The crossing was at times very rough — odd for that opulent and garish hotel to be dashing through the waves at 28/9 knots aided by 110 thousand horses.
>
> The bus trip thru' Catskills and Adirondacks lovely and scarcely too long. Montreal greatly changed: soaring with skyscrapers, enormously sophisticated, all restaurants and boutiques, the capital of a French state. But the Faculty Club is Gothick gloom, like the Oxford Union.
>
> Have given two readings — one on the eighteenth floor of a tower near Ottawa — and been wined and dined most nights.
>
> Hope all goes well with you and your broods,
>
> love,
>
> Patrick
>
> P.S. I am trying to avoid a Dylan Thomas by mostly drinking Molson's beer in taverns.[24]

The Dylan Thomas connection was still dogging his progress but of course we

knew what he meant — he was avoiding the "hard stuff" and the prospect of self-destruction.

One month later, Patrick returned, still agog with excitement. He had been fêted and lionized, "the new Canada" had been all he hoped for, he wanted to return and put down still deeper roots by researching modern Canadian literature. From now on, poetry was the obsessive centre of his consciousness. He began systematically to revise the poems of the *Preview* days, to edit out the rhetoric, and more important, to write afresh about his new-found land. As colleagues we were the privileged first readers of these efforts. The titles tell their own story of a Canada both ancient and modern, subsequently published under the headings "Notes from An Old Montreal Wartime" and "An Expanding Neighbourhood." The last section would consist of poems "of my post-Montreal, exiled, ruralised and now ageing self";[25] the early section, apart from "Whistle Stop: Vermont" — and it is only a whistle stop in New England — would contain the poems about Montreal and its environs.

THE MUSE HAD PATRICK "in thrall" and in 1972, he handed over the reins of office to me in order to concentrate on his poetry. More specifically, he was gathering together a body of poems that he liked (and some of the early ones he clearly did not) for a *Selected Poems* of some fifty preferred pieces and a *Collected* "magnum opus" of about one hundred and fifty. What eventually emerged was the seventy-one poems of *A Visiting Distance* published by Borealis Press in 1976 and the fifty-five of *Return to Canada* put out under the imprint of McClelland & Stewart a year later. Patrick called them "parallel selections from a considerably larger body of work" but it is hard to resist the impression that *Return to Canada* contains most of his favourites. It is not my brief to offer any steady criticism of the poetry but the new verse is generally less self-conscious, the baroque preciosity of much of the forties' stuff replaced by a style striving for greater clarity and directness. As Patrick says in the *Inscape* interview, "I have been pruning my rhetoric. . . . I've been inclined more and more to what I think the Germans call the 'Dinglich.' I like things; I like objects. . . . I prefer . . . nowadays accurate descriptions with their own maybe austere magic, to rather loose and wordy romanticism."[26]

"Remembering Baie St. Paul," an account of a traumatic summer centred on a "propagandist marriage" that went right against Patrick's sexual proclivities, not only has great honesty but even offers a retrospective critique of "the one poem that might have come off that summer." More matter, fewer words — or at least fewer pyrotechnics — that was now a conscious endeavour. If the early poetry had invited comparisons with Dylan Thomas — "a tea-drinking Dylan Thomas" at that — the mature gaze looks frequently in the direction of Yeats and Auden. "Advice to

Visitors," for example, derives inspiration from "In Praise of Limestone." The metaphorical treatment of the natural world, the tone, cadences and rhythms echo Auden's celebrated topographical poem. And Auden's preoccupation with familiar places and objects in *About the House*, his volume of 1965, finds a parallel in all the familiar references to paintings, trees and things in the final section of *Return to Canada.*

Patrick's second and extended visit to Canada took place two years after the first, in 1973. We heard little from him during that year, assuming that his research into Canadian literature was proving totally absorbing. But when he did come back from his sabbatical he was clearly unhappy at the prospect of rejoining an institution with which he was losing contact. The tensions, earlier enumerated between his creative self and his role as administrator, were very much on his mind. In a letter to me that summer of 1973, he wrote, "As the angst-ridden prospect of another academic year looms nearer and nearer, I have nonetheless the greatest hopes of our collaboration."[27] To make matters worse, the world of Trent Park was in a state of turmoil that mirrored his own unease. These were anxious times for all of us. Our little campus was now the potential victim of a takeover bid, soon to be engorged by a large, amorphous and impersonal predator. A natural maverick (Patrick preferred the word "bohemian"), the student unrest of the sixties had merely intrigued him. But this was more sinister. And by the end of another "angst-ridden" year, he felt he couldn't hang in there much longer. There were now two lynchpins in his world, rural Essex where he could continue to write and relax with his pets and plants, and Canada where he hoped to return every summer to lecture, research and write. Already Patrick had managed to squeeze all his teaching into two days each week. Closeted in his tutorial room, surrounded by memorabilia, an enormous jade plant on his desk, he conducted seminars with chosen groups of mature students. Afterwards, I would see him taking his little mongrel dog for a walk round the estate before whizzing off down "Snakes Lane" and out to Essex. Trent Park had become dispensable. It had to go.

We planned a royal send-off. As usual Patrick featured prominently in "Subject Week," that peculiarly English Department activity he had done so much to promote during his years of stewardship. There was a picnic by the lake, a poetry reading in the Orangery, a pilgrimage to the old amphitheatre in the woods, a treasure hunt and a literary quiz. I still have the programme of events. Patrick presided over a Dionysian ceremony in the New Hall, bedecked with a laurel wreath from his own garden, and recited a Pindaric Ode composed for the occasion. Not to be outdone, a visiting poet got very drunk, dived into the shallow end of the pool and, in a state of semi-consciousness or inebriation or both, surfaced with hand to bleeding head. Muttering about "this precious cargo" in apparent remorse, he then vanished into the suburban terraces of Hampstead with a woman student, and despite frantic phone calls from his wife, failed to surface for several days.

These junketings were followed by a departmental evening at which Patrick shamed us into silence by confessing how lonely and unappreciated he felt. Mellowed by wine, I made a speech which celebrated his manifold virtues in the most baroque and effusive prose I could muster. Patrick was, I think, nonplussed, but returned the next day, the final day of his nineteen-year sojourn at Trent Park, to deliver the grand valedictory address. All his books were on display in the Senior Common Room, monuments to the talent we had failed adequately to acknowledge. It was a sad occasion in more ways than one. Perhaps Patrick was right. At least I have often thought so since. He needed to be appreciated — no, more — to be loved all the time, even if his sarcastic sallies sometimes made one forget his vulnerability. And all in all he had given so much. At his best he was, quite simply, one of the two finest lecturers I have ever heard.

To garble Garrick's impromptu epitaph, "he wrote like an angel but did not talk like Poor Poll." Students loved him or merely endured him, but they always respected his knowledge. He was a wordsmith who could tap ringing phrases and new-minted coinages from the same inexhaustible fount as "Mr. P. Jones, Teacher," surely a poetic persona for himself. He introduced me to a host of writers — such modern Europeans as Proust and Rilke, the Americans Hart Crane and John Crowe Ransom and minor English talents like Denton Welsh and Cyril Connolly. His knowledge of the modern movement was as profound as his immersion in the world of Attic grace. By the time he began flirting with the muse again, his poetry had acquired the strength that comes from empathizing with the minds of others; his research into other writers had alerted him to the need to subvert his constitutional narcissism, to focus on subjects and issues beyond the Romantic self.

He realized too that, despite his late-won love of rural Essex, he was a poet who needed a profounder sense of place, of roots. For all his quintessentially English manners, Patrick never felt himself a dyed-in-the-wool Englishman. Canadian was, finally, what he felt he was. The "New Canada" gave him a subject, a poetic "raison d'être," a sense of identity. The last line of his "Inscape" interview avers, "I guess I *am* a Montrealer." What a pity then that "My Lady of Canada"[28] had played host to Patrick only during an extended spring and a golden autumn. Had his "partially Canadian sensibility" (Anderson's phrase) had a chance to make a permanent home in "America's attic,"[29] much of the prose with its strongly European emphases and experiences would have been forfeited, but the poetry would have found a subject-matter, a conviction and a power it achieved too fitfully and too late. None knew that better than Patrick.

NOTES

[1] *The Character Ball* (Norton: Chatto & Windus, 1963), p. 7.
[2] *Inscape*, II, no. 3 (1974), 70.
[3] *Dolphin Days* (London: Gollancz, 1963), prefatory note.

[4] Ibid.

[5] *Over the Alps* (London: Hart-Davis, 1967), p. 30.

[6] Ibid., p. 38.

[7] *Foxed* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1972), p. 17.

[8] W. B. Yeats, *Letter to Sturge Moore*, 21 September 1926.

[9] *Foxed*, p. 4.

[10] Ibid., Preface viii.

[11] "A Monkey in Malaya," *Return to Canada* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977), p. 26.

[12] *A Visiting Distance* (Ottawa: Borealis, 1976), p. 48.

[13] *A Message to My Colleagues* (unpublished).

[14] Ibid.

[15] *Humane Values in a College of Education* (unpublished).

[16] T. S. Eliot, "Journey of the Magi."

[17] *Return to Canada*, Preface.

[18] Ibid.

[19] *Inscape*, p. 72.

[20] *Return to Canada*, p. 106.

[21] W. B. Yeats, "The Tower."

[22] *Inscape*, p. 74.

[23] *Unpublished Letter to Patrick Campbell*, 5 September 1971.

[24] Ibid., October 1971.

[25] *Return to Canada*, Preface.

[26] *Inscape*, p. 71.

[27] *Unpublished Letter to Patrick Campbell*, August 1973.

[28] *Return to Canada*, p. 110.

[29] Ibid.

NOTES ON A PRISON WALL
(Fragment)

Nicholas Catanoy

"The world itself is but a large prison out of which some are daily led to execution."

— SIR WALTER RALEGH

Dumbfounded
that the sun and I
can exist
together
in the same cell

§

Methodically
lost in the rituals
of dying.

§

Orion
stands over my cell simple
and inimitable.

§

A bird reaches
behind my eyes and finds
them empty.

§

Time around scars.

§

The biggest hangman is not unexpected.
The instant of arrival is surprising.

§

Alone at noon
the flowers have faces.

§

To see no longer, even means to see.

§

That which is not daring is nothing.
The earth turns towards the night,
as for that thin entelechy.

§

I cannot decide
in which direction to walk.
Is anything central?
Some day I will descend to Bosch's
inferno.

§

Tragedy isn't getting something, or failing
to get it: it's losing something you already
have.

§

We do not hang you because you stole a horse
but that horses may not be stolen. (Seneca)

§

I have often
regretted my words,
never my silence.

§

For a good cause, wrongdoing is a virtue.

§

Only the dream survives time

§

Water seeks its own level.
Tree seeks its own root.
Life seeks its own solitude.

§

If there ever was a hero,
it was you — García Lorca.
You were divine.
Poems passed between robins.
Echo became a rose.
The light was your home.
Here and there, in cold pockets
of remembrance,
whispers out of time.

§

To be great is to be misunderstood.

§

Not to seek, but to accept.

§

The great masses of the people . . . will more easily fall victims to a great lie, than to a small one. (Hitler)

§

The world is not the most favourable season
for a surprise.

§

When I was a child, nobody died.
But now it happens all the time.

§

God made me humble and obedient to my rule.

§

Clarity
is restored
by the way the sun
shines on us.

§

I have shrunk
like a cut flower.

§

It is always a chance of charity when we are dead.

§

The mind dances
with itself but only the dance
is sure.

§

I was born lost and take no pleasure in being found.

§

The power of the invisible
is the visible.

§

It is another kind of wait,
waiting for the wait to be ended.

§

I postpone my immortality
in long flowering sea-thrift
and metrics, lacking
elemental memories.

§

Keeping pace with the body is a handicap.

§

My skies are all caves.

§

Am I, then,
the first man
to die on a night of arranged
lies?

§

I can endure my own despair, but not another's hope. (William Walsh)

§

Let my right hand
extend
to the small gull that rides
the hollow between
the wind
and the sea.

§

Nothing is worse in prison than the consciousness of one's innocence.

§

The world
is turning me
into night.

§

The air digests the sparrows.

§

Dying is an art.

§

Autobiographies ought to begin with the last chapter.

§

Life is built of indiscrete instants.

§

Being accumulates negatives.

§

Perhaps the only true dignity of man is his capacity to despise himself. (Santayana)

§

An owl cries
in the shifting darkness.

§

I fall more and more into my silences.

§

The philosophical act par excellence is suicide. (Novalis)

§

The day dies in a flower.

§

Ends are not consequences.

§

Some leaves fall with that sound
one listens for.

§

I believe in all those fugitives.

§

Each day, the last day.

§

Because death is inevitable, human initiative
is doomed to failure.

§

Learn to cope with a world which is built entirely
on the fake.

§

My life is something I can evaluate, but who am I to evaluate it? (Gabriel Marcel)

§

As soon as one is unhappy
one becomes moral.

§

I've always made the mistake of being myself.

§

A coincidence must be
part of a chain
whose links are unknown
to me.

§

I was a stone in Sahara
with my own credit card.

FELIX LECLERC

Philip Stratford

8.8.88. FELIX EST MORT. The front page of *La Presse* is given over to the news. Pages 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 also. Tributes from everywhere: family, neighbours, politicians, fans, fellow poets and musicians. "Défenseur de la langue," "le grand poète," "one of the two pillars of the country," says singer Claude Léveillé, "René the father, Félix the grandfather of Québec." Words Leclerc had written about Lévesque are now turned back to him: "He belongs on that very short list of true liberators of the people."

He had just turned 74. For twenty years he had lived in near seclusion in the village of St. Pierre on his beloved Ile d'Orléans. The public man had become more and more private, the chansonnier reverted to the poet, the troubadour to the man of the land. After October 1970 he growled in rage and wrote "L'Alouette en colère." But he was always an independent *indépendantiste* and had an original vision of an equal three-way sharing among French, English, and Native People.

He continued to the end to write humorous, touching, ironic meditations on his life and times. He had known all the ups and downs. Largely ignored at home during his apprenticeship, he had gone to France in 1950 for a three-week tour and had stayed three years, becoming known as "Le Canadien" and topping the Paris hit parade. He returned home in glory to write plays, stories, songs, poems. In 1963 twenty of thirty-four colleges voted him the most important writer in Québec. His books sold over a million copies. In late years he was accorded all the official honours: Order of Canada, Légion d'Honneur, Ordre National du Québec. But by 1984, 55 percent of Québec college students didn't know who Félix Leclerc was. (They all knew Boy George.) Last year a first biography came out, *Félix Leclerc: Le Roi Heureux*, written by a Frenchman.

Such ironies only sharpened his wit. "It's not because I'm an old apple tree that I give old apples," he said. And here, as a tribute to his freshness, is a translation of one of his last texts, a monologue he read for a TV appearance on *Les Beaux Dimanches* in January 1985. (Permission to print in this form courtesy of M. Fortier.)

THE VILLON LEGACY

Born usually of unknown parents
or of humble birth
in a forgotten village, in wolf country
or near Deadman's Lake.
If city-born always in the unsavoury
cut-throat part of town
between two brothels and a railway yard.
For that matter, the place has just been
bulldozed when you ask about it.
Unverifiable.
And his childhood home?
Burnt down.
They always go up in flames.
Don't exist any more.
"But they say it's that hovel on the corner?"
"Oh no. Never. Besides, I don't remember."
"Are your parents living?"
"Dead. All of them."
It is very difficult to trace the early years
of the superstar. The myth starts up so soon.
If, timidly, somebody says:
"I knew him at school," he can't recall.
If his parents are alive, he hides them.
"But isn't he the son of that drunken old
scavanger who used to sing in church?"
He laughs. His memory fails him.
Sometimes he says his mother was a beauty
who ran around with fifteen men,
his father a specialist in aviation
or poaching
or bank robbery.
Unverifiable.
Always enveloped in the fabulous, the mysterious,
in some new invention,
he'd change name if a brother, a nephew
or a cousin embarked on the same career as his.
And what career might that be?
To shine, strut, surpass everyone, startle,
surprise, attract attention, be extraordinary,
maverick, other, like no one else,
talented and know it,
different,

predestined,
touched by God's own fingertip.
He claims to have been at the bottom of the class
as if it were a special gift
(but was among the first when he wanted to be
and never had to repeat a grade.)
Coddled by a swarm of brothers and sisters
he speaks vaguely of his impoverished youth.
Unverifiable.
At fifteen
already a cruel, ambitious little character
is formulating
in his brain.
He'll be a poet, an actor, a concert artist.
He's got imagination and as much guts
as gift; he'll climb
out of the workingclass never
to return!
But what was the first flickering of all this?
Everything started in church perhaps
during the curé's sermon,
the sermon he recited in his own heart
ten times more beautiful;
perhaps it was at the movies seeing
the singing accordeonist;
perhaps when he saw in a cloud
of dust the passage of the long limousine
of a star from the metropolis.
Sixteen now!
He reads, listens, copies, imitates, intones,
invents, makes people laugh, is surrounded
wherever he goes, acts,
practises boldfaced lying.
His parents take it all in:
"Where'd he ever learn such stuff?"
He sends letters to radio stations,
tries to make contacts,
no reply, ever!
His time will come,
just has to learn to wait.
At last, a reply!
A little job in a small town nearby.
Adieu!
He's off.

"Where to?"
A hole to spend the winter in,
it's all he wanted.
Classes in diction, in voice-training,
in dance, in deportment, in solfeggio,
in composition, in recitation
till his eyes grow red.
Ear glued to the radio,
eye buried in old books,
hand scribbling,
nose in the paper,
voice buzzing,
he busies himself,
confines himself,
selfish,
irritable,
hammering the words out,
licking them over,
wearing them down
to the edge of anger,
some heavy as rocks.
He flays his fingers plucking
at an instrument,
begs tickets to see all the shows,
after each saying, "I'll beat them all!"
No women, no family, no holidays, no phonecalls,
it's a time of imitations, borrowings, doubts,
fury, reworking his texts
a thousand hours
a thousand days
a thousand nights.
Address unknown, mean little room
without heat, without water, he lives
from hand to mouth; messenger boy,
dishwasher, streetsweeper, foot-in-door salesman,
ever-smiling *garçon*, relentless,
pigheaded, spends hours getting a chord,
a phrase, a gesture right, goes
without food, without sleep,
with François Villon pinned up on the wall.
Patience, patience . . .
Method, discipline.
He reads enormously, puts himself down,
bucks himself up.

Then it's the first audition, a flop.
He disappears for two years
to come back shyer, stronger, and
ten times better armed.
He tries his wings in little attic
coffee clubs, offbeat,
unknown.
An old man, seeing him fly,
predicts for him a place at the top, with the eagles.
One-night stands, sleazy night-clubs, unpaid,
barely tolerated, trampled, elbowed, he hangs on,
near the suburbs, tomorrow,
on his knees, he'll make Downtown.
He prepares for it like an acolyte
preparing to receive a blessing.
Faced with the first lions
he subdues them royally! Rendezvous
next day with the management:
he cracks his whip and disappears
without a trace.
He makes acquaintances, forgets them,
a friendship holds him, he rejects it, locks his door,
changes address.
He pays court to journalists who can be of use to him.
"I hate publicity, leave me alone on my land."
He shuns the limelight, meaning, he begins to be seen
everywhere. "Where'd you turn up from?"
"Nowhere."
Hates receptions, doesn't miss a single one.
Enigmatic when questioned,
he expatiates on solitude.
Appearances, disappearances, that's his line.
Then, what he's been waiting fifteen years for happens:
a first small billing on the same programme
as the big star, and in a big hall, too.
First Night! The place is packed!
And it explodes like a revolution!
Blows wide open!
He's a revelation!
The big star is crushed, loses control,
collapses in tears, offers him his place.
He refuses. All this makes the front page.
And for years the front page will be his!
So now he dresses well, calms down, is seen, imposes

his presence, feeds the rumour mills, buys
a secretary, a car, a house,
and history is under way.
He entertains no one
but the very rich; thirty fat years
to forget the thirty lean ones.
He sings for the poor although they horrify him,
and he flees the little people he believes
he issued from.
He supervises the fortunes of his rising star.
What a discovery to see it mount so high!
At twenty he smashes all records
for record sales (four Golden Disc Awards),
for sheet music, cassettes,
and long-time runs in the biggest concert halls.
He's booked five years in advance,
sets out on world tours,
countries vie for him, publishers,
Russia, Canada, film companies,
studios, Hollywood . . .
He refuses them all.
"Where'd you turn up from?"
"Nowhere."
He crisscrosses the Americas in his private jet,
his flight crew pointing out the continents below,
sometimes red, sometimes blue.
And the tears he leaves behind!
Women abandoned who sacrificed everything for him.
Children boarded out whom he acknowledges
but doesn't see.
Parents who grow old waiting for him in vain
regretting that they never understood him
(they understood all right).
And that's just the beginning . . .
Millions roll in and multiply.
The man whose posters are always so serene,
whose words are wise,
whose voice reverberates in mikes across the world,
autographing subway tickets
or bare backs,
carefully casual,
debonair yet firm,
omnipresent
omni-on-the-spot

omnipleasant
omniadored,
the one who can take a failing show
and singlehanded call in a full house
is more and more aware
that he and only he is putting poetry
back into business.
Sometimes he spares a thought for the fellow artist
who plays to empty seats and hurries off
after the final curtain to change his shirt
for nobody, rushing through the cold corridors
to his second floor dressing room.
(He wouldn't go to see him play but insisted
that the poor devil attend his own rehearsals.)
A Pope in his plush suite,
his dresser close at hand,
his secretary likewise
polishing his image,
he savours the satisfaction
that his work has found a place
in every heart.
Admire a rival? Him? Why so?
The papers say that no one rivals him.
Who is it that has banished banality, unmasked hypocrisy,
dethroned the insignificant, pilloried stupidity,
and set the French tongue in its true place
in the foreground
in the first rank,
carried along on a little melody?
Fifteen lines of his words
are a granite monument fifteen stories high!
It was he reintroduced the wink to this tragic country
that had forgotten how to laugh or be creative.
He got hope started up again!
And in a moment of high confidence, he said:
"These days they're calling me the new
François Villon. In schools and governments
I'm spoken of as François Villon.
Alas, he never knew what glory was,
much less worldly wealth.
A hunted man
pursued by the police, sleeping
in the open, fingers frozen,
inspiration numb,

while I,
I have four residences
shares in highly respectable financial
institutions, as many millions
as he had lice.
It's for you, François Villon
I clandestinely pass these gifts along
to those feverish twenty-year-olds
who all resemble you.
So now, how does this story end?
By death, by God. The poet dies.
The superstar dies too,
ringed by thieves if he's rich,
by mockers if he's poor.
What was it killed him?
I'll tell you:
age, fatigue, a worn-out heart, all that.
But more than all that, hearing, the first time in his life,
a signal, a shrill whistle from the balcony . . .
"Get off the stage!"
And twenty years came down around his ears
like a sledgehammer to the head.
He realized he'd have to yield his place
to that child with the angel locks
there
in the wings, champing the bit, his demon eyes on fire,
called back by the crowd's standing ovation.
Retired
he passes in review, confusing names and dates,
his meteoric passage through the firmament of stars.
Sick, dying, dead, buried.
To please the few who still remember him,
he is inscribed in the Academy
and in the Temple
of Fame
where names drop in capital letters into oblivion.

IN SEARCH OF AGNES STRICKLAND'S SISTERS

Michael Peterman

IN 1978, WITH VERY LITTLE EXPERIENCE in the use of archival resources, I began a sabbatical project — to compile "complete" (which is to say, as complete as possible) bibliographies of the writings of Susanna Moodie and her elder sister, Catharine Parr Traill. The suggestion came from Gordon Roper, a senior colleague at Trent University, who was convinced that there was much of value to be learned from a comprehensive listing of all of Moodie's and Traill's books in their various editions and of their respective contributions to periodicals particularly in Canada, the United States, and their native England. For my own part, in discussing Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852) and Traill's *The Backwoods of Canada* (1836) with undergraduates on the banks of the Otonabee, that definitive river in the pioneering and immigrant experiences of the Moodies and the Traills, I had already become something of an imaginative participant in their adventures and struggles. That Moodie's "fierce, impetuous" river had become by then Margaret Laurence's river that "flowed both ways" added a piquancy to the identificative element.

Like many readers of *Roughing It in the Bush* and *The Backwoods of Canada*, I wondered about the historical accuracy of these texts. Where did fact end and fiction or elaboration begin? What important personal detail and background data did the respective narratives ignore or fail to provide? To what extent could the two narratives be seen to be interconnected? How did these narratives relate to other writing they undertook during these years and to their earlier writing in England? How, too, did they come to be published and how much authorial control did they exercise in the process of publication? At the same time, I was particularly concerned about the distorting effects created by the edited versions of *Roughing It in the Bush* and *The Backwoods of Canada* then available to students. Clara Thomas's *Backwoods* edition not only cut out much original textual material but included two chapters written by Traill *after* the 1836 publication. Carl Klinck's *Roughing It* had been stripped of much of its Otonabee essence, its balance and flavour dramatically altered by those excisions. Faced with the publisher's stipulations about length, Klinck, like Thomas, had to make choices. The inadvertent effect was, in the latter instance, to remove much of the bush from *Roughing It*.

In beginning to track down bibliographical clues to the literary pasts of Moodie and Traill, I was neither well prepared nor methodologically well trained. I doubt that I was even very enthusiastic, for it was the texts that really interested me. I hardly knew where to start other than to gather together existing bibliographical sources (beginning with R. E. Watters's *A Checklist of Canadian Literature, 1628-1960*), then to organize and verify the information available.

My interest picked up considerably, however, when I looked at Carl Ballstadt's "The Literary History of the Stricklands," an unpublished doctoral thesis written for the University of London in 1965. Here was bibliographical information aplenty about all the scribbling Strickland sisters — Eliza, Agnes, Jane Margaret, Catharine, and Susanna — a mine of data drawn from extensive research of British and Canadian magazines and from close checking of the various surviving editions of books by the Stricklands. Ballstadt's careful work outstripped anything available in print. So rich were his Strickland bibliographies that it seemed most of the work I had set out to do was already done. How much more was there to be found?

Much more, as it turned out. Ballstadt's thesis led me first to the *Albion*, a weekly paper specializing in British and European news, published in New York by John Sherrin Bartlett. The thesis had listed two Moodie poems, both appearing in 1835. In the volume for 1833 (2 March), however, I came upon two other poems and a letter. Dated 14 February 1833 — thus only five months after her arrival — Moodie offered Dr. Bartlett "the first flight of my muse on Canadian shores" (*Letters of a Lifetime*, 90). In itself not a particularly revealing letter, it nevertheless transfixed me. Here was discovery, something that was new. Something hidden was suddenly revealed. Something I had intuited was now confirmed. Moodie, I had felt, was too much the writer to cease writing, however demanding and uncomfortable her new living conditions in rural Upper Canada. Her remark in *Roughing It* — "I had never been able to turn my thoughts towards literature during my sojourn in the bush. When the body is fatigued with labour, unwonted and beyond its strength, the mind is in no condition for mental occupation" (Ballstadt, 440) — suggested cessation of writing. Such, however, had not been the case, at least initially. Situated at first near the front in Hamilton Township, only four miles from Port Hope, the Moodies did not, after all, venture north into the bush until 1834.

FURTHER BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INVESTIGATION confirmed Moodie's efforts to keep her writing career alive despite the disadvantages of conditions in "a new colony." Her poems appeared, for instance, in such places as the Cobourg *Star*, John Kent's *Canadian Literary Magazine* (York), the *Canadian Magazine* (York), and Sumner Lincoln Fairfield's *North American Quarterly Magazine*.[1]

She received little, if any, remuneration for these efforts, only the satisfaction of continuing to see her name in print. Her name, however, was a source of confusion in itself. Dr. Bartlett at first mistook her for her better-known sister, Agnes. He apologized for his public gaff when he published a third Moodie poem, "There's Rest," in the *Albion* for 25 May 1833. Even in 1833 in Upper Canada there were both benefits and drawbacks to being Agnes Strickland's sister.

Agnes Strickland was still very much the significant Strickland sister when in 1960 Carl Ballstadt set off for London intending to study Moodie and Traill in relation to their Suffolk upbringing and English background. He was told that the Canadian sisters were not in themselves of sufficient interest to justify a thesis. It would be far better to concentrate on the Strickland family background as it related to the literary career of Agnes, particularly her very popular *Lives of the Queens of England* (1840-1848), a multi-volume history co-authored by the eldest sister, Eliza. The Canadian Stricklands — Moodie and Traill, as well as brother Samuel — could only be tangential concerns.

Little had changed when, nearly two decades later, I made my first research trip to England. But as I was soon to discover, while one still faced a paternalistic blind spot with regard to the achievements of colonial writers, important new evidence was awaiting discovery. Such was the case with the Glyde Collection housed in the centralized archives of the Ipswich Public Record Office. This material had not been available during Carl Ballstadt's research in the early 1960s.

No doubt it was largely Agnes Strickland's fame that led John Glyde, a Suffolk antiquarian of the late nineteenth century, to collect and preserve the letters James and Emma Bird received from Agnes and various of her sisters. As an established poet of local note, Bird and his wife, who lived in Yoxford (a village some ten miles from Reydon Hall), had been friends and encouragers particularly of Agnes, Susanna, and Catharine. The letters the Birds preserved — twenty-five from Susanna and nineteen from Catharine — constituted an extraordinary find. They provide a rich source of information about the pre-emigration lives of the Canadian Stricklands, offering glimpses of personality, allusions to publications and writing projects, comments on travels and experiences, even references to amorous involvements. It was possible to see at close hand not only the religious intensity and enthusiasm of Susanna but also the wit and determination of the unmarried Catharine. Moreover, since the collection included a letter from Catharine written from Canada (7 January 1834), one also had a means of comparing the kinds of letters she actually wrote from the bush to the "letters" that make up *The Backwoods of Canada.*

Here again was discovery, but this time of a far larger, far more formidable kind. If archives are a mirror of the past, then the reflections that this mirror offers, sometimes clear and revealing, can often be frustratingly oblique and difficult to identify, let alone explain. By now working as a team, Carl Ballstadt, Elizabeth

Hopkins, and I collectively faced the task of reading into that mirror, of understanding and interpreting the complex networks of references, allusions, and assumptions that characterized these early letters. We had to track down bibliographical references in Suffolk and London newspapers, annuals, and magazines. We had to identify the participants and trace the social lives of the Strickland girls at home and in London, and we had to make sense of the ebb and flow of their interests and passions insofar as the letters revealed such things. One archival source led us to another; we moved from one kind of mirror to another, clearing up some mysteries to our satisfaction even as, in time, we had to admit that others would at least temporarily remain unresolved. Who, for instance, was Asker, the young man to whom Susanna may well have been engaged in 1828 and whose "extravagant career" she lamented (*Letters*, 25)? And, what was wrong with Mrs. Thomas Harral that led her to behave in so nasty a way to Catharine, then affianced to her son Francis?[2]

Susanna Moodie: Letters of a Lifetime (1985) evolved from a series of such archival discoveries. By the time we found the Glyde Collection, we were also at work on the Moodie letters that were part of the extensive Traill Family Collection in the National Archives of Canada. As well, new material — including eight Moodie letters — became available in the Richard Bentley Collection in the British Library.[3] It was clear from internal evidence, however, that many of Moodie's letters to Bentley were missing. Since the kindly Bentley had been Moodie's most important literary correspondent through the 1850s and 1860s, we were very frustrated by this apparent dead-end. It was only when we realized that the Bentley Collection had been sold in blocks to three libraries — the University of Illinois in Chicago, the University of California at Los Angeles, and the British Library — that we were able to track down most of the missing letters (twenty-two at Illinois and one at California) and thus fill out this significant stage of Moodie's writing career. Collectively, the Bentley letters tell us a great deal about Moodie's literary isolation, the making of *Roughing It in the Bush*, *Life in the Clearings*, and *Flora Lyndsay*, her literary tastes and reading interests, her view of herself as a writer, and the importance to her of having a congenial friend in the literary world of London.

Other archives held isolated letters. The Douglas Library at Queen's provided a brief note by Moodie to Charles Sangster, one of her few communications on record with a Canadian writer still held in some critical esteem.[4] As well, what seemed then to be her only surviving letter to John Lovell, the publisher of the *Literary Garland*, the *Montreal Transcript*, and other papers in which her work appeared, was at Queen's.[5] Three Moodie letters turned up in eastern American archives, amplifying our sense of the range of her several connections south of the border from the eccentric poet Sumner Lincoln Fairfield to Henry David Thoreau's admirer and acquaintance, Daniel Ricketson. Among the Moodie letters found in

newspapers, one of the most interesting and suggestive is a formal note written in the wake of the Mackenzie Rebellion to Charles Fothergill, the editor of the (Toronto) *Palladium*. Fothergill published it in the paper for 11 October 1838 along with the poem she enclosed, "The Burning of the Caroline." In discovering that issue of the *Palladium* among a few surviving and unbound copies of the newspaper in the Archives of Ontario, we again enjoyed that feeling of "unhiding the hidden." In the process we also came across several previously unknown Moodie poems, most notably "On Reading the Proclamation Delivered by William Lyon Mackenzie, on Navy Island" (17 January 1838).[6] Given the broken run of the *Palladium*, we had to accept the fact that those lost weekly issues likely contained other Moodie contributions, perhaps of similar note. Through tracing the reprinting of certain Moodie poems in other newspapers, however, it was possible to make note of some other appearances of her work in the *Palladium*.

Newspapers are of course a crucial resource in the act of historical reclamation. What the Archives of Ontario has managed to preserve of the *Palladium* is a bounty, but what is lost is cause for lament. Similarly, the broken runs of the Peterborough and Belleville papers of the 1830s and 1840s were, and continue to be, a great frustration for us. There is, for instance, no way to measure whether Moodie wrote very much for the Hastings (or Victoria) *Chronicle*, Belleville's reform paper, though from the late 1830s on she shared firm reformist convictions with her husband. Neither can we study with any exactness the extent to which George Benjamin, the powerful editor of the conservative Belleville *Intelligencer* and leader of the city's Orange Order, used his position to criticize, even to slander, Dunbar Moodie and his family during the first fifteen years of his long and difficult tenure as the first sheriff of Hastings County. When Susanna itemized some of her complaints and cruelly satirized Benjamin as the "Jew Editor" in her story, "Richard Redpath" (*Letters of a Lifetime*, 147), she doubtless delighted in a literary kind of revenge.[7] What survives of the *Intelligencer* or its opposition the *Chronicle* is, however, too spotty to provide a sufficient record of the basis for her — and others' — outrage. One is forced, therefore, to track stories reprinted from the *Intelligencer* in other Upper Canada papers to provide some evidence of Benjamin's partisanship and cruelty and thus to measure the grounds of Susanna's pain, indignation, and coarsely racist riposte.

BUT IF ARCHIVAL DISCOVERIES and the process of drawing together useable archival material were at the heart of our efforts in putting together *Susanna Moodie: Letters of a Lifetime* (and in the work still underway in preparing Catharine Parr Traill's approximately 475 surviving letters), we as editors also became archival agents. When, for instance, the opportunity arose to purchase

a Traill letter to George P. Putnam, the American publisher who in 1852 so quickly pirated Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush*, we did so on behalf of Trent University. In speaking to a seniors' group in Toronto, Beth Hopkins made a connection with a Moodie descendant, Mrs. Hope Vickers, who turned over to her a shoe-box full of Susanna's letters. This material, along with letters from another descendant, Miss Kathleen McMurrich, we helped to direct to the National Archives where it now, appropriately, resides.

A book such as *Letters of a Lifetime* is but a first venture, a literary trap to draw flies. Over the seven years it took to find the material and to prepare introductions and annotations we were both delighted that we had found so much and frustrated by obvious and significant gaps in the collection. Our letters to, and contacts with, descendants had unearthed some valuable material but had led to many more dead-ends, not to mention various stories of family burnings of Moodie papers to preserve and ensure privacy. One of those dead-ends was Patrick Hamilton Ewing who, as it turned out, died at age 71 shortly after *Letters of a Lifetime* appeared. The great-great-grandson of Moodie, Ewing, who likely never went through the papers himself, kept them for decades in his attic in Red Hook, New York.[8] He did, however, leave instructions that the material be properly cared for. Accordingly, his friend Eric McLean of Montreal negotiated the sale of the collection to Claude LeMoine, manuscript curator of the National Library of Canada.

The appearance of new Moodie letters and material was not in itself surprising. Since the publication of *Letters of a Lifetime*, two new letters had already surfaced, one from New Zealand and one at Guelph. What was astonishing, however, was the breadth of the Ewing collection. As Mary Lu MacDonald observed in the *National Library News* (December 1987, 19:12, p. 5), "Manuscript collections of pre-Confederation writers in either French or English are so rare as to be almost non-existent. The originals of a few letters, by a few writers, survive in archival collections devoted to some other purpose, and some copies of letters by a few writers, held in private collections or in foreign repositories, have been assembled in Canada. However, even for the most diligent researcher, early nineteenth-century literary manuscript sources are extremely scarce. The Patrick Hamilton Ewing collection . . . ," she concluded, "is possibly the greatest single find in Canadian literary history. Scholars will be mining this rich source for years to come."

While the Ewing Collection contains manuscripts, parts of the Moodies's library and various kinds of memorabilia, two particular aspects are worth special notice. As might perhaps be expected, there aren't many Susanna Moodie letters in the collection. Of the fifteen from her pen, more than half were written to her husband during his absences in 1838 and 1839 while serving militia appointments along the Upper Canadian front. These letters, paralleled by a number written by him to her from Toronto, the Niagara, and the Victoria districts, constitute a crucial record of the actual events that lie behind the final few chapters of *Roughing It*

in the Bush. We learn in detail, for instance, of harrowing illnesses suffered by Susanna and her children, her competence in running the bush farm on her own, her deep affection for her husband, and the sensitive operations of genteel society in the backwoods. From Dunbar there are glimpses of his near involvement in the Short Hills Raid, commentary on the alcoholic excesses and misbehaviour of military officers, the factor of patronage in militia appointments, even his responses to Lord Durham's highly controversial report. Writing from Belleville on 24 May 1839, he noted in a postscript, "I sometimes wish I could clear out from this unhappy distracted country where I can see nothing but ultra selfish Toryism or Revolutionary Radicalism. . . . A black cloud hangs over Canada. . . . Lord Durham's report has stirred up a hornet's nest. Hardly anyone can talk or think cooly [*sic*] about it. I believe the middle course is the only safe one in this case, as in many others. . . . If the British Govt has the discernment to adopt his [Durham's] suggestions on some very important points it is my firm belief that he will yet be regarded as the best friend Canada ever had. . . ." In reply, noting that "another long separation from you would almost break my heart," Susanna declared that "this must be the *last winter* of exile and widowhood." Should we "desert poor Canada in her day of distress," she added, "let us go to the Cape at once, and have, naught to do with brother Jonathan and his scampish progeny" (1 June 1839).[9] She could not really forget the persecutions she had endured at the hands of her rough American neighbours while living in Hamilton Township.

The second noteworthy part of the Ewing Collection is Dunbar Moodie's spiritualism diary, a ledger book of some 250 pages recording experiments he was witness to from 1857 to 1863 in Belleville, Toronto, and New York. A fascinating document simply as a record of the experiences of Susanna and Catharine Parr as mediums, it is also a kind of subtext to the psychological preoccupations that underlay the conscious lives of these two women even as it provides a suggestive record of the ways in which they unconsciously sought to put troubling memories to rest. In preserving her father's diary, the Moodies's eldest daughter, Catherine Mary Vickers, deliberately destroyed most of the sections dealing with the spiritualist activities of her sister, Agnes (Fitzgibbon) Chamberlin. While she believed that her father "lived to see the fallacy of the intention," she had no doubt that he had maintained a "perfect faith" in spiritualism during the time of the diary and was "in every way faithful and sincere" about these experiments.

To look backward now is to realize that it was only in the late 1970s and early 1980s that sufficient archival material became available to make possible collections of letters and increasingly sophisticated study of writers like Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill. Why, we might ask? The passage

of time and accidents of possession had something to do with it. So too, in both cases, did the Strickland name. Of greatest importance, however, was the extraordinary growth of interest in both the universities and the media (dare one say the culture as a whole?) in the subjects of writing in Canada and Canadian culture, past and present. Born in the early 1970s and still gaining momentum today, these initiatives have been allowed increasingly to flourish through a variety of support institutions like the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and a constantly improving network of library and archival resources. For many reasons, then, the time was right.

Still, in the cases of Moodie and Traill, it would be wrongheaded to put undue emphasis on the excitement of discovering important documents and large caches of letters. Gratifying as they are, such moments are rare. Far more germane to the process is the daily methodological searching, the persistent checking into such standard resources as land records, newspapers, and local histories. One learns in the process a great deal about libraries and archives and their resources; indeed, one learns, above all, the worth of a thoughtful librarian's or archivist's help.

In this regard let me turn to an archival resource of special value in the work of our research group, one that I suspect is not known to enough Canadianists. Founded in 1812, the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts, is an independent institution devoted to all material printed in the United States prior to 1876. Its library has the world's largest collection of early American newspapers as well as fine collections of American children's books, yearbooks, cookbooks, etc. What we found in Worcester was a series of glimpses of Moodie and Traill in America — evidence of their deliberate connections to the United States, of the extent to which their works were pirated there and of the ways in which their writings were reviewed. It was surprising to discover, for instance, that in its editions of 28 August and 4 September 1852, the *Saturday Evening Post*, a "Family Newspaper" in Philadelphia, printed chapters from Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* on its front page under the title "Pictures from Life." Suggestive, too, were the number of highly positive reviews of Moodie's books from the 1850s in American newspapers. One was able there to move directly from Edwin Bruce Kirkham and John W. Fink's *Indices to American literary annuals and giftbooks: 1825-1865* (1975) to the annuals themselves noting the extent to which Moodie and Traill material had been pirated to fill these American imitations. Moreover, it was a thoughtful librarian at the AAS who suggested I have a look at the microfilmed *Index to Early American Periodicals*, edited by N. F. Adkins. The result of a WPA project in New York headed up by Oscar Cargill in the 1930s, the *Index* provides an itemizing of the contents of some 340 early American magazines. You won't be disappointed, the librarian told me, and I wasn't. There I found access to previously unknown appearances of fiction and poetry by Moodie and Traill — mostly pirated — as well as to several more reviews of their work.

Bibliographies, I have discovered, are best measured in decades, not years. In compiling a list of the poems that Susanna Moodie published in various kinds of periodicals over her lifetime, I can now list close to 170. The record, which continues to develop,[10] reminds us that Moodie was as much a poet as a writer of sketches and fiction and that her poetry appeared widely in England, Canada, and the United States during her lifetime. Through the thoughtful help of scholars such as Mary Lu MacDonald, Carole Gerson, and Mary Jane Edwards, it has been possible to amplify this documentation. MacDonald, for instance, provided me with a list of the Moodie (and Traill) poems she had found in her close study and analysis of the newspapers of Upper and Lower Canada prior to 1850. Such documentation allows us to realize that the aforementioned poem, "The Burning of the Caroline," first printed in the *Palladium*, appeared in at least three other Canadian newspapers. Another rebellion poem, "Canadians Will You Join the Band. A Loyal Song," did even better, appearing first in the *Palladium* (20 December 1837) to be reprinted within a few weeks in at least eight Canadian newspapers.

The work goes on. Archival resources continue to be mined. With each discovery — small or large, bibliographical and historical — we can add to the picture, step by step informing ourselves more fully about what it is that we should know about and learn from the past. The work helps to make possible not only improved understanding but also better criticism. As scholarly editions of texts, books of letters, and bibliographies emerge, informed literary and cultural criticism can take place. The literary lives of authors such as Moodie and Traill in this sense become one of our most compelling reference-banks to the lives of ordinary people and in particular to the lives of women in nineteenth-century Canada. They take us beyond official history, away from the lives of the politicians and the effects of government reports and closer both to life as it was lived and to writing as an act consistent with that living. In such work literature meets history, sociology, economics, politics, and geography, and is the better for it. And, as Moodie and Traill take their places in a fuller mosaic of nineteenth-century Canadian experience, we can be grateful that one very good reason so many resources are still available to us lies in the fame of their sister, Agnes, who could never understand why anyone would immigrate to, let alone stay in, a colony like Canada.[11]

NOTES

[1] More than ten Moodie pieces appeared in the *North American Quarterly Magazine*. Some of her work also appeared in English periodicals and annuals after her emigration.

[2] The Traill letters are currently being prepared for publication. The Glyde Collection is, however, available on microfilm at the National Archives in Ottawa (see the Traill Family Collection).

[3] Royal Gettman, Richard Bentley's biographer, told Ballstadt that he was not aware of any Moodie correspondence in the collection.

[4] See also Moodie's letter to Louisa May Murray held in the Scott Library archives of York University.

[5] A second Lovell letter has recently turned up in the Patrick Hamilton Ewing Collection now held by the National Library of Canada. The apparent loss of most of Moodie's correspondence with Lovell and *The Literary Garland* creates a significant gap in the picture of her literary life.

[6] Carl Ballstadt's article, "Secure in Conscious Worth: Susanna Moodie and the Rebellion of 1837," studies the Proclamation poem in detail. See *Canadian Poetry*, 19 (1986), 88-98.

[7] The question of George Benjamin's racial origin is not addressed in the extensive entry on him in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, IX, 44-46.

[8] See the *National Library News*, 19 (December 1987).

[9] Dunbar Moodie owned land in South Africa prior to his marriage to Susanna and their subsequent immigration to Canada.

[10] A copybook of Moodie's poems now available in the Ewing Collection reveals what are likely two new sources for early (pre-1825) Susanna Strickland appearances in English periodicals.

[11] An examination of the catalogue of the British Library reveals the extent to which, even in apparently authoritative bibliographical entries, errors persist concerning authorship of various Strickland books. Agnes often receives credit for work written by Catharine and Susanna. The business of sorting out authorship and of tracing publications of books by Catharine and Susanna written in the 1820s is another important aspect of the bibliographical work to be done. An important recent contribution to this subject is Rupert Schieder's "Catharine Parr Traill: Three Bibliographical Questions" in *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada*, 24 (1985), 8-25.

REDUCTIO

John Baglow

say if you will
to these constituents:
do not enter, you will drown
in captive sunshine, and return
to the numb soil,
trouble and dreams scattered
like prints in limestone —

they will ignore you,
they will keep coming
into the hail, screaming for peace
until flesh gives up its elements
to crystal and fog
and loses the right to speak.
there is no periphery.

COMPOSITION

Christopher Levenson

for Christopher Pratt

Always the sea outside
presses into the room
intrudes on stairway and door
yields to an early dawn
the primer has taken

its luminous calm
Night's stark geometry
then slowly the beach
and by high noon
light is everywhere.

Abstract, it battens down
beyond winter marshes
a stillness breeds,
that spread and infiltrate
of closed houses

on breakwater and buoy;
from the basalt shore
gradations of emptiness
venetian blinds
protected only by shadow.

In this sealed muted light
from the naked acts of the mind
His balancing eye
Windless and sunless,
these minimal landscapes

nothing distracts
composing, restoring.
can change the world you see.
they pull to eternity
merging with the sky.

books in review

PURDY'S SCOTT

A memoir in response to Sandra Djwa's *The Politics of the Imagination, A Life of F. R. Scott.* McClelland & Stewart, n.p.

HE WAS A TALL MAN, about six feet three inches. And he had stature, not just height. His self-composure settled a cloak of calm over everything. It was almost impossible to be excited around him for very long. And when I say "self-composure," I mean the same sort of ambience that Doug Harvey, the old Montreal Canadiens' defenceman, used to have. Harvey would dominate a hockey game, in the sense that he forced it into the speed and pace he wanted it to take. Frank Scott had the same sort of ambience, a calm in which he was at the centre, affable, humorous and gracious: a presence I found fascinating, and questioned in my own mind as to why this should be so.

He was a Canadian aristocrat, of course, the son of Canon Frederick George Scott, a Canadian hero in World War I. Leaving out the aristocracy of money, Scott was a member of the aristocracy in which you *feel* that quality about the other person, which is no more explainable than giving reasons why you like someone else, or why you fell in love. You just feel it, and it's so.

He dressed like the generation just before mine. That means grey flannels and generally darker apparel. He always wore a tie, and there was always a touch of formality about him. But once or twice, I am sure, I've seen him in a smoking jacket. Of course he smoked a pipe. It was sort of like that long cigarette holder Franklin Roosevelt affected in news reels. It gave Scott the Rhodes Scholar look, which was accurate but nevertheless a bit misleading.

There were gatherings — you couldn't call them parties exactly — at the Clarke Avenue residence. There were reasons for them. They generally celebrated something, including friendship. Frank and Marian Scott as host and hostess are at least partly responsible for my definition of that word. In their sixties and seventies, Frank with a somewhat uncanny gaze seen from the wrong angle (he had an artificial eye, the legacy of a boyhood accident); Marian just as imperturbable as Frank, and gracious in a way that made you feel at ease. And you said to yourself, am I living in another era than my own? Uncanny as Frank's glass eye, the good manners, the graciousness, the friendship of these dwellers in another world.

But they weren't from another world! Migawd, Frank Scott wrote poems! Marian painted pictures! But I felt privileged to know them. Along with Irving and Betty Layton and Louis Dudek, the Scotts were my own introduction to how interesting life can be, my transition from one level of existence to another. Something in the back of my mind whispered: throw away all your preconceptions? No, not all, but a lot of them. And at the time I met the Scotts, I was changing myself, into and being someone I can't keep track of, who sometimes blurted out uncomfortable things or thoughts. They saw me in one of those incarnations and said Hello.

Frank's father, the Reverend F. G. Scott, was rector of St. Matthew's Anglican Church in Quebec City at century's turn. Tall and athletic, he had rescued a man from drowning, preached to Canadian troops on their way to the Boer War; and later, in his mid-fifties, he was chaplain in the Canadian Army during World War I. And Canon Scott wrote poetry, sometimes stopping acquaintances on the street in Quebec City to hand them little cards with copies of his latest poem. There were seven children, only one girl. Frank was the second youngest, born in 1899,

one of the last Victorians. The family was dominated by religion, strong patriotism and poetry. One of Frank's earliest memories: "Father would come rushing out of the study calling to the family, 'I have written a new poem! Amy! Amy! Children! Come and hear!'" It's a matter of some wonder to me that Frank didn't grow up to hate the stuff!

However, there's little doubt that this family upbringing, containing unequal parts of religion, poetry, duty and patriotism, instilled in Frank Scott the desire to excel. At age 20 he wrote, "So far I have done nothing to justify my existence." At 21 he applied for a Rhodes Scholarship, and was successful. At Oxford, away from a dominating father and older brother William, Frank began to come out of his shell socially; and he read omnivorously, including H. G. Wells, Thomas à Kempis and Rupert Brooke, and was even more obsessed with "doing something great."

After Oxford, Scott was involved with A. J. M. Smith, Leon Edel and two others, all students at McGill. They published the *McGill Fortnightly Review*, a literary magazine funded principally by its editors. And the editors enjoyed themselves, satirizing McGill stodginess in poems and editorials, raising university hackles in the process. Smith, who had a fairly intimate knowledge of modern poetry, told Scott to throw away his own stuff and write some more. Scott did. And along with the poems of Abraham Klein, also in Montreal, this era in the early 1920's may be regarded as the beginning of modern poetry in Canada.

In 1924 Scott joined the law faculty at McGill. He remained there forty years. At McGill his interest grew in social problems and the intricacies of municipal and national politics. Climbing Mount Greylock in Massachusetts during an academic conference there in 1931, Scott, Frank Underhill and Percy Corbett laid the foundations of the "League For Social Reconstruction." Ann Moreau, in the Scott issue of *Brick Magazine* (1987), says that "Scott and Harry Cassidy went around to all the little towns and villages of Quebec, including Ste. Rose, and he discovered that in the clothing industry women were earning wages of about four cents an hour at that time, which he found upsetting." (I suppose the understatement is deliberate.)

Scott and Cassidy published a report on this situation. And when the "Co-operative Commonwealth Federation" (now Underhill and others of his League For Social Reconstruction colleagues were League For Social Reconstruction were involved. He had met J. S. Woodsworth, the social activist, earlier, and was impressed. When the Regina Manifesto of the CCF was written in 1935, Scott, Frank Underhill and several others joined in its writing. And here also I am rather puzzled. Eugene Forsey (also an early socialist) says in *Brick* that the Regina Manifesto "was written I think largely by Frank Scott and Frank Underhill." And while Sandra Djwa does mention Scott's involvement, that involvement is not nearly to the extent implied by Eugene Forsey.

In 1936 Scott and Arthur Smith (the latter then teaching in the U.S.) edited *New Provinces*, an anthology meant to sweep away the old romanticism and sentimentality of the Carman-Roberts-Campbell school of poetry. But all sorts of hassles grew out of this book. E. J. Pratt, a staunch traditionalist himself, objected to Smith's introduction. Scott hurriedly wrote another one, in order not to offend Pratt, on whose sales popularity their own anthology depended. When dust settled and the book was published, very few copies were sold anyway. Nevertheless, *New Provinces* remains, rather more than a milestone on the way to a distinctive Canadian literature.

In 1942 a young Englishman, Patrick Anderson, immigrated to Canada to avoid

the wartime draft in his home country. Anderson was a student of W. H. Auden, Spender and Day-Lewis, and brought the Dylan Thomas rhythms to Montreal. Anderson and his wife, Scott, Neufville Shaw, Bruce Ruddick, P. K. Page and A. M. Klein united to start another little magazine, *Preview*.

> To the Montrealers Anderson looked and sounded the way a poet ought to look and sound. He knew of the new poets; he spoke eloquently of their concerns and techniques. And he wrote enviably well. To P. K. Page he seemed a kind of giant cuckoo, force-feeding his fledglings with poetry and communism.

Irving Layton, Louis Dudek, Audrey Aikman and John Sutherland were stimulated enough to set up a rival magazine, *First Statement*. The *Preview* group of poets was thought to be cultured and cosmopolitan, and admired British poetry; the *First Statement* people were crude by comparison, somewhat visceral, and admired U.S. poetry. When *Preview* seemed to lose energy at war's end, the two older magazines merged into a new one, *Northern Review*. And trouble began at once. As Djwa describes it, during a literary get-together at Scott's place the old *First Statement* people were ushered into the kitchen for food, and the ex-*Preview* group into the more posh dining room. Earle Birney, who had been a teetotaller, took his first drink of Scotch in six months and became very ill. Irving Layton then claimed that Birney was a drunkard. It must have been a great party. Marian Scott writes, "How could you call us 'gracious' if we were capable of such outrageous behaviour!! As I remember it, everyone met in the living room for discussion — refreshments were on the table in the 'posh'! dining room so that people could wander back and forth; as there was some disagreement between the two groups, probably some or all of the First Statement members may have gone into the kitchen to discuss things — and that was maybe how the myth was born??" (Personal letter, June 1988).

On his way to becoming an establishment figure himself, long before the end of his life, Frank Scott managed to offend and/or antagonize many of the entrenched and privileged stuffed shirts he encountered along the way. He spoke out loud and clear on literally dozens of issues, municipal, provincial and national. Sir Arthur Currie, McGill principal and Canadian commanding general in World War I, was extremely worried at the very idea of his university being involved in politics. As a result of this sinful interest on Scott's part, he was denied the job of Dean of Law at McGill for many years.

Premier Duplessis of Quebec was also a Scott antagonist. Duplessis objected to Montreal restaurant owner Frank Roncarelli supplying bail for Jehovah's Witnesses in their occasional brushes with the law. He also objected strongly to the religious sect itself. Duplessis had Roncarelli's liquor licence cancelled, which meant sure death for the eating place. A. L. Stein, the Roncarelli lawyer, enlisted Frank Scott to fight Duplessis in the Quebec courtrooms. Criminal law was not Scott's special legal field (that was constitutional law). But he took the case anyway, and after years of talk-talk-talk the team of Stein and Scott defeated Premier Duplessis in his own courtrooms. And loud cheers were heard across Quebec, except in the Montreal *Star*'s editorial offices where they believed socialists were communists under another name.

In the early 1970's, Mavor Moore wrote a television play about Scott and the Roncarelli case. My wife and I were at Scott's place in Montreal when the play was first produced. In some aspects it was like a Hollywood premiere, with searchlights criss-crossing the sky. A. L. Stein was there. Roncarelli was there. So was Frank Scott. All the principals except Duplessis

(he was dead) were there. I had the weird feeling that history was being made; and what was I doing right in the middle of it, a bemused spectator? Well, at least a repetition of legal history. And Frank Scott was the principal actor in Mavor Moore's play, loving every minute of it. How could one ever say in those circumstances that the play was bad or even mediocre? Have another drink and admire the man, and feel fortunate to meet these people at this re-enactment of a turning point in their lives.

Frank Scott reminds me in many ways of a citizen of the ancient Greek *polis*, Athens particularly. He was not a politician *per se*, but everything that happened (or so it seemed) in Canada was in his realm of thought and action. He understood the problems of Quebec in a largely Anglophone nation, problems like conscription in World War II, and a constitution drawn up in England. He was a member of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963. He spoke out strongly in 1946 against the displacement of Japanese Canadians during the war. "The real problem we have in Canada has nothing to do with the Japanese at all: it is the problem of racial intolerance." In other words, it's *our* problem here and now as Canadians in 1989.

The "October Crisis" in 1970 seemed like a terrorist revolution to some Canadians, among them Frank Scott. Bombs were exploding in Montreal mail boxes. James Cross, British trade commissioner in Montreal, was kidnapped by the Front de Libération du Québec (the FLQ). They demanded Quebec separation from English Canada. Pierre Laporte, a cabinet minister in Quebec's Liberal government, was kidnapped and murdered. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau proclaimed the War Measures Act, conferring emergency powers on the government. It was a time of turbulence and fear in Canada. The political right and left were polarized: socialists condemned the War Measures Act, conservatives were for it. But surprise, that staunch old socialist Frank Scott supported the government. On the evidence of terrorism at the time, I myself agreed with the government's action. And what can one say years later? The aftermath demonstrated that there had been no genuine revolution planned by the FLQ, just some isolated but alarming crimes of terrorism and murder.

One looks back at that time with mixed feelings. I think the socialist left were against the War Measures Act on general principles of freedom, no matter the seeming danger at the time. Their feelings were not based on the evidence at hand. But as it turned out, they were right; Frank Scott and many others, including myself, were wrong. For whatever reason, Pierre Trudeau decided that a show of force was needed: but this was not justified despite the terrorist acts, and has not been justified by any evidence since produced. It was a sad time for Canada, with a legacy that protrudes into relations between Quebec and English Canada to this day.

Even among his friends, Frank Scott was thought of as a "public person." Nearly everything he said and did was known and talked about in Montreal and wider circles. Very little of his life was private; even a couple of love affairs were known and discussed. Sandra Djwa doesn't say much about them in this biography for obvious reasons. It's the penalty for being a public man. (Did Pericles have a girl friend — was Caesar's wife a lesbian?)

George Woodcock has an essay in his *Northern Spring* comparing Scott to the ancient Greek dramatist, Aeschylus. Composing his own epitaph, Aeschylus ignored all the plays he'd written, mentioning only that he'd fought for Athens against the Persians at Marathon, in the ranks of ordinary spearmen. In a sense, that was Aeschylus's prideful identity, long before

historians decided the fate of Western civilization had depended on that battle. (Personally, I think Western civilization was a lot tougher than that.) The Greek playwright was obviously not an "ivory tower" sort of writer. Woodcock places Scott in the same category. He also mentions Milton, Hugo and Zola among the artists who took sides politically, espoused causes, fought the battles of words and principle, were men of good conscience, men of honour. There are not many artists who do this. It is a small but distinguished company, those who commit themselves to civil action, who can look forward and backward, citizens of the *polis*.

One thinks of his friends, Frank Scott's friends. They were multitudinous. Who knows how close and warm they were. One simply can't tell at this point. But I'm sure dead Arthur Smith was a friend, with accompanying feeling as well as shared interests. And a passion for social reform was shared by Scott with many others, that dream-passion similar to friendship and even love. And I think of myself, not really close to him at all, a dweller on the periphery, a kind of hero-worshipping admirer.

But search back into the past. Was there someone it was possible to admire and look up to then, someone wiser than yourself — that eternal adolescent, yourself? All of us, we supposed adults, are still adolescents in one part of our minds. In a cynical and corrupt world, we need someone like Scott. He/she needn't be perfect — in fact, never inhumanly is perfect — but someone, maybe an Arthur Koestler (and I scrabble for other names), well, Archbishop Tutu. . . . Someone.

Frank Scott did a great deal of writing in his long lifetime. Much of it was of the social kind, books, tracts and manifestos, taking the temperature and pulse of the country, that sort of thing. I've seen no bibliography of it, although perhaps one exists somewhere. The rest is poetry. Scott always thought of himself as a poet, and many of his friends were poets. One must discuss the quality of his poems, and not wish to sound overly ambiguous. Because his poetry was not exactly top-drawer, although something much better than a mediocre average. But I wish he'd been better than he actually was, in that medium he cherished.

Many of the poems were political, but the best-known one is undoubtedly "The Canadian Authors Meet," a satire on the Canadian Authors Association, of which the following is the last verse:

> Shall we go round the mulberry bush, or shall
> We gather at the river, or shall we
> Appoint a Poet Laureate this fall,
> Or shall we have another cup of tea?

First published in 1945, and satirizing bad poets, I still find the poem extremely funny. To be fair about it, the CAA has changed a great deal from that fuddy-duddy image. But its executive still feels sensitive about the poem: in fact I had a proposal last winter that I write a poem myself, refuting the Scott one. I pleaded lack of inspiration, which was true: I couldn't possibly write a poem that good anyway.

Some of Scott's most amusing work focuses on the difference between French and English usage: "DEEP APPLE PIE/ TARTE AUX POMMES PROFONDES."

"Lakeshore" is often the poem that takes a critical laurel wreath. I'm not sure I agree. "For Bryan Priestman" and "Eden" are my own favourites. The Priestman poem, about a professor of chemistry who drowned trying to save a child, has a surface simplicity. Scott saw Priestman as testing himself, in perhaps the Hemingway manner, the attempted rescue as an experiment that risked his own life. However, one might say that Priestman should have focused more on the child rather than on an experiment with himself. But poems like that one,

which can set the mind at work, burrowing and tunnelling into the deeply buried self, these are better poems than I have thought they were. And that is my fault. Because I'd like to be as generous as Frank Scott was, and still be accurately honest about it.

And how good a biography is this one? I'd say better than average, but not up to the best of its genre. It isn't easy to write about a man like Scott, since his was largely an inner life. And errors — one that pertains to myself: I've never "received support" from the Canada Foundation (as distinct from the Canada Council), to my certain knowledge. But this was not an error by the biographer, just inaccurate information.

Sometimes, when my wife practises her silence on me, I can hear Frank Scott's voice in memory. . . . It's one of those literary-cum-political gatherings at his place on Clarke Avenue in Montreal. The bartenders — who are Frank and Marian — are busy. Doug Jones, Arthur Smith and Leon Edel are discussing Henry James and Eliot's *Wasteland*. Dudek is trying to get a word in edgeways, or any other way. Layton claims his new poem is an immortal masterpiece. Pierre Trudeau is condemning Meech Lake and Free Trade with Scott, Frank Underhill and Eugene Forsey. Lou Stein and Frank Roncarelli are wondering if they should bring another suit against Premier Duplessis for damages; but that's impossible: Duplessis is dead. Phyllis Webb and Pat Page are discussing the syntax of comparative prosody in French and English with Anne Hébert, and Gilles Hénault. Leonard Cohen is trying plaintively to get somebody, "anybody, please, please — listen to Bob Dylan rocking with Ben Jonson with 'Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes.'" And Suzanne, sitting disconsolate in the room's corner, wants to go back to her place by the river. . . .

It's an exercise in sentimentality to think these things. But when you review the life of someone you liked and admired, such lapses in taste may perhaps be permitted. Would I be permitted also to end with the last verse of a poem I wrote about Frank Scott?

> At least a dozen Scotts exist
> — each a prosecuting attorney somewhere
> fighting intolerance anti-Semitism such
> blood sports of racists
> by which we mark ourselves
> as inescapably human
> — each a defense witness as well:
> include mention of that mysterious
> phrase "What's right"
> all ambiguous crap removed
> what's fair and equitable for everyone
> What's right?
> Frank Scott knew

AL PURDY

SUBVERSION

WILLIAM NEW, *Dreams of Speech and Violence.* Univ. of Toronto Press, n.p.

WILLIAM NEW IS a scholar and critic who has established an international reputation in two major fields: his own national literature, and comparative post-colonial literary studies. Paradoxically, his activities in the post-colonial sphere have been exploratory and radical, while much of his Canadian reputation rests on what would generally be regarded as more conservative pursuits: literary history, bibliography, editing. In *Dreams of Speech and Violence*, however, the subversive power of apparently conservative forms of literary practice becomes clear. The work's radical insights and combative arguments are supported by such a plethora of literary example and scholarly documentation that the detail runs the risk of obscuring how re-visionary the arguments are. When New writes of Katherine Mansfield that

> Clearly her method is oblique. But an oblique method was something she needed if she was to make any headway combatting the New Zealand literary/social conventions. The point is not that she denied these conventions existed; she admitted them, rejected their applicability to herself, used them and then proceeded to allude to the presence of alternative conventions . . . co-existent with, yet largely unseen by the world that held power and so defined the myths of identity,

he is also describing his own methodology and its relationship to a number of important contemporary critical and theoretical debates which underpin post-colonial and national literary discussions.

Using a marginalized genre (the short story) in two marginalized English-speaking cultures (Canada and New Zealand), New exploits this double displacement to investigate four major theoretical questions: the status of the short story and its relation to the politics of literary production in empire and colonies; the viability of the concept of literary and cultural universality; the importance of a comparative framework in considering developments in national literatures in order to distinguish the generically post-colonial manoeuvres they employ; the genesis of certain so-called "postmodern" preoccupations — fracture, subversion, fragmentation, and some types of irony — in colonial and post-colonial experience. None of these topics is particularly new in post-colonial criticism, but their embodiment in a full-scale literary historical argument is much more unusual.

These investigations are, however, conducted indirectly, smuggled into narrative accounts of the early publishing history of journals, or of textual analyses of individual stories. Contemporary Canadian writers' views on story as referential object rather than story as "artifice-in-process" relocates the documentary form and fragmentation from a universalist phenomenon of postmodernism, attaching it to a product of *Canadian* (post-colonial) cultural and historical circumstance, thereby questioning the usefulness of imported concepts and categories like the post-modern:

> Just as clearly we can see that Cohen and Bowering acknowledge the kind of connection Hood extols at the same time as they resist its attractions. . . . In other words, it is a documentary, historical reason that leads them to their own versions of broken form. But in doing so they are also performing an historical act, an act in history and with antecedents. Perhaps unconsciously, they are reiterating D. C. Scott's 1922 insight into the nature of a literature appropriate to a turbulent age, and so updating the cultural paradigm; and by performing a literary act that now has analogues in their cultural past, they are re-enacting his revolution for a "postmodern" age.

This sort of observation can be confused with an abdicating appeal to the dead hand of tradition, but acknowledging the past does not mean being bound by it. Neither does New attempt to construct "single-stranded" national traditions to confront the old Armada of European literary imperialism and its newly refitted postmodern navy. Cultural re-enactments are important in dismantling hegemonic claims from outside, but they must themselves resist essentialist solidification:

> The distinctiveness of what Canadians do . . . lies not in a set of unique features (though there may be some) but in a combination of tendencies: it is a distinctiveness of mix, and therefore less easy to categorise and identify. But 'real.' There are those who will refuse to acknowledge the tangible effects of an externally influenced cultural history upon the present or who will be insufficiently sensitive to Canada's culture to recognise its individuality; repeatedly they will mistake the constantly shifting balance of the mix for a set of random borrowings without cultural resonance or antecedent or substance. They will be wrong.

This is strong stuff, which buys directly into the "nationalists" versus "internationalists" debate and indicates where proponents of both sides go wrong. The

message is consistent throughout, though it is much more quietly presented in most of the text — sabotage by ship-worm rather than confrontation by opposing canon.

In addressing general issues through two national short story traditions, New concentrates on questions of language and form, rather than on theme and subject matter. Post-colonial writers, as he notes in his Preface, begin by "wanting to tell what is 'real'" yet find themselves bound by the imported language and forms of the imperial "centre." Hence they work by *sub-version*, an "indirect" means which is "a process of speech and form as well as political will." Language is necessarily crucial. To the post-colonial writer words have always been suspect, *différance* a condition of language and being. Indirection and fragmentation then "sound verbal alternatives to the status quo" and "open broken forms of the short story constitute a genuine opportunity for authentic speech." "Opportunity" is the key word here; in post-colonial worlds the "authentic" is, like language and surfaces, permanently suspect. Writers like Duncan Campbell Scott, Margaret Laurence, Alice Munro, Katherine Mansfield, Frank Sargeson, and Maurice Duggan (some of whose stories are discussed in detail in the final section) have had to speak through (not in) the language of the dominant "other" deliberately "doing violence to the codes and forms of the dominant language in order to reclaim speech for oneself."

And similarly with form. New's book constitutes an attack on the concepts of "wholeness" and "unity" in literature and in criticism. The post-colonial short story inevitably challenges such critical axioms, while Katherine Mansfield's "At the Bay" in New's reading, "attempts to methodically unmask the illusion of wholeness and thus the expectations of a unity-centered criticism." And within the white, male, nationalist traditions themselves, women writers and indigenous authors challenge emergent holistic concepts of *national* unity.

Both post-colonial and national literary studies need a lot more work of this kind, conservative in the good sense of accounting meticulously for the range, variety and detail of its material, yet radical in the freshness and subversiveness of its conclusions and implications.

HELEN TIFFIN

TEN YEARS FOUND

N. ALICE FRICK, *Image in the Mind: CBC Radio Drama 1944 to 1954*. Canadian Stage & Arts Publications, $15.95.

NOT MANY CANADIANS know just how much CBC radio drama contributed to our cultural and artistic life during and after World War II. Few know, for instance, that from 1944 to 1954, CBC radio employed more Canadian writers and actors and generated more original Canadian drama for a bigger Canadian audience than any theatre in the country since. At one time or another, different factors have conspired to obliterate our knowledge about, or interest in, this Golden Age of Canadian radio drama: the complete dominance of television over radio since the mid-1950's, the lack of Canadian theatre historians, and CBC's own reluctance to acknowledge its past.

Recent developments, however, are beginning to reverse this situation. Some disenchanted viewers are once again becoming listeners, theatre historians are less rare, and the CBC celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1986 by promoting its own achievements, including its contribution to Canadian theatre. Given these changes, Alice Frick's introduction to and reclaiming of ten important years in Canada's theatre scene is a welcome addition to our

bookshelves. Frick is well qualified for the task: she spent nineteen years at the CBC, from 1942 to 1961, and during the most creative decade of the Golden Age — 1944 to 1954 — she was the script editor for Andrew Allan's nationally broadcast and highly successful radio series, *Stage*.

In the ten chapters of *Image in the Mind*, Frick alternates between discussing the development of *Stage*, the drama series she knows most intimately, and the several other CBC drama successes. She moves through these more or less chronologically chapter by chapter: she recounts her year at the CBC before Andrew Allan came to Toronto to become National Supervisor of Drama in 1943; then, the first year of *Stage*, the Sunday night series which featured original Canadian radio drama (1944); the years of *Stage*'s half-hour productions (1944 to 1946); the first year of the prestigious *CBC Wednesday Night*, the station's three-hour vehicle for drama, literature, poetry, music, and opera (1947); the active years of drama on the Dominion Network — docudrama, serials, and adaptations — many with a focus on contemporary social problems (1944 to 1954); the first year of *Stage*'s hour-long productions (1947); then, the two years of the dramatized series on anthropology, *The Ways of Mankind* (1952-53); and finally, the "golden" years of *Stage*, 1949 to 1954. Frick ends this latter chapter with a lengthy discussion of one of *Stage*'s most infamous radio plays, Reuben Ship's satire on Senator Joseph McCarthy, *The Investigator*, which capped off the 1954 season, and which is now available in Howard Fink and John Jackson's new anthology, *All the Bright Company: Radio Drama Produced by Andrew Allan*. Frick devotes the penultimate chapter to the four major radio drama producers at the CBC — Andrew Allan, Esse Ljungh, Rupert Caplan, and J. Frank Willis — and her closing chapter reiterates the importance of this decade both to CBC listeners and to the nurturing of Canadian drama.

By surveying CBC drama programmes, *Image in the Mind* chronicles the impressive amount of activity and the numbers of people involved in producing drama at the CBC during these years. Frick mentions several dozen names in her marshalling of facts, from administrators to secretaries, from drama producers to actors and actresses, from writers to sound men and musicians. This breadth is both a strength and a weakness: a strength, because it shows the extent of the excitement generated by the prospect and realization of indigenous drama; a weakness, because the reader is often ill-prepared for the information. Especially in the opening few chapters, Frick moves haltingly between human stories and factual background. Perhaps this weakness is a natural hazard of memoirs: Frick sometimes forgets that all those CBC radio people — whose images have lived in her mind for forty years — are unknown or unfamiliar to readers raised on American television broadcasts.

After the confusion of the first chapters, Frick does inform us about the high points in each of the drama series. She wisely provides excerpts from the more interesting plays, balancing the need for different kinds of information: about the plays themselves, the writers' intentions, audience reaction, and so forth. She also includes a dozen pages of photographs of the major personalities, a helpful guide for readers who need pictorial help to keep track of the many names. Considering the enormity of the task, Alice Frick brings together important information in an introduction to this important decade. By doing so, she has begun the task of reclaiming these ten lost years in Canadian theatre.

JILL TOMASSON GOODWIN

SECRET LETTERING

STEPHEN SCOBIE, *The Ballad of Isabel Gunn.* Quarry Press, $10.95.

AS HE DID IN *McAlmon's Chinese Opera*, Stephen Scobie here gives a voice to an almost-forgotten historical figure. The story of Isabel Gunn, an Orkney woman who, in 1806, invented herself into the man John Fubbister so that she could go to Canada with her lover John Scarth, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, is hardly well known. She is another of those women marginalized by history. Yet Isabel Gunn's story, told from her own perspective, follows a familiar pattern: the woman is willing to leave her home and to lose her identity in order to be with John Scarth, the man she loves. The man, claiming to be drawn by the mystery of the unknown land, is separated from her once they reach the new country. The mystery proves to be no more than "the other woman," the man's native Indian wife "à la façon du pays." The woman gets even by taking another lover, only to lose that lover when he is killed accidentally. She takes her former lover once again, perhaps to provide a father for the child with whom she is now pregnant, only to discover that she can no longer accept him. She bears her son, assisted by a native Indian woman, and, her female identity now discovered, fulfils her contract with the Hudson's Bay Company by doing traditional woman's work for a year before returning to her former home where she is now an outcast.

The poem does not draw attention to itself as fiction or as poetry. Indeed, it does the opposite. The authenticity of the narrative is supported by Scobie's use of photographs of the ship *Prince of Wales* on which Isabel Gunn, as John Fubbister, and John Scarth travelled from Orkney to Canada, of Fort Albany where "John Fubbister" spent her first and last winters in Canada, of the *Officer's and Servants Accounts, extract for John Fubbister, 1806-1810*, and of the Hudson's Bay Company post at Pembina. He provides a list of references the reader might consult, citing an article by Malvina Bolus, "The Son of I. Gunn," in *The Beaver* (Winter 1971), as a major source of information. He invites readers "to judge the extent to which [he] has extended the meagre documentary record with fictional speculations." In making such a comparison, we note that most of Scobie's additions serve to emphasize the feminist themes of her story.

Bolus writes in the third person, using details about the *Prince of Wales* laying in supplies, about Captain Henry Hanwell's hiring for the "Bay," and about trade routes in the Canadian Northwest to lend her account authenticity. She withholds information about the identity of John Fubbister until mid-way through her article, and then only after quoting from Alexander Henry's journal. Scobie begins with Isabel thinking in images of forgetting and remembering, and then proceeds to describe events from her perspective. He also provides the entry from Henry's journal, but he juxtaposes the two accounts, Isabel's and Henry's. Henry writes:

> I returned to my own room, where I had not been long before he sent one of my people, requesting the favour of speaking with me. Accordingly I stepped down to him, and was much surprised to find him extended on the hearth, uttering dreadful lamentations; he stretched out his hands toward me, and in piteous tones begged me to be kind to a poor, helpless abandoned wretch, who was not of the sex I had supposed, but an unfortunate Orkney girl, pregnant, and actually in childbirth. In saying this she opened her jacket, and displayed a pair of beautiful, round, white breasts.

Isabel observes:

> . . . men
> haven't the guts to write the truth
> of what a woman suffers, no, all he can see

is "round, white breasts," a pretty picture
indeed, as he runs from the room, and thank
the Lord Jesus, an Indian woman
is there in his household to see me through,
her name was Ke-che-cho-wich, I'll set it
down
because he doesn't in his diary.

Scobie also invents a second lover for Isabel, Davie Spence, in order to even the account with John Scarth for his infidelity. The idea that the land exerts some hold over John Scarth is presented several times. As John Scarth writes:

. . . Sometimes I think there is
a kind of tax for living here, you pay
with parts of your body, and as you saw,
I have given my heart, I have given my eyes.
I go snow-blind with the sheer delight
of emptiness: I always doubted there would
be room inside of it for you. In Orkney
I tried to tell you this, but in Orkney
there are no words for Canada. . . .

Scobie has the messenger, James Brown, interpret these words for 'John Fubbister':

It is simple enough:
he has a woman on the Eastmain river,
a "country wife," we call it, "à la façon du
pays";

then Isabel thinks the image of exchange: "Trade-goods were all we lived by." She takes Davie Spence as a lover to even the account with John Scarth. She becomes pregnant — the flowering of summer linked to her flowering. Davie Spence offers to take her south, to Quebec. Instead she goes south to Pembina, glorying in her independence:

And as we moved south, the land began to
sing.
. . . .
At last it was pure lyric, rowing the Red
in the late August sun, with the banks
slipping by
to the silver notes of the slender birch
like a line of descant, tossed in the breeze.

Bolus, as does Scobie, cites Kipling's, Fidler's, Vincent's, and Harper's comments on the surprising birth, but she does not interpret them as making Isabel Gunn "the object of salacious stories: / . . . a thing, to be written about / in all their journals." Scobie's emphasis is on telling her story, perhaps on making the others entries in her journal: history is a story told in the third person, but that history is inadequate. It is the first-person narrative that corrects impersonal history. What is it that history teaches? First, that history must be known. The poem is hardly self-reflexive, although the last line "I am not unnamable. I am Isabel Gunn," echoing Brian Moore's "I am Mary Dunne," suggests that the telling of the story gives her an identity. The "somebody" of Kroetsch's "we haven't got an identity until somebody tells our story" becomes the self. While that self is ultimately a fiction created by Scobie, and while Scobie is aware of contemporary theories about the play of referentiality, that "we are all orphaned in language," he is also aware of the need to struggle against such an orphaning. Rather than losing itself in the "funhouse" of language, writing, as Scobie says in speaking of bpNichol, "is a heroic attempt to overcome such separation."

Instead of using the techniques of poetry to make language unfamiliar, Scobie gives us lines that are usually grammatical units. The lines combine to form a continuous narrative. Space on the page creates units of the narrative, emphasizing incidents without breaking the flow of the speaker's recollection. Without making the language spare, Scobie does not allow Gunn flights of fancy in images that are new, nor are her interpretations of those images unconventional. Hers is not the poetic imagination which transforms reality as conventionally perceived. The image of the new land as unwritten, for example, is quite conventional:

Orkney is bleak enough: a landscape as bare
as a paper that's left too long in the sun
so the ink has bleached white, the writing is
lost:

but writing at least *was* there, some trace
of the hand of man and the guidance of God.
But no one has written Labrador.

Similarly, her experience leads her from images of space, absence, and measurelessness to images of blankness:

. . . this endless
winter of 1808
I froze from civility:
this blankness, this despair, this final
Canada.

But the narrative is framed by the images of the Rings of Brodgar and the Maes Howe mound as speaking. At the outset,

Only the standing stones in their circles
— the Ring of Brodgar, the Maes Howe
mound —
raise to that sky their secret lettering.

By the end of her narrative, the stones have communicated with Isabel Gunn:

and I have talked with the men who lived
there
and with the women who gave birth to them.

That communication with the past has given her an identity: "I am not unnamable. I am Isabel Gunn." So too, Stephen Scobie, by giving one woman who lived here a voice, helps us name ourselves.

KENNETH HOEPPNER

SCH/MERZ

COLIN MORTON, *The Merzbook: Kurt Schwitters Poems.* Quarry, $10.95.

THIS BOOK CAN BE read as a textual collage on the life of German dada artist Kurt Schwitters. Several of the poems, "W," "Usonate" and "Critics," are direct adaptations of Schwitters' works. Epigraphs to some of the poems come from Hans Richter's *Dada Art and Anti-Art,* and Kate Steinitz's *Kurt Schwitters: A Portrait from Life.* The book is attractively illustrated with Dadaist collage works by Kurt Schwitters and Colin Morton. This *Merzbook* is also well served by a chronology of Schwitters' life which can be referred to when reading Morton's poems. However, the book should not be thought of as a Kurt Schwitters biography: it focuses on a variety of real and hypothetical moments in Schwitters' life and can be valued as much for Morton's skill in portrayal as for its historical significance.

Morton often relies on wit or absurdist images and fragments language into nonsensical morphemes which can be read as much for their acoustic qualities as for any conventional significance. Perspectives shift. We are offered interview-like "recollections" of Schwitters, ostensibly from the point of view of other artistic luminaries such as Hausmann. Morton has juxtaposed these "recollections" with Schwitters' "opinions." In this way, Morton addresses the inauthenticity of historical record, and the validity of fiction. Implicit and explicit in Morton's poems are questions concerning the fundamentals of both modern and dada art. Issues such as chance, parody, satire, absurdity, playfulness, and spontaneity are dealt with. It could be said that Morton's poems are more conventional than their subject matter. Perhaps this is necessary in order to maintain an effective historical perspective. To abandon wholly established literary rules and craftsmanship, would not serve Morton's purpose as well as it did that of Schwitters and his contemporaries. There are exceptions. The poem "Anna Bloom" attacks the conventions of the love lyric, uses absurd twists in logic, nonsensical syntactical arrangements, repetition and sound. Perhaps, if he were alive, Schwitters would appreciate this homage. However, most dadaists would have decried such a strategy. Their purpose was to dump artistic and literary conventions in the ashcan, not to celebrate them.

However, even though Schwitters was associated with the Dada movement, he

also stood outside of it. He never adopted fully the movement's revolutionary posture. To the uninitiated, Schwitters' work might appear to be inspired by the same trenchant and subversive spirit that had reached Berlin in 1917 via Richter and Huelsenbeck. It was adopted and practised by an intellectual group composed of Johannes Baader, George Grosz, Raoul Hausmann, John Heartfield and Franz Jung. Most of these artists were involved, one way or another, with Herwarth Walden's publication *Der Sturm*. They included political militants who were responding to the decay of capitalism. Schwitters' activities were based in Hanover. The rubbish that Schwitters synthesized into collage works, anticipated the typographical dismemberments which became the hallmark of Dadaist pamphlets. However, his plastic idiom was less savage, and more humorous than many of the other dadaists'. Morton's book offers splinters of insight into these developments. He depicts the drama of an artist who daily re-examines his own approach, an artist who finds himself in the midst of one overwhelming social-political upheaval after another. Poems such as "Wantee, to Her Neighbour" combine symbol and colloquialism into a stylized conversation that becomes a minimalist comment on politics and human weakness. Morton's appropriation of pop images, and cast-off phrases from folk songs, advertisements, other poetry, and so on, combine into neo-cubist textual collages.

Perhaps more important is the fact that Morton examines weaknesses in Dada philosophy and politics through his portrayal of Schwitters. It is in this rather conventional way that he questions the questions of the Dadaists. Poems such as "Huelsendada" and "Home in Hannover, 1922" portray Schwitters' rejection of anarchist/communist socio-political values extolled by some Dada artists. Schwitters refused to create an art that served a political cause because that would simply have become another type of shackle on free expression. Morton's *Merzbook* is a testament to Schwitters' struggle for artistic freedom.

KARL JIRGENS

PLAY MEMORIES

NeWest Plays By Women, eds. Diane Bessai & Don Kerr. NeWest, $19.95/$9.95.

THOSE WHO APPROACH *NeWest Plays By Women* looking for a uniquely feminist celebration may be disappointed. Though three of the four plays are dominated by women protagonists, the ardent feminist will find nothing as stylistically or polemically radical as Boucher's *The Fairies are Thirsty*. Those seeking an anthology of well-written dramas of more general appeal will be more satisfied. The collection, featuring two Governor General's Award nominees, strikes a nice balance between the work of an older, more established generation of women playwrights (Glass, Pollock) and that of the newest wave (Lill, Boyd).

Both Boyd and Lill have written compact one-woman shows focusing on the personal struggles of two young women venturing into alien territory. For Ellen, the frazzled writer/mother of *Inside Out*, the battleground is her own kitchen as she frantically attempts to cope with the simple, monosyllabic world of her toddler (a life-size puppet whose voice is supplied by an off-stage actress) without losing her grip on the adult world of film scripts and career opportunities. Though Boyd's humorous but perceptive "slice of life" is the slightest of the four dramas, it is also the one most likely to strike an immediate chord in anyone who has braved the loneliness, frustrations and rewards of early motherhood.

Lill's *The Occupation of Heather Rose* presents a more complex and disturbing journey into the heart of darkness. On one level, the play is an indictment of the shallow, patronizing government programmes imposed on Northern communities, and Heather Rose, who seems intent on turning her remote Northern nursing station into a Baden-Powell paradise, initially appears to be the comical butt of Lill's criticism. However, the young nurse's post-return account of her mission's failure rapidly evolves into a chilling portrait of personal and social breakdown, as the grim, nihilistic reality of Snake Lake shatters her cosy self-esteem and sucks her into the community's self-destructive abyss of inarticulate rage, despair and loneliness. In Heather's gruelling journey from bubbly idealism through drunken cynicism to a devastating sense of grief over the glue-sniffing death of a young native during a tribal spring festival, Lill skilfully captures the tragedy of both a young woman and an old culture lost between a past of dead myths and an empty future.

In contrast to Lill's and Boyd's one-character shows, Glass and Pollock have written full-length period dramas of broader scope. Set in the Saskatoon of the 1940's and 1950's, *Play Memory* is less a condemnation of that straight-laced society's intolerance of mavericks than a compassionate look at the disintegration of a once-happy family, and the stubbornness with which love and hope die even in the midst of domestic hell. Glass maintains this humane perspective on a brutal situation by filtering the action through the dispassionate, understanding eyes of the now-grown daughter, and making the father a character of such passion, wit and defiant individualism that even his self-pitying escape into alcoholism after his loss of career and social position, and the escalating violence he heaps on his family as his self-disgust deepens, is not enough to alienate wholly either the audience or his family. The memory of the Cam that was, chains the women to the Cam that is, and the inevitable family break-up needed to free them from his destructive influence ironically has to be perpetrated by Cam himself as his final gift of love to the wife and daughter he has abused.

Sharon Pollock's *Whiskey Six Cadenza* is the richest and most complex of the four plays. Centred on the figure of young Johnny Farley, it explores the human dimension of the bitter battle between the bootleggers and the law in 1930's Blairmore, Alberta. Pollock's sympathies are all too clearly with the bootleggers. The Prohibitionists, as represented by Mrs. Farley and Bill the Brit, are portrayed as shrill and malicious, while for Johnny in particular, the charismatic booze boss, Mr. Big, comes to represent a whole world of lyricism, love and personal freedom beyond the narrow, stifling confines of the mines, Johnny's family and respectable Blairmore society. Fortunately, Pollock's gift for vivid characterization redresses the imbalance. Through her lovingly drawn Mr. Big and his relationships with his family and cohorts Johnny begins to discover the darker side of this charmed circle. Both the booze and the lyrical visions this latter-day Bacchus dispenses may be elixirs of joy and fantasy to the downtrodden, but they are also dangerous narcotics that destroy people's ability to deal with reality. Big's booze destroys Johnny's brother and father as surely as his own manipulative dreams ultimately destroy himself, his foster daughter, Leah, and Johnny's hope for happiness with her. Johnny leaves Blairmore more appreciative of the regenerative power of dream-images, but also more wary of their power to destroy.

The effect of these four strong plays is further enhanced by the volume's editorial packaging: ten production photographs, an eleven-page introduction to the plays and playwrights, and a closing bibliography listing reviews, articles and plays

for "Further Reading." While these materials are particularly helpful in the case of the less well-known Boyd and Lill, I was somewhat disappointed that neither the introduction nor the bibliography contains any general information on the role of women in the Canadian theatre. For, though writing for general audiences, all four playwrights are part of a continuing heritage of strong female contribution to our developing theatre art, and one would expect a better acknowledgement of that in a collection featuring the work of Canadian women playwrights.

MOIRA DAY

MARITIME TOPOI

JANICE KULYK KEEFER, *Under Eastern Eyes: A Critical Reading of Maritime Fiction.* Univ. of Toronto Press, n.p.

I AM QUOTED on the back cover of this book, so it seems best to begin with the comment that summarizes my initial reaction:

> It seems absurd to say that *Under Eastern Eyes* is an eye-opener since Janice Kulyk Keefer discusses a subject we're supposed to know. But Keefer shows us that we did not know, and insists that if we claim to know Canadian literature we had better pay attention to the heritages and histories and fictions she sees as an alternative to the MacLennan-Buckler version of the Maritimes.

Before I read *Under Eastern Eyes* I would have claimed that my teaching of Canadian literature, especially because of my interest in literary regionalism, had always given Maritime fiction its due. *Barometer Rising* was the first Canadian novel I read (Grade 11); I often taught *Each Man's Son*, and included *The Mountain and the Valley* (the arguments about this tropist *tour de force* will be given new impetus by this book) in every course I could. But I had also taught Thomas Raddall's *The Nymph and the Lamp* and Charles Bruce's *The Channel Shore* to the enthusiastic response of students on the Pacific shore. Reading Kulyk Keefer showed me, first of all, how limited my reading list is, and how I had lacked a regional, cultural, and historical framework to which to relate this fiction.

Under Eastern Eyes expanded my sense of the canon of Maritime fiction. Kulyk Keefer's discussion of Douglas S. Huyghue's *Argimou: A Legend of the Micmac* (1847) as a subversion of historical fiction is an impressive argument for paying more attention to this book. Her investigation of the poetics of escape in Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Emily* series, or of the epistemology of chronicle in Silver Donald Cameron's *The Education of Everett Richardson* elicits the same response. Kulyk Keefer's last chapter attempts to bring some recent women's writing more centrally into our CanLit regional consciousness: Nancy Bauer's *Flora, Write this Down*, and Susan Kerslake's *Middlewatch* and *Penumbra.*

Similarly, much of the book is a retelling of Maritime history and its cultural implications. *Under Eastern Eyes* is a pioneering venture in literary history — inevitably, because it must recognize a necessity which simply would not apply for books published in 1987 on Prairie fiction, or Quebec fiction. Kulyk Keefer focuses on three central principles of the Maritime heritage: (1) "a strong historical awareness," (2) "community conceived in the intimate terms of family or village life," (3) an eighteenth-century "European response to nature": "Nature humanized, accessible . . . never annihilating." In developing these propositions in her introduction, Kulyk Keefer delineates differences from the centre and the other regions of Canada, argues (in a valuable outline of the development of critical ideas in Canada) the need for an alternative approach to the Laurentian thesis (and Frye's elaborations of it), and ends

by presenting one of the most fully developed rationales for regional approaches to Canadian literature that we have.

Kulyk Keefer claims that postmodern theory, particularly concepts of metafiction and marginality, need to be taken into account in discussions of Maritime fiction, yet in practice she does not go as far in this direction as I would like, or as would be profitable. She argues that the Maritimes' favourite genres are the idyll, historical romance, and the realist or representational novel. Given her conviction that "Maritime fiction is overwhelmingly representational," Kulyk Keefer tries (following A. D. Nuttall's *A New Mimesis*) to be the "transparent" rather than the "opaque" critic, and to judge a book's "mimetic authenticity." As her titling of the first chapter recognizes, this claim is "polemical," and unfashionable, but it identifies a stance invaluable for opening eyes.

Kulyk Keefer is also a poet of delicate nuance, and a short story writer alive to the cadence and echoes of her language. Among the pleasures of reading *Under Eastern Eyes* are the writerly turns of phrase and their implicit discovery. "Perception, for Buckler," she says, "becomes creation." Of the epilogue to *The Channel Shore* she writes: "It finished the novel in the same way a glaze does a painting, fixing and intensifying the colours of shapes which continue to move and relocate themselves in the viewer's eye." This figure is not only an effective simile, but also a revision of the received reading of the entire novel. Elsewhere the talented writer is, disappointingly, less in evidence. For example, she too readily adopts the modish, balance-sheet metaphor to describe "decay" as "the bottom line of communal life." And the lingering dissertationese (e.g., "conflictual relation") stands out just because we recognize here a better stylist than in many a work of literary criticism.

I disagree about Buckler's realism, think Kulyk Keefer uses Warren Tallman too easily as her strawman, and wish she would say more on the rhetoric of realism, on Anne Shirley's "pyrotechnics with language," and on the poetry of Charles G. D. Roberts' *In the Morning of Time*. But this study is an eye-opener. As the first extended organizing of its subject, it does very well what such a book should do: outlines the paradigms and principles to argue with. Kulyk Keefer's discussion, for example, builds up a helpful series of *topoi*: the graveyard, Bluenose, Arcadia, nature as a book, and, perhaps most interestingly, the *absence of sea*. Her succinct organizing gives us ideas and beginnings we have not had before, and will bring readers a new sense of Maritime fiction in Canadian literature, and of contexts within which the reading and rereading of these books will be more inclusive and more dialectical.

LAURIE RICOU

VINTAGE WILSON

DAVID STOUCK, ed., *Ethel Wilson: Stories, Essays, Letters*. Univ. of British Columbia Press, $29.95.

DAVID STOUCK's compilation of Ethel Wilson material brings together much that is previously unpublished or little-known: nine stories, six essays and a generous selection from thirty years' correspondence, mainly with her editors at Macmillan, Ellen Elliott and John Gray, but also with such Canadian writers and critics as Margaret Laurence, Mazo de la Roche, A. J. M. Smith, Alan Crawley, Malcolm Ross, Dorothy Livesay, Earle Birney and Desmond Pacey. The resulting compendium, drawn mainly from the Ethel Wilson Papers in the Special Collections Division of the University of British Columbia Library, has a double aim,

according to the editor: it "offers the scholar the opportunity to study the author at work and all readers the pleasure of reading 'more' Ethel Wilson."

Although some explanatory notes are directed to the general reader the references to relevant scholarship and the placing of individual items within the larger context of Wilson's published work indicate that Stouck's primary audience is the scholar, or at least the Wilson aficionado. His introduction and headnotes, for example, provide useful background information, but deliberately subordinate biography of the woman to the thematic and technical development of the artist.

Of the three sections that make up the book the weakest is the fiction. Although Stouck admits that not all of the stories meet the standards of Wilson's published fiction, he justifies their inclusion on the grounds of the insight they provide into her "rigorous process of self-criticism and excision," since all were at some time offered for publication. But the word "rigorous" seems excessive, in view of the uneven quality of her published work. Her decision to delete from *The Innocent Traveller* the four stories involving Topaz Edgeworth published here for the first time was well taken: while readers may enjoy further glimpses of the irrepressible Topaz and the filling out of Edgeworth family background, the focus is not consistently upon Topaz (a fault of the published novel as well). Stouck's justification of the inclusion of second-rate material on scholarly grounds alone is most questionable in "The Life and Death of Mrs. Grant," part of Wilson's unpublished preachy novel of juvenile delinquency, *The Vat and the Brew*.

The reviews, radio talks and other pieces which constitute the essays in the second section are more interesting. In them Wilson discusses her favourite reading and critical principles such as the privacy of writing. Her sense of the privacy and vulnerability of writing is the more pervasive when the familiar "A Cat Among the Falcons" is reprinted in the context of previously unpublished essays like the engaging "Admissions, Seabirds and People." The recurrent bird imagery reinforces the thematic similarities of the two essays: the falcons (literary critics) of the former, "handsome, formidable and trained birds, equipped to detect and pounce upon error," and the seabirds of the latter, who "do not invade" other birds' territories.

Most interesting and rewarding are the letters, her preferred means of communication with the world, Stouck says. In accordance with Wilson's wishes not to publish anything personal, he has restricted himself to letters of literary interest. Yet some sense of her personality does emerge — her diffidence, for example, in a letter to her publishers seeking advice in coping with publicity interviews. Of particular interest for the scholar are the insights that the letters offer into her writing, insights that Stouck's editing emphasizes. Preeminent among these, perhaps, are the projected alternative endings for *Lilly's Story* and *Love and Salt Water* contained in letters to her publisher; other letters, and editor's notes, supply reasons for the happier endings of the published versions. Of incidental interest to readers of *Swamp Angel* is the letter to Desmond Pacey relating the history of the Wilsons' own swamp angel.

Stouck's other claim for the value of the letters — that they reveal something of the literary climate in which Wilson lived and wrote — is abundantly illustrated. Predictably, they also reveal her changing attitudes and opinions over the years. In several letters she displays her irritation at the symbol-hunting of reviewers and critics of her fiction, yet in a previously unpublished talk, "Somewhere Near the Truth," she acknowledges the

symbolic value of the swamp angel. In a 1947 letter she objects to the classification of Malcolm Lowry as a Canadian writer, but in a 1955 letter she accepts it. Yet her underlying writing standards remain constant. A letter to Earle Birney hopes that he will not be offended by her questioning the value of university-taught Creative Writing courses in "A Cat Among the Falcons," published in *Canadian Literature*. (Birney "regretted her opinions," Stouck says, and the correspondence lapsed.) And she remains aware of the pitfalls of literary nationalism: "It seems to me that what Canadians have to aim at is not to write something *Canadian* (they'll do that anyway) but to write *well*."

Stouck has performed a valuable service for Ethel Wilson readers and scholars by making this material available. It should provide incentive for years of scholarship to come.

MARGARET DOYLE

NOVEL ROBERTS

JOHN COLDWELL ADAMS, *Sir Charles God Damn: The Life of Sir Charles G. D. Roberts*. Univ. of Toronto Press, $24.95.

EARLY IN HIS CAREER Charles G. D. Roberts wrote, in an Introduction to an anthology of wildlife poems, that "Among the young poets, with all their admirable dexterity, there is a too general lack of romance, of broad human impulse, of candid delight in life." As John Coldwell Adams notes in this biography, the lament expresses Roberts' "own expectations of literature." It also defines a principle followed in various ways by Roberts' biographers. Elsie Pomeroy's *Charles G. D. Roberts* (1942) was an expression of adulatory delight — without the candour — that Roberts himself (we find out from Adams) described to Lorne Pierce as "camouflaged autobiography." No student of Roberts would want to be without Pomeroy's sentimental recording of Roberts' own legends. Certainly not Adams, whose personal friendship with Pomeroy prompted his own biography: "As I listened to her reminiscences about Sir Charles, I was struck by all the things that she had left unsaid. . . . That was when the idea of retelling his story originated."

What Pomeroy found unsayable, primarily, was certainly not the romance, but the *romances* of Roberts' life. Adams intends to show his subject's delight in life more candidly by (among other things) recording what is known, or suggested, of Roberts' many extra-marital affairs or flirtations. In so doing, however, the code words of Victorian romance persist, colouring Roberts as heroic voyager. Adams repeatedly reinforces his subject's "sense of adventure": in fifteen years of visits the young writer saw New York become "the eighth wonder of the world"; in Churchill, in his early seventies, Roberts was witness "to the opening of a new frontier." Adams' chapter on the New York period is titled "Assailing Manhattan," and in Sicily the wandering Charles is even "assailed by the pungent emanations of cypress groves." Not surprisingly, then, the sexual life of this "blithe spirit" is veiled in such vocabulary as "dalliance," "wanderlust," and disport[ing]." The cumulative effect is to invoke affectionate tolerance for what Roberts might have called his 'broad human impulse[s].'

Perpetuating the image of Roberts as a late Victorian Don Juan results partly, of course, from a lack of information. For all the merits of recording the anecdotes and reminiscences which Pomeroy omitted in 1943, details of Roberts' love affairs are undocumented. Thus in Adams' book we still often find blanks where we might have expected to know who slept with whom. The poem "Taormina" "hint[s] at a romantic attachment to an unidentified

companion." More crucially, for a student of Roberts' poetry, the identity of the woman to whom *The Book of the Rose* (1903) and much of the rest of Roberts' poetry is addressed, remains unknown to a reader of the biography. This sense of mystery adds to the romance mode, and is, in one sense, very appealing. But what Adams might have done on such occasions (as Leon Edel suggested in his *Literary Biography*) is to describe his own search for the facts, however unsuccessful, as part of the texture and substance of the biography itself.[1]

Sir Charles God Damn is a romantic biography of a literary figure rather than a literary biography. Adams does not integrate into the biography any re-readings of the poems, stories, or novels; he is content to summarize, in very general terms, received critical opinion. A great deal might have been done here, presumably; for example, a closer examination of Roberts' studies of the classics is badly needed. Tom Hastings, in a paper for a graduate seminar as the University of British Columbia, showed how an examination of Roberts' own biography could illuminate the Gluskap poems (in what form did Roberts learn the legends? how did he regard them? etc.). These are the sort of inquiries I missed in *Sir Charles God Damn.*

My strongest response in reading this biography was not regret for the romance, nor for the absence of a stronger component of literary analysis, but the longing for a novel. We have learned a great deal in recent years about how biography is a fiction. Endless material here needs to be freed into fiction. Could someone write a combination of D. G. Jones' re-reading of Lampman's Kate and Heather Robertson's novels of Mackenzie King? Perhaps only in a novel can we find what Roberts did for three months in Biskra, North Africa, or what he said in conversation with Mrs. Morris in his cottage in Pontleroy in the Loire Valley, or the answer to the question Adams asks: "What did May Roberts think about the love poems her husband was writing?"

As this last question indicates, my suggestion for a novel is a compliment to Adams' method. He relies for descriptions of people and places on Roberts' own fiction. His book gets its greatest energy in its later sections when he depends more on gossip and anecdotes, on the insights which are engaging for their fictionality and for the untrustworthiness of the voices. Ultimately Adams' version of Roberts is most interesting as a shadow novel — Adams retelling the unsaid Pomeroy. And perhaps no romance in *Sir Charles God Damn* is more poignant, moving, and important than Adams' account of Pomeroy's 'love' for Roberts and her tormented ambiguous response to his surprise marriage (age 83) to Joan Montgomery (33) four months before his own death. What more could a novelist wish for?

LAURIE RICOU

NOTE

[1] Adams seems to adopt such suggestions in a post-publication comment in *Canadian Poetry*, No. 21, where he notes Laurel Boone's identification of the mystery woman as Mary Fanton.

LYING TRUE NORTH

STEVE MCCAFFERY, *North of Intention*. Nightwood Editions, $14.95.

STEVE MCCAFFERY'S *North of Intention* is a combination of previously published and unpublished works. The writing is ebullient, complex, and often responds to and goes beyond French post-structural criticism. The collection includes theory, an interview with McCaffery, and numerous important analyses of both U.S. and Canadian writers who have worked

with innovative form during the last ten years. Throughout, McCaffery applies his extensive knowledge of both obscure and well-known artists, writers, philosophers and political theorists. The collection is well-served by an extensive index which is rich in cross-references. Some changes from the original essays do occur in the body of the text, but most additions are confined to the footnotes. The dialogue that emerges between the footnotes and the bodies of the essays gives the book a *Glas*-sy bitextual feel. The differences between original works and the essays as they appear in this collection will be of special interest to those who may wish to trace the growth and development of McCaffery's theoretical base. His previously unpublished essays break important new ground.

In "McLuhan + Language × Music" McCaffery discusses McLuhan's theories on post-Euclidean accoustic space in reference to music and composers such as John Cage and R. Murray Schafer. This particular essay is significant because it quite sensibly considers McLuhan's work in reference to music and because it probes McLuhan's theories by using his own notions of acoustic space. In this way, McCaffery determines the degree to which a number of McLuhan's theories are "sound" (pun intended). The essay "(Immanent) (Critique)" combines subjective and objective viewpoints in a textual layout that fragments words with spaces and the text with caesuras and large blank areas. Here, McCaffery creates a visual analogue for what Derrida calls *differance*. That is, he addresses the gap between conception in the author's mind, and concept as it is finally manifested upon the printed page. This particular piece, and much of McCaffery's work alludes to Derrida, and gestures syllogistically to phenomenology. The paper, "Elsewhere of Meaning" offers an overdue (Anglo) examination of the work of Quebec Automatiste and writer Claude Gauvreau. McCaffery applies his comprehensive knowledge of historical influences behind sound and concrete poetry, as well as his understanding of Breton and European surrealism to reveal meaning, and its absence, in the phonetics of Gauvreau's *Jappements*.

"Writing as a General Economy" is perhaps the most important of the previously unpublished essays in this collection. Here, McCaffery discusses writing as economy rather than linguistics. He considers literary order in terms of a distribution of forces. Using a Marxist approach, McCaffery criticizes writing in which there is a privileging of meaning as product. It could be argued that the general economy of McCaffery's text implies, if it does not state, that the product/process dialectic is illusory. McCaffery uses homological language to discuss heterologics and a dissolution of contiguity. A question remains concerning the degree to which this implication is aleatory. The reader is propelled into an emotive reaction to the impossibility of grasping certainty. It is this uncertainty, which alludes to Wittgenstein as well as to phenomenologists such as De Man, that inspires McCaffery's incisive readings of recent difficult poetic works. McCaffery's writing lies north of Telos and both discusses and becomes a model of language as on-going inter-play rather than cumulative fixed meaning.

KARL JIRGENS

HINTERLAND DRAMA

EDWARD MULLALY, *Desperate Stages: New Brunswick Theatre in the 1840's.* Fiddlehead/Goose Lane, n.p.

JOHN RIPLEY, ed., *Gilbert Parker and Herbert Beerbohm Tree Stage "The Seats of the Mighty."* Simon and Pierre, n.p.

CANADIAN THEATRE history is at once the most rewarding and frustrating of disciplines: rewarding in that the recent explosion of new work confirms that we have only begun to explore the riches of a long-neglected theatrical heritage; frustrating in that that emerging heritage so often seems a continuing saga of failed efforts and broken dreams. Both Mullaly and Ripley's books run true to form in being revealing nineteenth-century case studies of Canadian theatrical failure at home and abroad.

Ripley's handsome 1986 edition of *The Seats of the Mighty* and Beerbohm Tree's handsome 1896-97 production of Parker's play are alike in being colourful, expertly packaged presentations of a script judged disappointingly weak and melodramatic even in its own time. However, Ripley's careful editing of the play and thirty accompanying pages of photographs, reviews, production history and script analysis will likely make this stage adaptation of Parker's well-known Canadian historical romance more palatable to modern scholars than it was to nineteenth-century dramatic critics.

Certainly, Canadian theatre historians, all too aware of the paucity of professionally staged nineteenth-century Canadian plays, will be intrigued by Ripley's account of *Seats*' brief but astonishing rise to international prominence before presidents in America and princes in England and its climaxing its career as the inaugural piece at Tree's lavish, new West End theatre. However, the play's fortunes plummeted as swiftly as they rose, and the question of why this collaboration between Parker, a Canadian novelist with an international reputation, and Tree, one of England's foremost actor-managers, should have yielded such forgettable fruit, is more central to Ripley's analysis.

His explanation indirectly sheds light on a more significant puzzle: why so few talented Canadian men and women of letters wrote successfully if at all for the nineteenth-century professional stage. Plagued by Parker's inexperience as a dramatist, Tree's insistence on converting the secondary character of Doltaire into a star vehicle for himself at the expense of the novel's central love story, and the general trauma of laying the novel's complex style, characterization and portrait of eighteenth-century French Canada on the Procrustean bed of the well-made play formula, the venture, as painstakingly chronicled by Ripley, becomes a fascinating study of literary gold being respun into theatrical dross.

The only question Ripley does not address is why Tree apparently never toured the play to Canada where patriotic sentiment might have ensured it a warmer welcome. Yet, as Mullaly suggests in *Desperate Stages*, nineteenth-century Canada had little of London's or New York's charms as a theatrical venue, and many, particularly in the earlier half of the century, performed in Canada only as an afterthought — or as a desperate last resort. It is on the lives and times of three such men, whose careers were reaching "desperate stages" when they connected briefly in mid-century New Brunswick, that Mullaly focuses his book.

Unlike Parker-Tree's *Seats of the Mighty*, Thomas Hill, journalist; Charles Freer, actor; and Henry Preston, actor-manager, were doomed never to scale even briefly those heights of artistic and personal success to which they aspired vainly. Taken together, these three interconnecting stories of each man's vaulting

dreams, desperate struggle for survival and final collapse into destitution or suicide, serve as a sobering reminder that for every Beerbohm Tree, there were a hundred unknowns starving in the hinterlands, and that Canada was "last chance" country for many who had failed in both England and America.

However, if *Desperate Stages* succeeds as three complementary portraits of human failure, it is less successful as a history of "New Brunswick's Theatre of the 1840's." One cannot quibble with Mullaly's decision to devote a third of the book to the luckless Preston whose chaotic Atlantic career demonstrates virtually every menace — fire, debt, riot, vandalism, dwindling audiences and deserting actors — which made mid-nineteenth-century Canada a theatrical minefield for the unwary. However, one does question his decision to devote the remaining two-thirds of the text to Freer, who spent less than a year of his long and turbulent stage career in New Brunswick, and to Hill, who wrote only one play during his two decades of journalism in New Brunswick. Even granting Mullaly's argument that a given theatre has to be discussed within the larger social, political and theatrical context of its time, the lives of these three men still meet too briefly and tenuously in the book, and its focus, largely through Freer and Hill, tends to diffuse into areas little concerned with either New Brunswick or its theatre.

Nonetheless, *Desperate Stages* is a well-researched book which combines an attractive dry wit with a generosity of heart. And it is a credit to Mullaly's powers of portraiture that he makes the failure of the mediocre and untalented in the backwoods of Canada as interesting and instructive as the failure of combined English and Canadian genius among the "seats of the mighty" in London and New York.

MOIRA DAY

TWO-HEADED ART

ANDRÉ-G. BOURASSA, *Surréalisme et littérature québécoise: Histoire d'une révolution culturelle*. Éditions les Herbes Rouges, n.p.

DOUGLAS FETHERLING, ed., *Documents in Canadian Art*. Broadview, $19.95.

THESE BOOKS MARK a major, invigorating new stage in the development of Canadian cultural and literary history. Bourassa's *Surréalisme et littérature* is an exhaustive study of varieties of and responses to surrealism by Quebec painters and writers; Fetherling's collection of thirty-nine pieces (some of them long, well-argued articles, others brief remarks) charts the scope of fine art criticism in Canada from 1892 to 1981. Each book is a first of its kind. There are two points of intersection between these volumes: the specific and unavoidable one is Paul-Émile Borduas' *Refus global* (1948); the more diffuse, but nonetheless crucial one, is the dramatic evidence each provides of passionate exchange and lively, informed discussion *between* writers and painters and *by* writers or painters *about* art. One conclusion is irresistible — that here, in Canada, as across modernist Europe, the painters led the way in the creation of the new.

The difference between these books is most illuminating in underscoring a major distinction between Anglophone and Francophone Canada. As Doug Fetherling points out, despite "*Refus global*, Canadians have not on the whole been a manifesto-making people." Bourassa's study, however, convinces me that a qualification is necessary here; it is *Anglophone* Canadians who are not manifesto-makers, and only one outstanding exception comes to my mind — the exception that proves the rule — Herman Voaden's *Six Canadian Plays* (1930). Furthermore, reading these two volumes together suggests that Anglophones have (for a variety of reasons — linguistic, cultural and

geographic) never nurtured a complex, inter-disciplinary artistic "movement" such as the one that flourished around Borduas, Riopelle, Gauvreau, Lapointe and others in Montreal. Or is it, perhaps, that Anglophone critics have yet to discover such activity, in fact to think about the arts inter-artistically? Would the Arts and Letters Club, affiliated with Harris and the Group of Seven, and including the poetry, plays and fiction inspired by their canvases or written by the painters themselves, provide a roughly parallel example . . . ?

Bourassa's study was first published in 1977 (when he won the Prix France-Canada), then translated into English and published by The University of Toronto Press in 1984, before being re-issued by Les Herbes Rouges in this "édition revue et augumentée." Unfortunately, however, this new edition is little short of disastrous. My, albeit cursory, check against previous editions shows very little in the way of revision or expansion and, although there are twice as many black-and-white illustrations here, they are so tiny and poorly reproduced as to be useless. Why must an important study like this one (at 600 pages plus in this pocket-sized format) be so cheaply produced? The only colour image is on the front cover where Léon Bellefleur's stunning "Danse des noyés" (1950) forms the background for the title of the text! Second only to my frustration with the illustrations, are my annoyance with the glued spine, the awkward format for the "Chronologie" and the skimpy Index. Even if Bourassa was not going to add significantly to this text, his publisher should have produced a better book.

Bourassa wisely begins his study with a discussion of precursors and approaches to modernism. There is, however, one glaring oversight in this important stage-setting: Bourassa's apparent ignorance of Expressionism, which predates Surrealism but has many strong links with it and, more importantly, some striking parallels with the distinctly "surrational automatism" that developed in Quebec after World War II. The oversight leads Bourassa into difficulty in his subsequent discussion of works that do not easily fit the surrealist mold — Suzanne Meloche's poetry, for example, or Gauvreau's *Voyage au pays de mémoire*, or an event like Pierre Mercure's 1949 opera *Le Vampire et la nymphomane*.

In chapter three, as he moves into an analysis of the *Refus global* pamphlet (which includes the famous manifesto), he must account for the differences between the Quebec and Paris varieties of "surrealism." The Quebec group stressed the non-representational, subjectivist and emotional qualities of their art and they strove for a global revolution and rejuvenation of the spirit; their stress, like that of the early expressionists, was on the rebirth of the collectivity instead of the individual. And the relevance for Quebec is, of course, immediately clear. In fact, their programme carries strong echoes of Nietzsche (a cult figure in early twentieth-century France and Germany) and occupies a space between Breton's surrealism and the Expressionism of pre-World War I Germany. Because he concentrates so exclusively on the French connection, Bourassa also misses what strikes me as a superb opportunity to compare *Refus global*, which represented all the arts (including theatre and dance) and was published by Roland Giguère in a beautiful edition, with its one notable precursor — Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc's *Der Blaue Reiter Almanach* (1912). To discuss Quebec "automatisme" in the modernist context is to invite such comparisons.

Surréalisme et littérature québécoise does provide a richly documented history of the interconnections amongst Quebec painters and writers; each chapter is or-

ganized in sections devoted to key publications, or to the work of a particular writer. Bourassa also throws considerable light on the strong differences of opinion (between Borduas and Pellan, for example), the discriminations and "ruptures" — political, aesthetic and religious — that fuelled debate over surrealism in France and "surrational automatism" in Quebec. The "Chronologie," replete with vital information demonstrates conclusively, not only the extent and vitality of the Quebec movement, but also the degree to which its painters, at least, have received international recognition. I wonder, however, why Hubert Aquin's name is missing from this list? What connection, if any, did he have with the Quebec "surrealists"? Was he a surrealist or, perhaps, an expressionist?

Documents in Canadian Art, in sharp contrast to the "new" *Surréalisme*, is a simple, well-produced text. It includes essays by artists, art historians and arts reviewers, beginning with excerpts from John Hassell's 1809 *Sketching from Nature* and coming up to the 1980's with essays on performance art by Gathie Falk and on Jack Bush by Hilton Kramer. The pieces are not organized in rigid chronological order, but rather follow topics or lines of thought as if Fetherling, in contrast with the synthetizing methods of Bourassa, were loathe to impose any kind of meaning on his disparate materials. Each entry opens with a brief bio-bibliographical and historical note from the editor. These brief notes are extremely important, too, for they constitute the only extra-textual information about the reprinted essay or its author that the editor provides.

In his "Preface" Fetherling quotes Northrop Frye to the effect that an anthology is the easiest kind of book to attack. Be that as it may — and my general enthusiasm for the book notwithstanding — I must protest that the editor fails to provide enough required information. If his intended audience is other art historians, or those with a special interest, then I suppose his passing references to Painters Eleven, Robert Motherwell, or the Young Romantics, will suffice. But if he hopes to find other readers (and a book like this should be widely read), then there should be a developed introductory essay with footnotes to direct readers to further readings or to catalogue sources. A bibliography and Index are also needed.

The one thing a "preface" like this *must* do is to provide a rationale and an overview for the anthology but, although Fetherling drops many provocative ideas towards such a rationale, he does not develop them. His reference to manifesto-making (cited earlier) is a case in point, as is his "concept of variability," which, if anything does, unites these "documents." In this "concept" lies the germ of an interesting theory, very briefly set forth in a preceding paragraph or two and summarized as follows: "The Canadian way is for pockets of activity to spring up and to coexist but not to merge with other such pockets which, taken together, inform and decorate the environment." If this is so (and I think Fetherling is correct), then why does this happen? What factors of geography, funding, exhibiting policies, and of the national psyche are at work here? And how does this image of "pockets of activity" compare with the situation in other arts — Canadian theatre, for example?

To be fair, Fetherling did not set out to wrestle with such large questions. But one further question, not addressed in the "Preface," should be raised: why stop in 1981? If you are going to mention the Young Romantics and neo-expressionism, for example, why not include Scott Watson's essay from the *Young Romantics* catalogue (Vancouver Art Gallery, 1985)? (Did it take six years [and this can happen] to find a publisher?)

Quibbles and complaints aside, there are some gems in this collection: Borduas' title essay from *Refus global,* H. F. Gadsby's infamous 1913 diatribe on the Group of Seven "The Hot Mush School," Bertram Brooker's "Nudes and Prudes" (1931), Charles Comfort's little-known defence of Picasso's expressionism called "The Painter and his Model" (1931), and more polemical pieces by Barker Fairley, Hugo McPherson and Sandra Gwyn. As might be expected, several writers discuss the Canadian landscape, but my favourite of these (Frye's and Woodcock's views are well-known) is Wyndham Lewis' article for *The Listener* on "Canadian Nature and its Painters" (1946). Lewis focuses on A. Y. Jackson and concludes, in terms that echo Canadian poetry, that there "is something of the Ahab in him; the long white contours of the Laurentian Mountains in midwinter are his elusive leviathan." Canadian painting of the 1980's, after a period in the 1960's of hard-edge abstraction and minimalism, seems to have resumed Jackson's search for the leviathan, and when Fetherling revises this edition of essays he will want to include something on the new "romantic landscape."

The longest essay, by far, to be included in *Documents* is Clement Greenberg's "Painting and Sculpture in Prairie Canada," an article commissioned by *Canadian Art* and published in 1963. As Fetherling notes, Greenberg's essay was "widely discussed"; what he does not do is to hint at why, where or in what ways it was discussed. From his Olympean position, Greenberg offered a series of observations on the state of art from Winnipeg to Regina, with New York as his standard and abstraction as his touchstone. Clearly, Greenberg was sensitive to the danger of sounding patronizing, and he bent over backwards to praise representational and figural work when he could, but his preference for Saskatchewan abstraction is nonetheless clear. However, when he identifies Dorothy Knowles' (an early member of the Emma Lake group) handicap as a failure to take herself "seriously enough as an artist" and extends this to all Anglo-Canadian art, one cannot help but note the irony (unapparent to this American pundit) of his own pronouncements.

In conclusion, I can only reiterate: read these books. Each helps to recreate our artistic past, to demonstrate the many vital ways in which that past informs our present, and to provide access to a wide and complementary set of facts about the arts in our two-headed country. What emerges here, sharply with Bourassa, more tentatively with Fetherling, are nothing less than the documents and personalities of our tradition and inheritance.

SHERRILL GRACE

FINDING VOICE

KATHERINE VLASSIE, *Children of Byzantium.* Cormorant Books, n.p.

DAVID HELWIG, *A Postcard from Rome.* Viking, $17.95.

"LITERARY HISTORY AND the present are dark with silences," Tillie Olsen tells us on the first page of her wonderful book of that name. The silences that show and suppress us are many and varied, with women suffering most from the inability to find voice and language to describe their experiences. Feminists today are particularly concerned with the acquisition of a language suitable to women's experience. As Xaviere Gauthier tells us: "Women are, in fact, caught in a very real contradiction. Throughout the course of history, they have been mute, and it is doubtless by virtue of this mutism that men have been able to speak and write." Here we have two quite different books — one the first collection of stories by a

female writer, the other the most recent novel of a prolific male writer — yet both deal with the silence and finding voice of a female protagonist.

Children of Byzantium is a collection of interconnected stories which accumulate to a novelistic vastness. Great gaps of time separate some stories, but there is a building chronology. There are too many carried-on events and character traits for the stories to be read separately with full appreciation, particularly the later ones, but each story builds to its own climax with a closed ending, before the new and later beginning of the next one. Together they tell the life of the young Greek girl, Eleni, whose parents arrange a marriage to a recent Canadian immigrant, thereby hoping to assure her prosperity. But after the terrible journey by boat and train, during which her belongings are stolen, Eleni does not find the expected large house and garden. What she finds in *kanada* instead is a hard life, circumscribed by poverty, alienation, and sexism, but she also finds a warm immigrant community and the richness of family life.

Children of Byzantium can be compared to other books dealing with immigrant experience. John Marlyn and Adele Wiseman, for instance, both deal with life within an ethnic culture removed from the Canadian mainstream, and both set their novels in Winnipeg, Katherine Vlassie's locale. The similarities have to do with the sense of alienation and the fears of discrimination or assimilation, but Vlassie does not concentrate on the clash between her protagonist and the larger world around her. Eleni's life is doubly marginalized. Not only is she an immigrant, but she is also a woman. The larger life of commerce and the community is not for her, and her husband prolongs her isolation by forbidding her knowledge of the new language and culture. He "always said it wasn't necessary for her to know more than a few words of English to do the shopping. He looked after everything else, didn't he? He did." He therefore keeps Eleni isolated, "in darkness," in a "secret world," and her life is a struggle against the well-intentioned protectionism of husband and subsequently sons, who seek to keep her muffled behind a wall of silence. *Children of Byzantium* thus traces Eleni's journey towards understanding and voice. She is helped along the way by other women who share their experiences with her, but Eleni herself does not speak easily, even with the other immigrant women. Her first outlet is her first baby daughter, to whom she explains "how sad she'd felt at first in this strange land, and how frightened she'd been at the thought of having a baby." Eleni also addresses her prayers to another female, the Virgin Mary, "Panagia," as she can offer the "comfort" that a male God or priest cannot.

Told in the third person with the focus on Eleni, there is such a sense of realism to *Children of Byzantium*, and so truly does Vlassie tell her tale, that it almost appears as an accounting of actual events. The style is exquisitely clean and spare, with no extraneous material. The reader is made to care for Eleni, as she struggles in her new life. The men go off and run the store, making even superficial contacts in the larger community. Eleni stays home with an ever-growing number of babies, caught within the close-knit and warm world of women. Painfully ignorant of life, Eleni learns by doing and being done to. Silent to the larger world around her, there are also inhibitions in her marriage, with many subjects that cannot be talked of even with her husband. Taught submission to this husband, Eleni at first unquestioningly follows his edicts, her only outlet being long, solitary walks to gaze at the spacious, brightly-lit homes of more fortunate Canadians. Eleni "didn't feel Canadian. Canadians were the ladies who walked along the street with an air of be-

longing, who wore their clothes with an easy grace, who spoke to shopkeepers." Eleni's friend, Matina, is more daring, trying to learn English from the newspaper and filling in Eleni's woefully meagre practical education. But Matina's single attempt at conquering the outside world, after a short-lived success and feeling of expansiveness, ends in pain and a return to the confines of the family home.

Even though some of the stories focus on Eleni's male cousin or her son and the effects of war on them, the main concern of *Children of Byzantium* is Eleni and the particular problems of immigrant women: shipboard rapes, ghettoization, the endless children, and the inevitable anguish of abortion. The vast time frame of *Children of Byzantium* ranges from pre-World War I, through that war, the depression, World War II, and beyond. True to the book's primary concern, the conclusion finds Eleni finally able to voice her bitterness and speak out to her husband. She must break the enforced silence of her particular griefs: "she'd never properly said her goodbyes to the dead — her parents in Greece, her infant child buried in an unknown cemetery right here in this city, her son somewhere in Europe."

Eleni's new understanding extends to an appreciation of the continuation of the wrongs done to her, in the treatment of her daughter. Together they plan a trip that will try to right some of these wrongs and confront what has been hidden from them. The book's last words are affirmative: "'Yes,' Eleni said. 'On our own.'" The end thus looks ahead into the future of Eleni's daughter, whose fate is seen to be tied to her mother's, and their shared trip emphasizes the necessity of women's support for each other. *Children of Byzantium* is the finest first book I have read in a long time.

While David Helwig's *A Postcard from Rome* similarly focuses on a woman's silence and her need to find her voice, it lacks some of the warmth of Vlassie's book and its believability. Still, it is an engrossing story with a rich sub-text of musical references. Although a novel, *A Postcard from Rome* is also similar in form to Vlassie's story cycle. There are time gaps and shifts to other characters between the chapters of Helwig's book, as there are between Vlassie's stories, while the main focus is still on the female protagonist, Edith Fulton, a Canadian opera singer. At the outset of Helwig's book Edith takes the stage to sing the title role of Puccini's *Tosca*, but her voice escapes her and she flees in silence. She is suffering from a very particular, traumatic silencing, but as Helwig repeats for us, a singer is nothing without a voice. "Her closest companion was her voice," and all her life she has sacrificed to that companion. "The body of a singer was perfected to its one function, sacrificed to certain startling abilities," and with those "startling abilities" silenced, the singer has "no lasting connection with the world." Occasionally over-writing, Helwig has Edith exclaim: "My voice is the instrument of my soul, the only glimpse of perfection I will ever be allowed."

The cause of Edith's traumatic silencing is a recently received letter from the father she has long believed dead, missing in action in World War II Italy, the site years later of Edith's defeat. The novel, with a series of flashbacks balancing the contemporary plot, provides the stories of Edith's and her father's lives, as they relate to the present crisis. The stories of the past catch up with the present by the novel's conclusion, and the book is framed by operatic sequences, as one might expect. After working through her pain, Edith is once again able to take to the stage, this time singing the role of the Marschallin in Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*, symbolically in the capital city of her own country, with her father in atten-

dance. She, as did Eleni, finds her voice in the end.

In contrast to the tremendous feeling of sympathy Eleni elicits from readers, the grown-up Edith curiously discourages such a response. It is all too evident just how much she has sacrificed for her singing career. She seems cold and self-centred, but not so the young Edith and her father, whose stories are vital and understandable. And there are, curiously, some parallels between the adolescent Edith and Eleni. Both are isolated, one ironically by an absence of voice and the other by a presence of voice. Edith is a solitary child, feeling abandoned by her father and misunderstood by her mother who only "liked things to be ordinary." And Edith's voice is not ordinary.

Both *Children of Byzantium* and *A Postcard from Rome* also contain portraits of the abuse of power by men over women and of the victimization of women by their own bodies. Eleni and Edith both face unwanted pregnancies and the loss of babies, with the subsequent emptiness. Emptiness and despair is also the lot of men who go to war, carefully detailed and sensitively described in both books. A major difference in *A Postcard from Rome,* however, is the lack of female friendship that surrounds Edith, perhaps contributing to (or because of?) her lack of substance in the present. I am certainly not saying that internalized female characters are uninteresting or unsympathetic (witness Margaret Laurence's Rachel in *A Jest of God*), but there is something cold and missing in Edith's present struggle. Although it is necessary to the working out of the plot that Edith be cold and empty, it is a risk not to create enough sympathy for her. At novel's end she appears to make some sort of breakthrough, as she discovers she can confide in a young woman who was her student but who gave up the larger life of opera at the order of her domineering husband. (Is there no way out of the either/or dilemma?)

In comparison to the stark realism of *Children of Byzantium,* Helwig's book seems much more consciously wrought, with many well-conceived images within the larger structure of the operatic metaphor. The emptiness/silence already mentioned becomes a leitmotif throughout the text. "Emptiness, hopelessness, a deep blackness was so close under the surface of life": the "emptiness inside her where her child had been," the emptiness Edith feels when she realizes the lack of sympathy between herself and her first serious boyfriend on the subject of her singing, and the emptiness "the thought of her mother roused." But this emptiness has also been Edith's salvation in a way: "There was a coldness in Edith, somewhere, without which she would not have survived." This is the very "emptiness . . . within which the voice could expand and resonate," the emptiness which turns dangerous when she cannot sing, but which again is full when she matches her own emptiness with that of her father. The similarity of diction is clearly deliberate. We are told of Edith's father that there is an "emptiness . . . inside him," "a hole where mind and memory used to be." The years of silence, in which he has not contacted his family, have not been easy, spent in part in ignorance of who he is and in part playing out a similarly solitary life to Edith's. Attaching himself to a priest in a small town in Italy, it is "as if he had taken a vow of silence," and "his silence [borne of his nature as well as his lack of knowledge of the language] increased the awe" in which the townspeople already held him. He is "the silent stranger" who both focuses and resolves his daughter's silence.

It is only necessary to add that a knowledge of music, and opera in particular, is a help in appreciating Helwig's book. Edith moves from the silencing of the "passionate" to the voicing of the "poign-

ant," from being unable to sing the role of Tosca, the solitary woman she loved so much and with whom she identified, to being able to voice the role of the Marschallin, who "realizes that there is also a future self hidden in her, an old woman, comic or pathetic." This sense of futurity and possibility Edith shares with Vlassie's Eleni and Laurence's Rachel, but further parallels between Edith and her operatic roles are confused. The Marschallin, for instance, woman of the world that she is, recognizes that she must relinquish her much younger lover to an innocent girl. The suggestion of such a theme of the old order passing on to the new is relinquished in *A Postcard from Rome*, when Edith's protégé refuses a singing career for a husband and child in suburbia. Still, the largeness of opera is evident in the book, and as the "curtain falls" on Edith's opera and Helwig's novel, the sense of closure is balanced by "a last suggestion that no story is ever over." Helwig is correct, and the powerful impressions of these two books are lasting.

ANN MUNTON

RESISTING DREAM

LENNARD J. DAVIS, *Resisting Novels*. Methuen, $20.95.

M. T. KELLY, *A Dream Like Mine*. Stoddart, $19.95.

THE NEW MARXISM, as Davis himself admits, has had its troubles bringing to bear on literature its innovative reconsiderations of history, sociology, and psychoanalysis. In focusing on the novel, Davis keeps his discussion within manageable limits, and in carefully explaining his tendentious terminology as he moves along he produces a much clearer line of argument than is often the case with such material.

Davis's thesis is that the forms of most novels convey ideological messages not necessarily related to their themes. These virtually subliminal messages support bourgeois capitalism, and require "resistance" by readers if this ideology is to be thrown off. Premised on deconstructionist distrust of inevitable underlying ideologies and their expressions as content, Davis's argument goes further to explore the covert expression in the forms of setting, character, narrators and narrative, time, dialogue, and plot. In this exploration of literary devices so vital to the novel even readers unable to swallow the economic *a priori* of the argument will find value, for in his linkage of the literary with the political Davis produces illuminating critical insights. Some, such as those generated by the application of sociolinguistic methodoligies to dialogue in novels, are original and fascinating. Many others, although more pedestrian and more obviously derivative, are useful points worth incorporating into one's teaching.

Davis condemns the novel of "realism," attempting to show that the conventions of so-called realism are ultimately only artificial signs. Realism in the novel is exposed as a literary fraud which, while mimetically revealing instances of social injustice or human behaviour, masks non-capitalist, non-passive ways of reacting to them. "Realism" becomes a political soporific, administered by writers who are oblivious of these formal political effects.

Setting is deplored for its treatment as property ("commodification"), character for its erotic side-effects that sidetrack potential politicization, and dialogue for its concentrated simplicity, its syntactical correctness, and its avoidance of non-verbal cues. The conclusiveness of time and plot lines in individual characters' lives is seen itself as misrepresenting the open-ended nature of "lived experience," inhibiting the possibility of the representation of long-term social evolution, and concealing the mechanisms of potential social activism.

Davis's best examples are from *Robinson Crusoe*. His analysis of the island as property, and Crusoe's individual cultivation of it into a colonized "kingdom," is an intriguing and well-argued example of the novelist's manipulation of space and individual character along the ideological lines of capitalism. The novel's space becomes an "ideological space" which can be colonized by a colonizing type of language — hence the particular forms of the novel, as Davis sees them, become adapted from earlier narratives to fulfil new functions.

Resisting Novels is clearly weighted towards the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and moves much faster and less convincingly when it brings in examples from the twentieth. Davis writes off much of Post-Modernism as apolitical parodies of the very ideological forms he is illustrating, and so avoids — perhaps anticipates — criticism from that angle. Yet ironically, the deconstructive premise of his criticism, like the deconstructive effect of Post-Modernist parody, is probably its most valuable characteristic. Davis's arguments challenge much of what we take for granted as conventions of literature. It is a learning experience to reconsider so drastically the fundamentals of the genre.

Forty-one true novels are discussed, while a dozen more are commented on briskly in passing. Laurence, Orwell, Beckett, Tolstoy, Golding, the major Commonwealth and Latin American writers, are all missing or rushed past. Science fiction is ignored. I would like to see, if even briefly, discussion of *The Sheep Look Up*, or an early Soviet novel like Gladkov's *Cement*, or that *pièce de résistance*, *The Good Soldier Schweik*. A Canadian, disturbed by references to *Unfinished Business* by Robertson Davies, might suggest *Prochain Episode* or Dyson Carter's *Fatherless Sons* as challenges to some of Davis's points. Granted, Davis organizes his discourse upon devices and their ideological effects, and not upon canons, or schools, or chronologies. Even so, comprehensiveness is lacking, and the book would be much better if it recognized the now vast scale of its topic, and if it were written entirely with the care and detail shown in certain parts. I come away with the feeling that Davis has read more criticism than he has novels.

Applying Davis's principles to Terry Kelly's fourth novel, *A Dream Like Mine*, is both illuminating and dissatisfying. The title has an extraordinary origin, in the narrator's dream-like vision of brute force to resolve an immediate problem:

> How many nights had I lain sleepless and imagined shooting people who made too much noise? An over-powered car goes by on the street. In reverie I stop the car, open the door, say 'summary execution' and shoot the violent consumer driving it. There, no more noise. . . . Arthur had actually gone and acted out such a scenario.

This is a far cry from Davis's plea for co-operative non-violent activism in literature. The novel contains two main characters — Arthur, an Indian terrorist, and the unnamed white reporter/narrator who is forced into recording Arthur's kidnapping of a local pulp and paper mill manager as a protest against industrial pollution. These three characters travel about in the bush for a short, painful time. Like a Red Power Che Guevara, Arthur produces the predictable environmental-protectionist rhetoric and brutalizes the helpless mill manager, who in turn answers rhetoric with rhetoric until physical suffering shuts him down. Violence supplies arguments beyond words.

The resolution of this plot is surprisingly negative, for ultimately nothing changes except the reporter. The *need* for change is affirmed, but even terrorist violence is abnegated as a way of dealing with indifferent big business. Yet violence remains a threat, driven *underwater* at the end, lying in wait out in the polluted eco-

system. Is a good book a good threat? Will executives everywhere suddenly join Greenpeace and Pollution Probe, or are they likely to invest in still more gimmickry like smoke-bomb briefcases? The book's power is in the treatment of an issue and a character with high tension brutality, yet the reporter recognizes terrifying aspects of psychotic behaviour in Arthur's actions.

In Davis's terms this protest novel uses closure and individual, failing characters to reinforce passivity in the face of the power of bourgeois capitalism. Even the reporter personifies the punishment society inflicts on the active when, appropriately in the last chapter, he loses his reporting job. Loss is not balanced by gain; activity subsides into silent passivity. Backgrounding this political motif is a religious one. The reporter has been sent to Northern Ontario because he has an interest in Indians and there is a "story" about the use of sweat lodges as a semi-religious treatment for the endemic alcoholism of the "Heron Portage Reserve" near Kenora. Participating in the sweating ceremony, he is represented as experiencing a spiritual purification that focuses his mind on issues beyond his narrow personal anxieties. This might be more convincing if his mind had not been such a see-through fabric in the first place. It would be difficult to build a narrator with the transparency and implied objectivity that Kelly gives this one *and* make him a character who develops religiously in the course of his narration.

The incorporation of native religion into Canadian fiction is itself nothing new. Novels such as *Spirit Wrestler* have tried to interpret spiritual beliefs that survive their civilizations, that seem to promise lost links to a world of unspoiled Nature. This novel goes further than most, following a non-Indian into a sweat lodge, *into a secret* that itself tantalizes with the possibility of truly promising value in a Canada where religion has become, as Davis would say, commodified, itself a subliminally ideological text. In the absence of Christianity, the Indian religion becomes the novel's religion, supplying mystery to the plot and certain characters, and offering help for real problems like alcoholism. Kelly goes further, integrating the sweat lodge ceremony with Arthur's revenge, and with Indian myth. Like D. C. Scott's powerful image of a headless Indian in "Powassan's Drum," an evil spider myth is invoked. It frames and unifies the novel, as well as providing appropriate symbolism for the powerful resentment and anger of a people whose whole environment has been altered.

This is much more a political protest novel than a religious one. Neither the myth nor the religious beliefs are essential to the plot, or to Arthur's characterization. In fact, the terrorism and the religion are linked only by this innately powerful symbolism. The appeal of the supernatural is justified by mysterious Indian legends and rites. But it is an empty appeal, more suitable to an eighteenth-century Gothic novel. I expect Davis would see such Gothic elements as red herrings in *A Dream Like Mine*, seductive lures into the titillation of a Stephen King film. Not all white Canada can be pushed through sweat lodges like car washes and come out Green and unbigoted.

A Dream Like Mine does not mark an advance in the treatment of Native peoples in the Canadian novel. It does not explore universality in its Deus ex Machina, as *The Temptations of Big Bear* did; its rhetoric resembles the set speeches in Bodsworth's *The Strange One*. Even the plot — Indians taking violent revenge against white society — "has been done," by Leo Simpson in *The Peacock Papers*. The sacred backdrop and supernatural closure was used by O'Hagan in *Tay John* as early as 1939. Indian writers themselves

are increasingly describing Reserve life in literature.

Resisting Novels reduces to a plea for social optimism in fiction, for constructive criticism that could be applied to a constructive society. In Davis's terms, Kelly's novel succeeds as a novel because of the failure of its characters' rebellion against prevailing ideology. The novel depresses the protest it raises, implicitly retaining the ideology it confronts. This is fair criticism to apply to *A Dream Like Mine*, once one sees Davis apply it to Defoe and others. I would add that this short novel belongs to the border area between popular literature and serious literature — defined by a distinction Davis would reject. The novel is well structured, makes good use of symbolism and even myth, and publicizes the vital issue of environmental pollution. However, the novel's language, while violent and strong, is flat and uninteresting on its own, not making use, as Philip Kreiner has done for the Cree of Northern Quebec, of local linguistic anomalies. And its forms *do* work against its theme.

The kind of novel Davis wants could grow out of the kind of novel Kelly writes. One can see an author as well as a reader resisting forms, resisting the very novel he or she writes. It is reasonable to look for resolution of such resistance.

TERRENCE CRAIG

ONE-RING CIRCUS

DAVID GURR, *The Ring Master*. McClelland & Stewart, $29.95.

THE SIXTH NOVEL by David Gurr commands attention only because of its sensational subject, Adolf Hitler: we wonder if the book will shed light on the man who is the Western world's incarnation of evil. And, indeed, early in the novel a transcript of interviews with Hitler, then a shell-shocked soldier, suggests the psychological forces which mold the eventual Fuehrer of the Third Reich. Under therapy the soldier revealed a scene of horrific proportions which the analyst summarizes:

> The parents' bedroom door is open. An argument is raging. . . . The Jewish lover . . . likes the boy and has given him a puppy. . . . Jew and Mother were discovered in the act. . . . The boy holds the puppy, a visible reminder of the rival. In the terror of the moment, boy, or dog, or both, soils himself. The Herr Oberoffiziall [father] . . . act[s] out his hostility to the full. He snaps a rat trap on the terrified dog's organ. "Jew's whore!" the father cries at mother and child.

From this background emerges a schizophrenic whose "rage and self-loathing may first vent itself outward, on others." The transcripts are the only intriguing part of Gurr's overly long novel, but even this psychological speculation is not at all credible.

One expects plausibility in the hypotheses of historical fiction. Gurr presents the transcript of analyst and analysand, take it as fact or leave it; nothing convinces me to take it. Is the author privy to some document to make me sit up and take note of this new evidence? As an Austrian friend of mine commented when I explained the novel's premise, "Isn't Hitler too serious a subject for mere hypothetical speculation?" Well, no, not exactly. But the speculation, when provided in the guise of fiction, has to create its own credibility. The events of Gurr's historical fiction are merely bizarre.

Timothy Findley in *Famous Last Words* and Sylvia Fraser in *Berlin Solstice* explore the rise of Nazism in Germany successfully not only because the authors' versions of the tensions behind Nazism coalesce with all the articles and documentaries about that era, but also because the authors are good storytellers — they create characters who attract our interest and sympathy. Gurr's chief problem is

that he does not know how to *tell* a story. The narrator of *The Ring Master*, an elder Eddie Casson-Perceval, imprisoned in Spandau, speaks like a stereotypical stage queen, despite the fact that he is incestuous, not homosexual. "Don't tell me," in simpering ironic tone, punctuates the narrative. "And then—" is used repeatedly as an unnecessary connective device. Probably Gurr is mindful of the European conventions of capitalization, but Eddie seems to be trying to convey Irony and Significance by the use of capital letters. A comparison of him to the homosexual narrator of *Famous Last Words*, Findley's fictionalized development of Ezra Pound's fictitious Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, reveals Gurr's lack of human compassion, of insight. Certainly Eddie never matures, never changes. The incestuous relationship with his sister seems to be his only achievement in life, and well into middle age he uses the same childish language to describe sex as he did at 10: "porpoising," the two call their rocking motions. The repetition is tedious. Furthermore, the entrances into the narrative of Hitler are interrupted by each succeeding stage of the incestuous relationship and ultimately these scenes become mere pornography. The historical fictions of Findley and Fraser provide entertaining and instructive history and fiction.

Without question Gurr tries to be both entertaining and instructive; he uses a variety of narrative techniques — journal entries, dramatic dialogues, film scripts, poems and songs, in addition to more conventional narration and description. One can accept much in a novelist's experimentation with form if in the end the writing is fine, moving or insightful. Nothing here is. No doubt Gurr intended to alienate the reader, in the Brechtian sense, to make him conscious of the grand operatic dimensions of the Nazi holocaust. Once again, comparison with *Famous Last Words* highlights Gurr's limitations: Findley introduces two plausible characters who debate the veracity of Mauberley's tale and cause readers to question their own reactions to the material. But the excerpts from Frau Wagner in *The Ring Master*, for example, explaining Wagner's Ring Cycle, are addressed to "My Dearest Children of His Ring" and read more as a tiresome joke than as an enlightened connection between the two ringmasters. Perhaps the insanity of the events of history call for an absurdist form, almost high comedy. In any case, it does not work here: what you get is low circus. Gurr's form mocks itself and refuses to allow the reader to take the historical speculation or the fiction seriously.

WAYNE FRASER

LOST THINGS

CAROL SHIELDS, *Swann: A Mystery*. Stoddart, $22.95.

CAROL SHIELDS' LATEST novel is a much more ambitious and self-reflexive text than any of her previous work in this genre. *Swann* comprises five sections, only the first of which is in the style of her earlier novels, being the transcribed thoughts of a single character, narrated in the first person and the present tense. Although this section resembles a diary in that it is made up of chronologically sequential "entries," these "todays" and "tonights" are not moments of composition but of reflection. Active present-tense verbs, "I make myself a cup of ginger tea and wander off to bed," denoting actions simultaneous with the narration, leave no room for written composition in the subject's, Sarah Maloney's, life.

The middle sections of *Swann*, each named, like the first, for a single character, also display Shields' considerable gift for internal monologue. However, their third-person narration subtly shifts the lo-

cus of authority away from the characters. The question, "Who is writing?" suppressed in Sarah Maloney's narrative, becomes subliminal in Morton Jimroy's and increasingly insistent in the sections that follow. Titles and introductory remarks in subsections of Rose Hindmarch's narrative suggest an authorial presence that hovers between a narrator of juvenile fiction ("Here Comes Rose Now") and a tourist guide ("At the crossing of Broadway and Kellog, you will find, on the north-east corner, the Esso garage"). The fourth section, "Frederick Cruzzi," is even more darkly stained, for it is a kind of scrapbook, containing epistolary passages, tourist-guide passages, short histories and an essay on dreams. Like the writings — and, indeed, the thoughts — of its central character, this section is self-consciously "literary," displaying a "weakness for alliteration" and producing strings of carefully crafted, beautifully measured sentences, for example:

> Walking through this dream,
> and through all Cruzzi's dreams,
> are the stout sun-browned legs of his wife,
> Hildë.

But the composer of these sentences, though possessed of Cruzzi's style, is not simply a recorder of his thoughts, for she knows what Cruzzi "never came close to admitting . . . , not even to himself."

The fifth and last section is a shock, for it abandons traditional narrative altogether, being a film screenplay, complete with instructions for camera angle, music and lighting. Contrary to expectation, it is not an unmediated dramatization, but a highly encoded narrative — a set of instructions for a puppet-show in which the director holds all the strings and is not so much the interpreter as the creator of the characters' words, expressions, moods and even memories. The presence of actors gives a Pirandelloesque effect of doubling, which operates as a distancing technique. The reader's earlier intimacy with these characters is undermined by distrust of the apparatus of film making. The contrivances of fiction, elaborate as those of film, are laid bare by this distrust.

However, *Swann* is not a novel whose sole purpose is demystification or self-deconstruction. It is, in fact, a novel of reconstruction, a novel which plays with the problems of biography, fiction and poetic autobiography, as well as with the relationship of all these to the lived life of an individual. The title is the name of a female poet, murdered by her husband years before. (Her resemblance to Pat Lowther ends here, for Mary Swann is supposed to have been the wife of an impoverished Ontario farmer.) Each of the main characters — a feminist critic, a biographer, an acquaintance of Swann, and her publisher — has a vested interest in the reconstruction of the poet's life and work. Each, in his or her own way, distorts, suppresses or actively rewrites the facts. (This gives the reader cause to suspect the practices of the novel's author, too.) Their sense of ownership, or guardianship, of Swann is parodied in a fifth important character, nicknamed "Brownie," a collector of rare books. Brownie's actions are the most superficial of the novel's justifications for its subtitle, *A Mystery*. Foregoing his previous ideal of cornering the market on Plastic Man comics, Brownie attempts instead to acquire all the physical traces of Swann's life: her diary, her pen, the few extant copies of her poems, her photographs, even her house. His motives are entirely mercenary. He steals many of these items from the other characters during the course of the novel, leaving them increasingly dependent on memory for their knowledge of Swann.

The characters' sense of loss and their fragmentary understanding of Swann's life and writings are not always negative. Cruzzi and his adored wife, Hildë, having lived through a version of Swann's last

day, rewrite parts of the poems while transcribing the almost obliterated manuscript. Hildë's choices are authoritative: she "seemed to be inhabiting, she said, another woman's body." At the end of the novel, and of the "Swann Conference" which is the topic of the satiric last section, the characters cease their pretentious and divisive critical claims for Swann. Having lost all copies of the poems, they are drawn together by their need to reconstruct the text from memory. The book ends with a litany of Swann's poems, collectively and orally contributed, not in a lecture hall, but informally in a hotel room. This spontaneous incantation is a commentary not only on poetic fame but also on the occasional intersection of poetry with lived life — or, in the world of the novel, with prosaic fiction.

This intersection is a clue of the novel's theodicy. Of course, the reader knows that the actual author of the poems is the actual author of *Swann* itself. Shields is an accomplished poet, though these two literary interests have not previously overlapped in print. The poem, "Lost Things," ascribed in the fictional world to Mary Swann, is the novel's epigraph. Gnomic in tone, it is at last a direct, if cryptic, message from the author. The haunting suggestions of her presence ("Not quite a shadow but what a shadow might be / In a place that lacked light") are equated with loss, because they rebuff, and finally, in this moment of renunciation, exclude the fictional world ("books returned / To paper or wood or thought"). However, the incantatory and epiphanic effects of poetry give the reader a sense of community with the fictional characters who utter the poem, with the fictional poet Mary Swann out of whose deprivation it was supposedly written, and with the author, whose own experience, at some level, produced poem and poet and characters and all.

CATHERINE ADDISON

DISTANT FIGURES

CHARLES RITCHIE, *My Grandfather's House: Scenes of Childhood and Youth.* Macmillan, $19.95.

THIS BOOK IS A NEW venture for former diplomat Charles Ritchie; though it falls into the general category of autobiographical writing, it is not another instalment of the private diary which he has kept since the age of eleven and edited for publication in four volumes. Rather, *My Grandfather's House* is a collection of thoughtful and engaging personal essays about people whom Ritchie knew and was impressed by during his early years.

Inevitably, the book lacks the spontaneity and exuberance of the diary of the same period (though it should be noted that the inevitability lies as much in the departure from the diary genre as in the author's eighty-plus years). On the other hand, Ritchie's admirers will be delighted to have the further information which *My Grandfather's House* so entertainingly conveys, while readers new to Ritchie will find this an intriguing introduction to a writer who is arguably one of the most accomplished diarists of this or any century.

"When I look back on those distant figures who peopled my own childhood, I find myself increasingly curious about them," writes Ritchie in his introduction. "What were they really like? What were their stories?" *My Grandfather's House* attempts to pin these elusive personalities to the page, and in the process demonstrates that either Ritchie has exceptional recall, or there is a lot more material contained in the original diaries than he is willing to publish *verbatim.*

The title essay is an evocation of Victorian Halifax and of Ritchie's maternal grandfather. Though characteristic witticisms abound ("Never in the course of nearly a century had my grandfather done a day's work. This, and his heavy drink-

ing, may have accounted for his healthy old age"), the essay also contains a trenchant analysis of the colonial mentality of the time, and is an effective scene-setter for the essays which follow. We meet Molly Clarke, the young nursery governess from Ireland who came into Ritchie's life when he was three, and for whom "[w]hat counted above all . . . were loyalty and courage," two qualities on which Ritchie the diarist was also to place a high value. We meet Ritchie's maternal uncles, Charlie and Harry ("Bimbash") Stewart, as dashing a pair of forbears as any boy could hope for.

Other family portraits include Cousin Gerald, who yearned to be a professional actor, but whose best talent seemed to lie in embarrassing his family, and Lilian Stewart Ritchie, the author's mother. Readers of the diaries will welcome further news of this redoubtable lady, whom Ritchie describes with affectionate insight. His account of her visit to Calais in 1919, as a young widow with two boys aged twelve and eight, is especially revealing.

Other essays describe memorable friends and acquaintances of Ritchie's childhood and student days. Among them are Irina Kirsanoff, an impoverished White Russian who gave him French lessons ("I still speak French with a Russian accent," he asserts); Miss Melanson, the Matron at Ritchie's hated Ontario boarding school who left under an intriguing cloud; and Billy Coster, the ne'er-do-well friend from Oxford days who turned up again at Harvard and "announced his intention of sabotaging my academic prospects and indeed he nearly succeeded." Less successful are the essays on a Marxist friend from Montreal, which devotes too much space to political differences and not enough to the "differentness" of the friend himself, and on the Ottawa social *milieu* of Elizabeth Smart in the early 1930's, which contains some worthwhile information but lacks insight. Perhaps the deficiency is related to Ritchie's own conviction that, feeling a strong desire to write, he resorted to keeping a diary for most of his life because he lacked the talent to be a novelist. "[E]veryone is a mystery," he wrote in *An Appetite for Life* at the age of eighteen after trying, and failing, to write a short story. "But the characters in my story are not mysteries, they aren't people at all. . . . I cannot invent."

When Ritchie is on solid factual ground, however, few writers can touch him. *My Grandfather's House* is much more than just a further fleshing out of its author's ongoing life story; it's a well-directed new shaft, sunk deep in a rich autobiographical mine.

PAT BARCLAY

GHOST ADRIFT

SEAN VIRGO, *Selakhi.* Exile Editions, $26.95.

Selakhi's protagonist Darien (echoing Keats on discovering new worlds in words) provides a clue for reading *Selakhi* in a fragment he signs "Colin Clout the Catamite." Terming himself "a northern ghost adrift in an ancient uncatalogued library," he asserts that "at the heart of every novel . . . there's a poem." At the heart of *Selakhi*'s darkness lies Arthur Rimbaud's "A Season in Hell." Each section of *Selakhi* begins with a quotation from Rimbaud and the entire novel may be read as an elaborate word-web spun out from his poem.

The plot, when unravelled, is simple, except for the enigmatic ending, which implies a violent metamorphosis but may involve murder or drowning. In any case, the plot is subordinate to Darien's consciousness and Darien is obsessed with language. *Selakhi* moves easily among a range of poetic and narrative styles and between English and pidgin. Its message is "never mind wordsworth tranquillities; it's the *language*."

It's the language that charges this book with electricity and the language that trips it up and traps it in banalities. For words cannot be so easily unmoored from history. Although Virgo would like us to see Selakhi as entirely a "country of the mind" and to forget the cultural phenomenon of the 1960's in reading this novel (or so he says), the self-conscious intertextuality of the entire construction forbids that. A twentieth-century reincarnation of Rimbaud (that "northern ghost") cannot ignore the intervening history of decolonization that separates the original from his inheritor. Words like "savage" and "native" (two of Darien's favourites) carry different connotations for the contemporary reader than they did for Rimbaud.

My problem with *Selakhi* is that it fails to suggest a framework for seeing this gap. The novel is so closely enmeshed in Darien's egotistical adolescent consciousness that it can provide no ironic distance from his distasteful excesses (he murders a "native") and puerile judgements. *Selakhi* writes itself into the misogynist, imperialist tradition of categorizing the Other as savage exotic. Virgo's version of this primitivism seeks immersion in a white fantasy of native abandon, approvingly citing Rousseau and Gauguin as Darien's filters for seeing the native girl who becomes his mistress and the island that affords him asylum.

Selakhi creates a sensuous world of its borrowed words but it fails to question the inherited paradigms of cultural encounter it uses to link them together. Darien sees himself as a Caliban and a Friday, not a Prospero or a Crusoe, but he never seeks a form of relation to his fellows beyond that set up by these foredoomed pairs. Unlike contemporary Caribbean writers, for whom Caliban must assume responsibility for creating a better future, Virgo's Darien sees in the role only another excuse for further irresponsibility. He is indeed a ghost from the past adrift in a decolonized present where the tropical island paradises of the northern imagination have assumed shapes of their own beyond a Rimbaud's conceiving.

Selakhi shows the native culture merely tolerating Darien's presence as one would a troublesome but insignificant parasite (a louse perhaps?). The islanders hold their own through their speech, which is not translated and occupies large sections of the narrative. But like so many critics who have recently discovered what they call the "third world" as fertile new territory for their imaginations, Virgo is more interested in the self-delusions of the colonizers than he is in the formerly colonized. Despite his love of language, Darien becomes a tedious companion, but at least his story can be read to deconstruct the Rimbaud mystique that has survived as part of our cultural orientation for so long. Christopher Miller has identified Rimbaud as a key figure in what he terms "Africanist discourse," a variation on what Edward Said has identified as "Orientalism." *Selakhi* operates too comfortably within such a discourse for my liking, yet it is just enigmatic and playful enough to caution the experienced reader against judging too quickly.

DIANA BRYDON

CYBERPUNK

WILLIAM GIBSON, *Neuromancer*. Ace, $3.75.
WILLIAM GIBSON, *Count Zero*. Ace, $3.95.
WILLIAM GIBSON, *Burning Chrome*. Ace, $3.95.

ONE OF THE hottest new authors to hit the science fiction scene in decades, agree most of the rave review-snippets printed page after page inside the covers of *Neuromancer* and *Count Zero*, is William Gibson. *Neuromancer* alone won the Hugo, Nebula and Philip K. Dick awards the year it was published. It is no mean

feat to win the two most important science fiction awards for one book, and a first novel at that. Gibson is now completing the filmscript for the Hollywood movie version of *Neuromancer*.

Gibson is one of two Canadians to have rocked the science fiction/fantasy genres internationally in the last few years. Toronto-based fantasist Guy Kay made a sudden name for himself with the internationally acclaimed *Fionavar Trilogy*. Vancouver-based Gibson, however, has heavily influenced and affected the direction of the newest style of science fiction writing, cyberpunk. Cyberpunk usually presents a high-tech, near-future society which is struggling with the harsh realities of a world grown into the logical extension of the one in which we live today, with all its problems taken to their logical extreme. Cyberpunk presents a harsh and ugly future, with increasingly high-technology compounding rather than decreasing the already insolvable problems of a future we are creating in our own present.

Gibson's presentation of this near-future world is as grim and harsh as any in the cyberpunk field. His world is full of unchecked corporate violence perpetuated by the handful of conglomerates which rule the world's economy, conglomerates which are in a continual race to outdo each other in the field of high technology, especially computer-based technology. Lives are advanced, ruined or even terminated according to their value to the monster conglomerates. Much of the rest of the world, it seems, is involved in mercenary shadow operations, hired by one conglomerate to work against another, either by stealing information through the "matrix," a huge, sub-reality created by networks of computerized data, or by stealing key personnel. Each major data field in the matrix is protected by "ice" which "cowboys" attempt to penetrate at the constant risk of brain-death.

Neuromancer (1984) is concerned primarily with theft through the matrix. Case is the protagonist, a cowboy who got caught stealing data from his employers and who had the "jacking" function of his brain removed by them as punishment. He is discovered in the seedy, cut-throat underworld of Chiba, a major Japanese centre on this urbanized planet, by Molly, a street mercenary hired by Armitage who has been hired by . . . ? They repair the damage done to Case's brain and set him to stealing data from some of the toughest data fields in the matrix. As the plot convolutes along, Case and Molly, now lovers-by-convenience, get curious as to who Armitage really is and whom he is employed by. Finally, after multiple attempts on their lives and minds, multiple gruesome murders committed by Molly or those out to stop Chase, and multiple shifts of venue, they find themselves in a tug of war between two overly talented, overly developed computers, owned by an incredibly wealthy, incestuous and self-murdering family. One of these computers hired Armitage to hire Case to bring it the necessary data to create a final binding between it and its antagonistic counterpart, which will allow it to break the legal bounds of its intelligence and create a new artificial intelligence, completely autonomous and unique, the highest and greatest intelligence on the planet.

As far as I understand it, this is the basic plot-line of the novel. The plot, however, is loaded down with and obscured by layers of technical jargon. Since terms such as "cowboy," "jacking," "matrix" and "ice," the most important of dozens of such "futuristic" terms, are not explained at any point in the novel, readers must wade through them as they would through treacle, in search of a plot. Furthermore, because they are both alien and undefined, these terms set up no images to help the reader envision this grisly and highly unattractive future. The charac-

ters, if they wish to survive, must be as grisly as the world itself, and therefore evoke no sympathy and little interest. Molly seems to exist simply to slice up anyone who gets in her way, in the most gruesome way possible, while Case spends his time doing unexplained, unfathomable things in the matrix.

Count Zero (1986) is, on the whole, a much better written novel than *Neuromancer*. The plot-line is much easier to follow, although it revolves around three protagonists whose individual stories do not coincide until the last few chapters of the book. Most of the major characters are a little more interesting and a lot less blood-thirsty than Case and Molly. The protagonists have emotions, motivation and substance. Much of the jargon used is defined to some extent. The world itself remains as brutal as ever, but that brutality is relieved a little by the characters. As the story is largely concerned with a mercenary who deals with stealing people, an art connoisseur and a "hot dog" (a would-be or apprentice cowboy), much less time is spent in the matrix. *Count Zero* is a better-written, better-structured novel with a more coherent and interesting plot-line, and more realistic and interesting characters than *Neuromancer*. Needless to say it won no awards and is not (yet) being considered by Hollywood.

The key to understanding much in both novels, however, lies in *Burning Chrome*, a volume of short stories which Gibson wrote between 1977 and 1985. The stories "Johnny Mnemonic," "New Rose Hotel" and "Burning Chrome" deal with the same world as the two novels, but explain that world and the jargon used much more clearly. Thus although this volume was published two years after *Neuromancer*, any reader wishing to save himself a lot of time and confusion should read *Burning Chrome* first. These stories show careful craftsmanship and a true literary edge. Gibson, like so many of his sf predecessors and colleagues, shines in the short story form. His characters seem human, vulnerable and three-dimensional. His plots are fascinating and well constructed. Gibson is a clever writer, but in the novels one can be so easily overwhelmed by the cleverness that one fails to notice the lack of substance. He shines in the short stories, yet the short stories show up the true hollowness of the novels. Catch-22.

One further minor criticism. Apparently, in the world of the future, Canada does not exist. Japan and the Eastern Seaboard of the U.S.A. are the centres of the new world. Turkey, L.A., Arizona, South America and outer space all sneak themselves into the novels in some minor way, but Canada does not exist. Perhaps Canada just did not make it in Gibson's nightmare world. Perhaps that is something to be grateful for.

J. R. WYTENBROEK

SF EMOTIONS

Tesseracts², eds. Phyllis Gotlieb & Douglas Barbour. Porcepic, $9.95.

THIS ANTHOLOGY OF science fiction writing is made up of four pieces of verse and nineteen pieces of prose. The four pieces of verse are all very brief — the longest no more than forty-four lines — but the prose pieces vary considerably from the lengthy *Happy Birthday, Universe!* by Alain Bergeron to the very short *Soluble Fish* by Joel Champetier. To find some unifying principle within the anthology's variety is not easy. In this regard, Douglas Barbour's Afterword is useful. He dismisses what might be thought the book's superficial appeal — namely the call to read it because it is Canadian. He points out that science fiction is essentially international and that at best we can detect no more than "national intonations" in the

selections. Barbour notes that amidst the "many moods, many worlds, many visions . . . a concern for character that has only recently entered the field is clearly felt by all these writers and emotions are probably even more a source of wonder than any technological development *per se.*"

In general, the more the stories appeal to technology and scientific jargon, the less successful they tend to be. William Gibson's *The Winter Market* is a case in point. The story asks an intriguing question. Lise, who has made a phenomenal success with her record(?) video(?), *Kings of Sleep*, has so many of her experiences and dreams recorded in the huge Hollywood corporation's computer banks that even after her death there will be enough raw material there to create new works in her name. What, however, will these works be? Is this immortality; is she in some sense not dead? As her editor asks at the end of the story, "Rubin, if she calls me, is it *her*?" But rather than focusing on this idea, Gibson mystifies us, and clouds the issue. What is Lise when we first meet her? She moves in and is supported by an "exoskeleton" made up of "pencil-thin polycarbon." She cannot herself experience sex, but she can communicate some kind of experience to a male human being via a cable that plugs into the skeleton. But Gibson's attempt to create an alternate age and technology leads not to mystery; it stops at obscurity.

The best stories are those that concentrate on the human problems of the characters and keep the science fiction muted, calling upon it only to intensify the emotional dilemmas or to add a touch of suspense, or surprise. An example is Terence Green's *Ashland, Kentucky.* Jack left his sister Margaret about fifty years ago and as she lies dying she wants desperately to see him again. The narrator, her son, begins the futile attempt of trying to find him. The steps he takes are all realistic and sensible. Any one of us might do the same kind of things. He is unsuccessful and his mother dies without seeing her brother. Then, mysteriously, letters postmarked 1934 and with the stamps of that time suddenly start to arrive from Jack addressed to Margaret. Not knowing what to make of it, the son sets out to solve the mystery. The low-key style that deliberately avoids melodramatic effects contributes to the remarkably convincing conclusion of the story.

Only Esther Rochon's *Xils*, among the more fantastic stories, thoroughly creates a credible world different from our own. Set in Montreal in the future after another life form had driven all the people out of the city and eventually allowed them to return, the story shows the two forms of life — the Xils and the humans — living side by side. To protect the Xils, human guardians have been recruited; one of these tells the story. Thus we see the human race from the outside. The means by which the humans and the Xils can live side by side is gratifyingly gruesome, but so quietly inserted that inattentive readers might even miss it.

One cannot overlook Margaret Atwood's *Freeforall.* A science fiction scenario is devised as a plot frame and the details are competently worked out. But the chief merits of the story are its style, and its study of the character of First Mother as she remembers the history of the House over which she rules. In some ways, *Freeforall* is the least likely story in the collection to be labelled science fiction, but it can lay claim in other ways to being the best piece of fiction (without qualifying adjective) in the anthology.

CHRISTOPHER DEAN

NO-HED

GLADYS ARNOLD, *One Woman's War*. Lorimer, $24.95.

CLARK BLAISE & BHARATI MUKHERJEE, *The Sorrow and the Terror*. Viking, $24.95.

GLADYS ARNOLD IS yet another articulate eyewitness to history who has now provided valuable insights into the momentous events of her times. Unfortunately, the value of *One Woman's War* is somewhat diminished, though defensibly so, either by a failing memory (she is, after all, in her eighties!) or by a still vibrant though moderately naïve idealism, fashionable, even desirable, in those hectic days of the Second World War but which now prevents her from consistently seeing things as they really were. It is perhaps unfair to expect objectivity in such a dedicated person. An inveterate francophile, her love of France is such that her tendency to gild the lily prompts skeptical reactions, admittedly infrequent, from this reader. More reprehensible is the sometimes careless editing which should have served her better especially in areas of historical accuracy. But no one can doubt the intensity of her feelings or the accuracy of her observations as she becomes a player in the unfolding drama of the war years. Her keen reporter's eye seldom lets her down; her heart never misleads.

Either as a Canadian Press journalist or working for the Free French Information Service, she met and sometimes worked with some of the great figures of the twentieth century such as de Gaulle, Jean Giraudoux, Georges Bidault, Jacques Maritain and Thomas Mann. Her observer's skills produce terse indelible portraits. A few bold strokes of the pen give us a self-centred, uncaring Robert W. Service fleeing France unaware of anything but his own discomfort. As her political curiosity changed to total commitment, Arnold's resoluteness carried her into some intriguing corridors of power. But the reminiscences are most engrossing when we share her compassion for ordinary people, her admiration for humour resilient in the face of adversity and her indignation at the intransigence of bureaucrats, the short-sightedness of politicians and the detached arrogance of "experts."

The reader is trapped in the shock of Paris flooded with refugees fleeing the advancing *Wehrmacht* from Belgium and northern France. Arnold writes of the "slow, uneven shuffling of feet and the awful silence." The subsequent exodus from Paris, the snail-like streams of ten million civilians being used on the roads of France ("weapons against their own protection") to impede Allied troops trying desperately to get to the Front, the rumours and the chaos all come to painful life as she recounts her escape to Bordeaux. The shock of the French surrender is mirrored in these brief words: "I could not bear to look at the naked pain in their faces."

An interview with a stoically purposeful de Gaulle in London whets her appetite for the fledgling cause of the Free French. She carries that spark to Canada where it will be fanned into flame by an heroic Elisabeth de Miribel whose task in Canada and eventually in the United States is to legitimize the cause of the Free French while counteracting the propaganda of Vichy (unrestrained, given the diplomatic recognition of a neutral and anti-Gaullist American government). The establishment of credibility for the Free French is made difficult especially in a Quebec that is ambivalent about France. Matters are made worse by the political infighting within the ranks of the French "colony" in Canada, for some are Pétainistes while others lean towards London.

There is a fascinating account of the U.S. reaction to the seizure of St. Pierre

and Miquelon by Admiral Muselier on behalf of de Gaulle. The *New York Times* wrote of the event as a "bloodless investiture . . . by four little warships . . . accomplished with a display of style and manners in the best tradition of Alexandre Dumas." But Cordell Hull, "livid with anger," demanded the return of the islands (which had by then voted 98 percent for de Gaulle) to Vichy. Hull echoed Roosevelt's insensitivity towards Free France and his paranoia concerning de Gaulle. Reactions were almost unanimously positive in Canada to the takeover, but U.S. influence caused doubts in some quarters "indicating," as Arnold states, "that Washington's pleasure and opinion then was just as inhibiting as it is today." Her syntax may occasionally falter but her asides are on target. Churchill came to de Gaulle's rescue at that time and, astonishingly, Mackenzie King stood up to the Americans in a fashion that was as firm as it was surprising.

Arnold's account is, nevertheless, flawed with some egregious errors which should have been spotted by attentive editing. In discussing Pétain, she twice claims that Canadians had served under him in the Great War. This is simply not true. Later in her treatment of French literary production during the occupation she states that "less than mediocre writers were given space and publicity by collaborating with the Germans." It would be difficult to defend the proposition that Louis-Ferdinand Céline or Pierre Drieu LaRochelle were less than mediocre writers. Their fascism no more affected the quality of their writing than Wagner's antisemitism influenced the beauty of his music. There are other lapses, such as identifying the FFI as the Fighting French of the Interior rather than the *Forces françaises de l'intérieur*, seeing swastikas (rather than simple Maltese crosses) on the wings of *Luftwaffe* aircraft, translating *bourrage de crâne* as "brain-washing" or *Les Cahiers du Silence* as "The Paperbacks of Silence."

But the book's strengths far outweigh its weaknesses. We share her joy at returning to Paris, her laughter at such anecdotes as the evolution of wartime Parisian eating habits (rats in 1870, cats in 1914-18 and rabbits from 1940-44!). We feel her compassion for the survivors of death camps as they return to Paris, many only to die. Some readers will also appreciate her inclusion of the lyrics to *Le Chant des Partisans*, one of the most stirring and haunting songs to come out of the war. At one point she complains that not enough attention is

> paid to the great spiritual qualities . . . of these ordinary people. . . . I become angry with those who examine war with cynicism, write of the dead with scepticism, glide with the sophistication of ignorance over the behaviour and attitudes of the people who endured it, and dare to make so-called objective judgments.

(Are you there, Keegstra? Zundel?) Arnold is one of those ordinary people who, like many other ordinary people, accomplished extraordinary things in extraordinary times.

Whereas Arnold is a witness to history, Clark Blaise and Bharati Mukherjee attempt in *The Sorrow and the Terror* to analyze the circumstances surrounding the destruction of Air India Flight 182, an event whose sole witnesses perished either immediately in the sky or, forty-five seconds later, on impact with the North Atlantic six miles below at an estimated speed of nine hundred miles an hour. The authors, fiction writers turned journalists for this particular purpose, see themselves as bearing witness by responding to the plea by the father of one of the victims to "tell the world how 329 innocent lives were lost and how the rest of us are slowly dying." Blaise and Mukherjee trace, through a fairly clear explanation of terms, the evolution of the fierce sec-

tarianism which has so plagued India that in 1985 it resulted in the bloodiest terrorist act of modern times. The fact that it happened half a world from Punjab province is but further proof of the pervasive virulence of the situation.

Much of the evidence proffered in ascribing blame is regrettably based on shallow research often yielding little more than conjecture and allegation, and yet to call these accusations spurious would be unfair for the truth must lie there somewhere beneath the avalanche of facts surrounding the incident. (One is reminded of Farley Mowat's admonition during an interview about *And No Birds Sang* to "never let the facts interfere with the truth.") A crime of such proportions, as inconclusive as its causes and effects may be (beyond the obvious), was bound to attract the attention of someone who would try to make sense of it. Blaise and Mukherjee can not be faulted for trying.

They can, however, be faulted for their feeble and *sotto voce* attempt to distinguish clearly between Khalistanis and moderate Sikhs. It is not sustained throughout the book so that they perhaps unwittingly perpetuate the increasingly accepted image of all Sikhs as wild-eyed fanatics honouring *izzat*, the Punjabi code which includes blood-for-blood revenge. A serious objection must also be raised to the totally unnecessary recording and elaboration of post-mortem findings replete with minute and grisly details of physical injuries suffered by those whose bodies were recovered. Consideration for the sensibilities of readers, many of whom (this reviewer included) were either friends or relatives of the victims, should have dictated another course of action.

Because of its labyrinthine complications, ranging from foreign intrigue through the countless peculiarities of factional fanaticism to almost official Canadian callousness and incompetence in security matters, the book tends to occasional confusion. There is, however, a very moving account of the reception accorded the victims' relatives by highly efficient and always compassionate Irish groups. This and a series of personal reminiscences by some of the parents are the book's saving graces. We witness the pain of pulling up roots to live in another world, the difficulties of adaptation, the immigrants' enormous pride in their families, their increasingly important roles in the community, their hopes, dreams and this final nightmare. Most seem possessed of a serene calm, yet one can detect an undercurrent of frustration at the slowness of Canadian authorities in settling the crime and at the rapidity with which their white compatriots forgot the event.

Even the most hardened reader cannot help but wonder whether the riddle might not have been solved more swiftly had the passengers been whites born in Canada by the accident of geography rather than persons of mostly Indian background who had come to Canada by choice. While we have recently been told that the investigation is "ongoing," it is quite obvious how Blaise and Mukherjee feel about it. The shame is that they are probably right and they cannot be blamed for seeking the truth.

GILBERT DROLET

UNSETTLEMENT

CHRISTINE MANDER, *Emily Murphy: Rebel.* Simon & Pierre, $24.95.

HELEN DUNCAN, *Kate Rice Prospector.* Simon & Pierre, $22.95.

JANE RULE, *A Hot-Eyed Moderate.* Lester & Orpen Dennys, $12.95.

THE WILDERNESS, AS Coral Ann Howells reminds us, has been a national myth consistently feminized in Canadian women's writing: "the facts of settlement provided the conditions of unsettlement as the wilderness became a screen on to which

women projected their silent fears and desires." These biographies of Emily Murphy and Kate Rice remind us that the wilderness was also a stage, one which allowed some women the freedom to play a quite different role from that suggested by their beginnings in the small towns of Ontario. In the west traditional expectations could be challenged, unsettled.

Emily Murphy and her husband Arthur, a clergyman, turned west after the death of their youngest child soured life in metropolitan Toronto. In the west the preacher became a mine owner and life insurance salesman. Emily Murphy, author of *Impressions of Janey Canuck Abroad* (1901), became part of the transformation of the west which she chronicled in *Janey Canuck in the West* (1910). It was from the west that Emily Murphy became a key figure in the first wave feminist movement in Canada. She campaigned for the Dower Act (1911), a law to recognize a married woman's entitlement to a share of the common property in marriage, and joined forces with Nellie McClung to campaign for women's suffrage. In 1916 she initiated and became the first woman police magistrate of the women's police court, a court where female offenders were heard and judged by one of their own sex. When the issue of whether women could hold public office on account of their sex was raised, Emily Murphy initiated the Persons Case of 1927. Along with four other women from the west, she petitioned for the right to be recognized as a person in the terms of the B.N.A. Act of 1867. The case went all the way to the Privy Council, whose resolution in the women's favour in 1929 opened the way for women to hold public office in Canada.

The muster of interests Murphy pursued as a writer and a campaigner are characteristic concerns of first-wave feminism: property law reform, prostitution, temperance, suffrage, birth control and family planning, drug abuse and mental hygiene, the pre-eminence of motherhood as woman's destiny. All come down to what contemporary feminists have recognized as the central and abiding concern of feminist theory and campaigns: sexuality, its social determination, daily construction, birth to death expression, and ultimately masculinity and male control. This lynchpin is important, for it allows us to bring into the one frame two such different histories as those of Emily Murphy and Kate Rice, both labelled "feminist" by these biographers. In her pursuit of the rebel Murphy, Christine Mander is able to follow the trail of this very public figure from a number of sources: the previously published biography of Murphy, the sketches and studies written by Murphy herself, legal and public archives. A portrait of Emily Murphy by J. W. L. Foster places her in the company of Carman, Lampman, and Roberts, among others, as "notables" of her time. On the other hand Helen Duncan's pursuit of the rebel Kate Rice is frustrated by the invisibility of a very private woman, who held no public office and whose campaign for independence was conducted wholly in the private sphere, and a remote one at that.

There is no image of Kate Rice other than that conjured by vague recollections of her fellow prospectors in the backwoods and by Duncan's own imagination, triggered as a nine-year-old by the sight of a beautiful and exotic woman from the west in a man's hat of black bearskin, striding down the streets of St. Marys, Ontario. Kate Rice and her companion Dick Woosey are, as Duncan suggests, legendary figures. Little about their lives is authenticated, and Duncan is free to weave into her biography symbolic events and suppositions: "to stitch and sew, to make my own judgements, to use my own imagination, according to my conception of Kate and her partner Dick Woosey."

At the very time when Emily Murphy's new life began in Edmonton, Rice also turned west and began her own career as a female Kit Carson (unlike Emily Murphy, turning down a proposal from a theological student in Toronto) becoming a trapper and prospector in the far north of Manitoba, and finally living with Dick Woosey in a purely business relationship. Rice demanded and achieved the right to live the most masculine of lifestyles. She eschewed not only marriage and motherhood but also, apparently, any kind of physical sexual relationship. The precise nature of the relationship between Rice and Woosey is a puzzling issue for Helen Duncan. Did they share a bed? Duncan's interest in Rice's sexuality is neither prurient nor trivial and she is probably right in her conclusion that they did not. It is a strength of Duncan's biography that she is able to weave so deftly, to write a biography of a life which was so private and conducted in terms of the imperatives of the seasons and the search for gold. Yet what she does not see is the larger historical frame — the connections between Rice's life of radical spinsterhood and the concerns of her seemingly more conventional contemporaries such as Emily Murphy. Kathleen Rice was not sixty years ahead of her time, nor was she a feminist long before the expression was ever heard, as Duncan claims. Rice was very much *of* her times. In the wilds of Wekusko Lake she lived her own version of the celibate lifestyle which Cicely Hamilton spelled out in *Marriage as a Trade* (1911) as the logical and militant lifestyle of radical feminism. Rice's lifestyle, no less than Murphy's concern for "fallen" women and the policing of female crime, relate to the thoroughgoing critique of masculinity which characterized the different campaigns and strategies of first-wave feminism.

Jane Rule's collection of essays, *A Hot-Eyed Moderate*, confirms that women may still immigrate to the western "reaches of wilderness" and find space to explore and flourish, to question female sexuality and woman's place. As Rule says of herself, "I am a politically involved lesbian, and I am a writer. I do not see the two as mutually exclusive; neither do I see them as inextricably bound together. Yet one of those two conflicting views is held by most people who read my work." Jane Rule has been prepared to use herself for propaganda, to make "educational points about my sexuality," while writing fiction which is thoroughly antipropagandistic. Whereas Rule would accept that her fiction is political, deeply concerned with the politics of sexuality and language, she resolutely opposes the use of literature as propaganda, as serving the interest of any one group. This point of balance between "lesbian" and "writer," politics and propaganda, so rarely perceived in the reception of her writing, is examined throughout these essays.

The collection is divided into four sections: "On Writing," "Writing for the Gay Press," "Profiles and Recollections," "Reflections," with the second being the most lengthy. The distinction suggested here between the first two categories is an unfortunate one. These essays were, literally, first published in publications like *The Body Politic*, and a few address issues which are conventionally thought of as especially relevant to the homosexual community. However, it also implies an assertion of that bifurcation lesbian/writer which stifles readings of Rule's work. In fact Rule writes about topics such as drag ("If what men want is our underwear, let them be welcome to it"), sexual fidelity (based not on a concept of love but a concept of property), and pornography with the same philosophy with which she speaks about literary traditions and the role of the writer — the right of people to be judged as individuals. In these essays Rule argues against

lesbian separatism, middle-class feminism, and the traditional realist novel alike as strategies for producing hierarchies. What she argues for is a fiction of reversed (or at least reserved) judgement, an integration of sexuality with other kinds of experience, and a detachment from policing of all kinds: "I not only want the church and state out of the bedrooms of the nation; I want the lesbian, gay and women's movements out of mine and yours."

Jane Rule refuses to be politically correct for lesbian, feminist and mainstream ideologies alike. Although her essays start from a quite traditional concept of the writer's craft — "the nature of art is to reach the universal by way of the particular" — to be a lesbian writer is to be an outsider, and this leads her to subvert social and literary conventions of all kinds, to write against the grain. In her commentaries and her fiction Rule's priority is to find a meeting point between the individual and society, to envision a community in which differences coexist untrammeled by hierarchies and orthodoxies of all kinds. She nails her colours to the mast with the Judith Lodge painting which hangs in her study and is a source for what she will go on writing: "We are a community of friends, together experiencing our communal biography, remembering, interpreting, sharing experience and work, time and space, as we do food and love."

GILLIAN WHITLOCK

CHENEVERT

PAUL G. SOCKEN, *Myth and Morality* in Alexandre Chenevert *by Gabrielle Roy*. European University Studies: ser. 13 French Language and Literature. Peter Lang, SF28.00.

PAUL SOCKEN'S CREDENTIALS in the area of this study are already more than respectable, he being the author of an annotated bibliography of Roy studies (1979) and of a concordance to *Bonheur d'occasion* (1982). This volume presents two essays on *Alexandre Chenevert* (1954), Roy's third novel, as well as a chapter on the relationship of the novel to some of her earlier writings, the transcription of an interview which took place in 1979, and a list of variants between the novel's two French editions.

The first of the two analyses is of greater interest. Entitled "Mythic dimensions," this chapter examines "Alexandre's revelation, his encounter with a divine presence and a transcendent reality." It presents a parallel reading of the novel and Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) stressing the conformity of Alexandre's itinerary to that of Campbell's archetypal mythic hero. From an initial state of alienation and anguish in the city, Alexandre flees to the wilderness of Lac Vert, where he undergoes a remarkable visionary experience of perfect harmony which later allows him to return to the vagaries of the real world, and to work out a modest reconciliation of the human and the divine. After his transfigurational experience, even as he is dying of cancer, Alexandre touches others and affects their lives. According to Socken, *Chenevert* is essentially an optimistic novel. Alexandre's pathetic journey has not been entirely in vain.

This study is already available in French under the title "Les Dimensions mythiques dans *Alexandre Chenevert*" (*Études littéraires*, 1984). Apart from the displacement of three pages from the article into chapter two of the book, the translation is a faithful one. To justify his republication the author reminds us that "the English-speaking reader has not been able to profit from the wealth of literary criticism available [on French-Canadian literature] in French." Unilingual anglophone readers of Roy (and there must be many) will be well served by this English version. The second chapter goes over the

same ground as the first, presenting "an analysis of the text from a humanist viewpoint." The author's observations here are nourished solely by his attentive reading of the text, without reference to other studies or critical approaches. The resulting chapter is, as I have said, less satisfying than the first.

The ancillary materials provided are of particular interest as regards the genesis of *Chenevert*. The author presents three short stories published in 1948 which are prototypes for the novel; although the links have been pointed out in François Ricard's *Gabrielle Roy* (1975), it is useful to have additional detail. A postscript about similarities between some of Roy's own experiences (as revealed in her posthumous autobiography) and those of her protagonist, as well as revelations contained in the interview, bring us closer to an understanding of Alexandre's *angoisse*. The author's statement that "unlike most of the other works, [*Chenevert*] is not highly autobiographical" ought to be more deftly nuanced.

Although Socken's studies of the novel are provocative, his view of Alexandre's ultimate achievement seems to me too sanguine. The dramatic moment of crippling frustration when the character is unable to translate into written text the fruit of his transcendental experience is seriously underplayed. When Alexandre discovers "the incommunicability of human experience," he is forced, according to Socken, to limit his role in the real world to that of a witness who touches others "by his person and his individual merits." Of course, his impact would have been infinitely greater had he been able to communicate his insights by means of a concrete *oeuvre*. And if we think such a creative eruption is too much to expect, we must remind ourselves that the novelist herself has succeeded in doing precisely that. As is the case for certain other Roy characters (Daniel in *Bonheur d'occasion*, Deborah in "Les Satellites," Martha in "Un jardin au bout du monde"), Alexandre's cancer is a sign of ultimate spiritual impotence, of an inability to concretize a transient transfigured state. His life, from that moment of failure onwards, proceeds inexorably downhill.

The book is well presented and solidly bound. I noticed only ten typos. However, the reference apparatus in the first chapter does not follow a consistent pattern. Further, I would have preferred a tidier system for in-text references (why does "AC" follow the page reference, while "*Hero*" precedes?). And if the book is intended for unilingual anglophones, why were the *Chenevert* passages, as those from critical works, not provided in translation?

DENNIS ESSAR

JEAN RHYS

PATRICIA YOUNG, *All I Ever Needed was a Beautiful Room*. Oolichan, $7.95.

JEAN RHYS'S MOST famous novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, is a homage, a criticism, and a reinterpretation of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* as well as a stunning accomplishment in its own right. Patricia Young's *All I Ever Needed was a Beautiful Room*, a modest contribution to this chain of women writers responding to other women writers, is a long narrative poem based on Rhys's five novels, letters, and autobiography.

Born in the West Indies in 1890 and drifting through Europe, three marriages, and a series of sad liaisons before settling into decades of poverty, obscurity, and drink in England, Jean Rhys attracts mythologizing. She can be seen as the archetypal "feminine" embodied in a patriarchal society — a woman ruined by, but only living for, love, and dependent on men who do her wrong. At the same time she may appear as the archetypal ro-

mantic individualist cast as a woman writer, down and out but unwaveringly devoted to her craft, insisting that each word be necessary and right, stripping her style to the bone, avoiding false sentiment and exaggeration. She claimed that her novels always began from an autobiographical core: she just wrote down what happened and then slowly and carefully rewrote until each fiction achieved a shape that pleased her and that seemed aesthetically inevitable.

Young's lean poetry is indebted to Rhys the spare and careful craftswoman; it incorporates her phrases and sets her prose to poetry. However, its subject is Rhys the suffering woman, an amalgam of her suffering heroines. As literary criticism, the poem thus oversimplifies both the variety within Rhys's work and the variety within her life, claiming that her characters are "indistinguishable."

If one reads this poem innocent of prior acquaintance with Rhys, one would probably find it emotionally coherent and moving, but perhaps confusing in its details. The text relies on its reader's familiarity with the Rhys canon. The first part of the "Julia" section, for instance, begins, "After Mr. McKenzie / I came apart in slow motion." The poem thus reminds the reader of Rhys's novel *After Leaving Mr. McKenzie*, but the poem does not itself explain that Julia's malaise springs from her hopeless, powerless position as the discarded mistress of a cold, well-to-do man.

The poetry does successfully convey the haunting impact that the oppressed Rhys heroine makes on her readers. At times the verse achieves the condensed force, the sheer emotional power, of the original texts. For example, these two passages combine the poignancy of Rhys's women with their realism about the connections between their emotions and their social situations, that is, about the connections between love and money:

> I wanted someone to hold me
> as though I were a child.
>
> A man with money could do that.

Or

> But I was alive, that much I knew.
>
> Because I suffered.
> Because money passed through my hands.

At times the poetry paraphrases the novels too obviously, too emphatically; at times it makes Rhys sound crude or explains things she left implicit, as in the lines, "So you see, love and hate / were one and the same thing" or "My belly burst with it every evening." Thus she has "Jean" explain to us that she wrote to overcome "Loneliness . . . the sheet of wet silk / that's clung / To my stunned, inert bones":

> I wrote because I had to,
> to rid myself of the awful sadness.
> That's the story people read.

Oddly, Young turns Rhys's life into a love poem at the end, reading her long-awaited literary triumph backward through a romantic veil. The last section is dedicated to "Leslie, my second husband": "He worked tirelessly for me." Rhys had three husbands, the first and third of whom went to jail briefly for financial chicaneries. The second inherited money that supported them for a while, but their relations were nonetheless difficult. The poem smooths these difficulties into nostalgia:

> Still, I loved him. I think he knew it.
>
> More than anything I wish he'd known
> of my later success. That I died
> almost famous, almost chic,
> wearing pearl earrings.

Rhys's wide, darkly pencilled eyes gaze out at us in the several photographs punctuating the book; like the poem, they invite us to join their cool, sad gaze at women who love and write and survive.

JUDITH KEGAN GARDINER

STERN PASTORAL

BRUCE ALLEN POWE, *The Ice Eaters.* Lester & Orpen Dennys, $22.95.

FOR MANY CITY dwellers in Canada, the divergence between the urban and rural ways of life — a difference sometimes more imagined than real — is as traditional as it is instructive and perhaps even therapeutic. Some will attempt the pastoral sojourn — with varying degrees of hardiness and discomfort — to lose, or at least put aside, one side of themselves and so find or restore another; others may seek some roots, attempt to come to terms — in a sentimental retracing of ancestral steps — with their personal heritage, or, in a more general way, discover something of what lies behind the label-defying civic ethos that they have come to know.

Bruce Allen Powe's *The Ice Eaters* has, as its central character, Murray Elkin, an enterprising survivor in the public relations world in recession-struck Toronto in early 1980's, who balances the demands of his commercial career against his own need to write and to go beyond his successful spy stories to capture, in prose, less tangible and more elusive elements of the human condition. His impetus comes, initially, from a desire to understand the life of his father, a man he never knew, an American GI who had worked on the building of the Alaska Highway during the Second World War. Personal life cannot hold him in the city, and, in any event, his wife regresses to a childlike state and is reclaimed by her possessive parents. But trips to the Yukon lead him not to paternal traces but into contact with a host of characters who form an antiphonal chorus to those who trouble him in his pressured Toronto life. The fact is that the Yukon poses more questions for Elkin than it appears to answer, though in the end he seems to come to terms with his experiences, with his talents, and, hence, with his life.

What is intriguing about Powe's narrative is the counterpoint of themes, characters, and locations, and none of the incidents or shifts in scene is either irrelevant or uninstructive. One moves through the events with Elkin as he attempts to balance his outward and inward concerns — challenged, outraged, awed, bemused (the range of reaction is as broad as it is realistic) — and suffers no sense of discontinuity. His Yukon and Toronto worlds have more in common than might at first be suspected: each, after all, has its legends, its truths, its civility, and its savagery. Each has characters who change and those who do not. And each has its artists and its dreamers, as in Bob Gabrielle and Isaac. Life in the business world, given Elkin's personal interest in art and his sensitivity, is demanding and painful, yet the pastoral element — in the Yukon scenes — is not idyllic but stern, and if it does not yield the ancestral truths Elkin seeks initially, it yields other benefits: dreams, dreams made true (as in Isaac's pre-death vision of the ice-eating fireball), hopes (as in Megan's view of life for her daughter), or hopes dashed (as in the case of Megan's mother, a chronically backsliding alcoholic whose ironic attempt to bring her daughter to heel is both convincingly conventional and singularly unsuccessful).

Powe's narrative is commanding. His description of the city, of nature, of people, and even of the machines which often fill his life is superb. His handling of characterization — and here dialogue plays a vital role in giving a real sense of voice and, thus, the person with the voice — is splendid: his technique is such that, as in all good performances, one is more aware of the effect than the process. And through it all one gets the sense of authorial certainty — that Powe has done his homework, that he knows his characters

and the spheres in which they move. That is not to say that his characters can — or should — be seen as generalized representations of all others who inhabit the same territory but that the portrayal of individuals has the ring of truthfulness, that paradoxically necessary element of convincing fiction.

However, the novel goes beyond pure narrative in its comments on human nature, on the need for understanding and love, and on the notion of what brute selfishness, incessant greed, and pointless degradation can do. And it says a good deal about the nature of art and the difficulty of the creative process as well. Art must be honest; it is borne with difficulty, and creators — not all of them are masters — are constrained by their gifts within their chosen media. Gabrielle knows this — perhaps instinctively — and Elkin learns it; they both know that in its greatest moments art can give expression to the inexpressible.

BRYAN N. S. GOOCH

TOUCHSTONES

DIANA HAYES, *The Classical Torso in 1986*. Pulp, $6.95.

RICHARD LUSH, *A Grass Pillow*. Wolsak and Wynn, $8.00.

MICHAEL BULLOCK, *Dark Water*. Third Eye, n.p.

THESE BOOKS SHARE a mystical quality that variously takes an escapist form using art, literature, and nature as touchstones for poetry. Although a reviewer is always pressed to look for similarities, these three books are providentially matched. Whereas Hayes would seem to be influenced by folk or fairy tales, Anglo-Saxon charms and such imaginative sources, Lush and Bullock both look for and find in art, literature, or nature what T. S. Eliot called the "still point."

Hayes' slim book includes a few alluring poems along with some less effective pieces ostensibly thrown in to complete an anthology. Natural images populate her ethereal world ruled invisibly by the moon and feminine forces. In the highly lyrical narrative "Take Your Heart to the River," Hayes recounts the romantic tragedy of a pregnant girl who self-aborts her fetus only discovered a fortnight ago:

> When, in spring, she took her belly-grief
> to the river's wide settlement, thick and
> spilling
> with the season's wet harvest, that winged arc
> of whitewater, where piper willow clung to
> her hair and skin
> as mateless pollen, then followed her to the
> bank's crest
> There she spoke not in sentences
> but small breathes that whispered
> listen to the river

Like the speaker in "This is the Moon's Work" who senses an affinity between herself and the moon, the woman in these verses is drawn to the river by its association with unattainable romantic desires. As she wades into the icy river, letting the cold water drive "an icy finger / to her womb" and the fetus fish "spill[s] to the currents / between her broken knees," she considers the river will be a better father than the biological father, who remains literally and metaphorically "too far from the currents to dream at all." Capricious rather than embittered, the female figure would like to "follow if her eyes were fins" this child who is now only "knee high to a polliwog" and destined never to leave its watery existence.

Unlike the magical reality in "Take Your Heart to the River," the real world becomes the referent in the title poem "The Classical Torso." In these verses, the speaker suggests the break-up of a relationship during and after a planned move to the west coast:

> I had set out on a western night
> where we talked of separation,
> long months in empty rooms,

echoes sustained for days
under such a barren roof,
our own voice repeating
to slice the raw edge off time.

On the west coast, an art gallery with its headless torsos provides an objective correlative for her state of mind:

And the limbs
of the torso mourn,
their tacit voice within,
all the crying lamentations
their headless souls contain.

At her best, Hayes instils a magic into her words and we are amazed that so few words can do so much. At other times, we are disappointed by slackness and a certain vagueness.

The world of art which provides the machinery of images for "The Classical Torso" becomes pivotal (together with the world of literature) in Richard Lush's *A Grass Pillow*. In "Winter Landscape with Skaters and Birdtrap," the speaker enters the reality of Brueghel's painting to interpret the painter's representation of evil in the form of an orange birdtrap:

What's meant
by the birdtrap? a threat half-buried
in orange snow. This is make-believe
at five o'clock. I've been learning how to see
sideways in any light; how to step down
from a dream.

Similarly, in "The Story of My Dovecot," the speaker immerses himself in the world of Isaac Babel's novel, even visualizing the topography:

This is a place I've never seen, but
know the topography, who lives in which
house, the feel
of Cathedral Street and how dirt melds with
sky
in the afternoon. I get sleeping sickness
when I read. Like slipping under water.
With my head on my arm, the pages touch
my face.
I smell flowers without name and take
refuge.

Whether by painting or work of literature, the poet is fascinated by the various mediums for dream and elevation to other realities. Thus, the "grass pillow" of the title is the metaphorical pillow — picture or book — that allows the poet to transcend the "sticky streets" and "diesel clouds" of this humdrum world in "Blue Sky, West Side."

Closely associated with this reverie through books is the "still point" of total communion with nature in "C Cirque Level." Like a Chinese, more mystical Wordsworth, Lush loves to immerse himself in nature as well as books:

On the eastern flank of
Cascade Mountain, pine needles
matted the way up, sunlight
filtered down to them. We climbed
without strain to the cirque; to silence
so thorough I heard the singing of myself;
to a pond that mirrored
a concave wall with cloud.

Although Lush's poetry is finely chiselled, *The Grass Pillow* is a disappointment. As a reader, I would prefer the poet to find magic in the immediate world without resorting to the crutches of others' imagination in the secondary form of paintings, books, and borrowed philosophies.

Like Hayes' *The Classical Torso in 1986*, Michael Bullock's *Dark Water* is infiltrated with natural images, particularly of water and woods. Whereas water and waterscapes create analogues for the underwater mind or consciousness, woods represent a romantic darkness of experience and an evil subliminally lurking in the psyche. In the title poem, "Dark Water," Bullock insinuates levels of meaning in what would seem, until the last stanza, a simple imagist poem:

In the dark water
a spinning leaf
sinks slowly to rest

Blue-eyed fish
nuzzle their curious way
among green weeds

An orange stone
gives off rays
of rutilant light

Here I too rest
slave in the knowledge
no path leads further

In the microcosm of this underwater scene, the poet sees the elements of the macrocosm and hints at another microcosm of the mind.

Employing a few more metaphoric leaps, Bullock in "Black River" implies that the river is a living soul whose spirit after death escapes into the sky in the form of a "wet white bird":

Winding winding
twisting the winding-sheet
the river writhes
between its coffin banks

Its cold soul rises
flutters among the leaves
a wet white bird
seeking an empty nest

Like Lush in "C Cirque Level," Bullock in the section "The Silent Pool" strives to represent his version of Eliot's "still point." And, in "The Heart-Shaped Pool," we find the speaker in the disconcerting act of looking back at his own mind through the analogue of the pool. Like synapses in the brain, a myriad of gnats are "crazy messengers / carrying messages to no one." The closed system of the brain can only look for meaning within itself. Bullock's elliptical verses tempt the reader to take meaning as far as it will go.

GILLIAN HARDING-RUSSELL

IMMUTABLE

Formations of Fantasy, eds. Victor Burgin, James Donald & Cora Kaplan. Methuen, $20.50.

ALEXANDRE L. AMPRIMOZ, *Hard Confessions*. Turnstone, $8.95.

Formations of Fantasy is a collection of cultural analyses which takes Freudian and post-Freudian psychoanalytic theory as its critical framework. For this reason, the editors have usefully reprinted two groundbreaking essays on the subject of fantasy: Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis' insightful examination into Freud's writings on the subject, "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality" (1964) and Joan Rivière's "Womanliness as Masquerade" (1929), an important early critique of femininity as role-play.

What is of particular interest in these essays are the ways in which they all variously emphasize the intersections of private and public fantasy in the productions of culture, as both the structures of the Freudian family romance and of socially determined inter-subjective relations mirror each other in fascinating and evocative ways. The critical aim of *Formations of Fantasy* is the deconstruction of the all-too-familiar opposition between "reality" and "fantasy"; as the editors indicate in their Preface, fantasy has for too long been dismissed as "the *negative* of reality." They aim at a revision of the view that fantasy is somehow only a *supplément* to reality and a recognition of the inevitably *political* nature of fantasy in both its private and public productions. The editors remind us that "There is no possible 'end to ideologies.' Unconscious wishes, and the fantasies they engender, are as immutable a force in our lives as any material circumstance."

From this perspective, the fourteen fantastic tales collected in Alexandre L. Amprimoz's *Hard Confessions* demonstrate at least a partial failure on the part of private

fantasy to translate itself into accessible cultural production. Many of these short pieces are closer to prose poems than stories, eschewing narrative structure for the more dream-like drift and fragmentation of poetry. This is not surprising, as Amprimoz has published many collections of poetry in both English and French. What is disappointing, however, is that these tales frequently fail to satisfy either as poetry or as narrative. For the most part, they offer neither the evocative depths of poetic language nor the surface attraction of the (postmodern) narrative. Their fragmentation seems too often less the function of an anti-aesthetic than a non-aesthetic.

Private memory plays a central role in many of these tales — memories of childhood in Italy (drawn, one may assume, from Amprimoz's own similar background), memories and fantasies of lovers (the several references to Petrarch's Laura, the appearance of Cleopatra in "The Fact of the Sea," and the forgotten names of lovers whose bodies are remembered in "Escargots," however, indicate to me that the coercive force of an abstract "femininity" as examined in several of the essays in *Formations of Fantasy* is not irrelevant to a reading of these tales) — and it may be that Amprimoz's fascination with the imaginative drift and overlay of the past has hampered his writing in *Hard Confessions*; too little of it seems to have been shaped for the consumption of outside readers. I find myself unable to grasp the subjective experiences recounted in tales like "Notes for an Impossible Fiction" or "The Fact of the Sea" (although the poem of the same name which appears in this piece is an indication of Amprimoz's skill with language and image). Yet these are the pieces which seem to promise the most satisfying reading in *Hard Confessions*. "Thinking About One of His Stories," a haunting exercise in *mise en abyme*, is both satisfying and beautifully written, a demonstration of what Amprimoz is able to achieve in this mode.

Even less successful in *Hard Confessions* are those pieces which are more overtly narrative in their organization and which seem to derive their form from the magic realism of writers such as Borges and Marquez. These stories tend to include so many events in so few pages, events both fantastic and grotesque, that they read more like the outlines of potential novels than complete short works. Here also Amprimoz assumes a lighter tone, which tends too often toward the cute rather than the witty. Thus, for example, reference is made to the city of "Greater Rotonto" ("July Storms"); an old housemaid is named Sophia Loren to no discernible purpose ("The Death of Charles Baudelaire"); a peasant involved in "the devil's work" laughs "in his own devil-may-care way" ("Too Many Popes").

The failure of language in *Hard Confessions* is its major disappointment. It may be that the severe constraint on length of these tales is partially responsible for this failure. In may be that Amprimoz is simply not very interested in sharing his meanings. What is certain, however, is that the bland, throwaway phrases of these pieces (the narrator of "Notes for an Impossible Fiction" observes, "These are my dreams and their simplicity shows that I am not interested in life") threaten to create a throwaway reader, a reader who simply does not care to understand the private codes underlying these published fantasies.

VERONICA HOLLINGER

WOMEN'S FRAMES

Prairie Women, dir. Barbara Evans. National Film Board of Canada.

NELLIE PETERSON HAS a dream: that through co-operation "we can all be win-

ners." Her dream was born on the Canadian prairies in the early decades of this century, and she shared it with a large number of Canada's unsung heroines who, as members of early women's organizations like the United Farm Women of Alberta, struggled "to create a better world based on social and economic justice, peace, and cooperation." In *Prairie Women*, an award-winning film only recently released by the National Film Board of Canada, director Barbara Evans skilfully weaves together the past and the present, in the form of excerpts from letters, diaries, and speeches, personal recollections and dramatic re-enactments, to tell the story of farm women and the movement of co-operative action from 1913 to 1939. It is an inspiring story drawn from the still sparsely documented chronicle of Canadian women's history and well worth the telling.

In a world in which women were socially oppressed, physically isolated, and subject to hardships unimaginable today, united action brought a sense of community and provided the key to social change. The road is a recurrent image in this film, taking women down dusty, muddy trails to "Farm Women's Week," local political meetings, and to other forums where they could express their views and lobby for change. They wanted a voice to speak for their own concerns: legal rights, education, and health and welfare. As former teachers, a good number of these prairie women were the best educated people in their communities. The letters they published in Violet McNaughton's "Women's Page" in *The Western Producer*, ranged in intelligent, articulate fashion over everything from birth control to the economic hardships of the Great Depression. Though they were often "prisoners" in their own homes for months at a time, they found the "Women's Page" brought the world to their kitchen tables. It kept them in touch with issues of vital concern to them and gave them a much-needed sense of solidarity.

What they achieved together was monumental, even by present-day standards. "The farm organization," Elsie Hart believes, "was the mother of all the best things that we have." These prairie women saw the establishment of rural and municipal hospitals, travelling clinics, and district nursing programmes. In education, they lobbied for hot lunches in schools, a school fair, and a curriculum more suited to a rural population. The changes they witnessed were also staggering. They were the first women of any province in Canada to receive the vote. And one of their finest spokeswomen, Irene Parlby, became the second woman Cabinet Minister in the Empire and was instrumental in the renowned "Person's Case," which in 1929 established women as legal persons in the eyes of the Canadian law. They were idealists. When the League of Nations called the First World Disarmament Conference in 1932, they collected some 500,000 signatures in support of the conference mandate. They believed peace was possible and refused to give up their children for cannon-fodder. But in 1939, where the film ends, it became apparent that at least one of their cherished goals would not be realized.

The muted colours of the film, the slow way the story unfolds, and the peaceful beauty of the prairie sunsets which punctuate the action — all seem to set the story squarely in the past. Yet, if there is a moral to this film, it is this: the dream lives on today. The modern-day "Peace Coffee House," which opens the film, and the captions which close it, underline that the goal has not yet been won. Only in 1969, we learn, was the dissemination of birth control information struck from the Criminal Code, and as recently as 1961 Saskatchewan became the first province in Canada to introduce medicare. In the interviews with these struggling women

half a century later, the voices of the present join with women's voices of the past to affirm, as the final caption puts it, "the struggles for peace and equal rights for women continue." Barbara Evans and her crew, especially cinematogapher Doug Cole, are to be commended for reclaiming this important episode from our Canadian past.

SANDRA HUTCHISON

ARCHETYPES

COLIN BROWNE, *Abraham.* Brick Books, $7.50.
LESLEY MCALLISTER, *The Blue House.* Aya Press, $8.00.

ABRAHAM, THE "Father of a multitude," is not only the archetypal elder but, in this book, is also a young boy. The story connecting the poems in this collection weaves between a young Abraham and an old patriarchal one. However, the poetic emphasis is on the boy, and the familiar archetypal figure is kept in the background as a point of reference. The old Abraham tends to appear in quotations from apocryphal books. The young Abraham of the poems is a boy in the late 1930's and early 1940's. The violence of the Old Testament Abraham's world is overlaid by the horror of the Holocaust.

An early poem, "The Boy," opens with a scene depicting the delicacy, vulnerability, rowdiness and smelliness of the young boy at play with other boys:

> Tilted, tiny swimming bird of a
>
> cap
>
> a new moon
>
> hinges
>
> little stars
> a yearning-seine: "Red Indians"
> flushed cheeks, or fruit in wet grass (yellow)
> orchards thudding, canvas and bannock
> sticks, avid boys
>
> thin-spouted, pungent.

The poem then abruptly reverses itself and the scene turns sinister:

> lenses reverse, *bouleversent*
> BEAST's flip
> is beauty: *arnoumai*
> turns 999, spout envelops, kisser's
> carbuncular
> the horn turns
> on the loin
>
> we bleat.

This reversal, this "flip," showing us the Antichrist visible when the scene is viewed through the other side of the lens, is an aspect of one of the central metaphors of the book, that of the photographic process.

The poem "Developer" plays on the idea of the image reversed through the camera lens and as well on the idea of the development of the boy. The image is fixed by the photographic process: "The salts have it, sunstruck / *quickstuff* à la Daguerre," and part of the image that emerges is that of the boy. But, it is never clear if the narrator observes Abraham or is himself Abraham observing himself from without, seeing a picture of himself:

> this kid
> old shorts, old pale his wrists stick out of
> he is leaning in at you
> me, that is
> leaning in at
> me.

In "Developer" the link between boy and Hebrew patriarch is enforced by the description of "this kid" as being "old pale," and more specifically by the image of "these stern papas / capped in yarmulkes" which parallels "The Boy" with his "tiny swimming bird of a / cap."

Another major metaphor of the book is that of the street, a street of life for Abraham:

> . . . Tamp down two stones
> you've a street;
> pry up and chuck out one:
> Eden.

Stones, stone, each with its hard animal
burning
in it
where we stand, I stand
on them, me, Abraham.

Very often, photography and the street appear together. In one poem: "The photographer spins to his right and as if drymounted on whirling cylinders / the street accelerates." In the next poem:

. . . that kid's swept behind me
I move the Kodak is it swings
at my side now the street
seethes with selling.

As the madness in the street heightens in this poem, "Abraham hurries across the cobbles." There is a continual sense of Abraham hurrying or trying to escape down the street. As the poet himself said about this book:

> We're . . . with this book, at a time when the Final Solution was being devised and I still don't know what happened to the little Abraham whose name is the book's name. He would certainly, several years later, be a candidate for selection. I have the awful feeling he died in a camp.

Using a biblical, archetypal figure such as Abraham, brings much symbolic weight to a work. The difficulty is in using such powerful symbolism subtly, as Colin Browne, I believe, has done. *The Blue House* by Lesley McAllister attempts a similar strategy. Again we have a group of poetic writings that are unified into a narrative by a central and archetypal figure. In this case the story hinges on the feminine biblical archetype of Mother Mary. Here too the archetype takes shape in a twentieth-century person. The modern Mary lives in the Toronto of the present and concurrently in her mind is in Mexico where she had had relationships of various sorts with a number of men and boys and not surprisingly became pregnant. The two major metaphors of the poems are Mexico and the birth-life-death cycle. These are clearly introduced on the first page:

Mary sits in the middle of a long coral couch.
Beside her are two books — on her left,
"Mexico
City" and on her right, "Old Age."

These books are frequently quoted as supporting commentary on the events in Mary's life. The book "Old Age" tells us that "The passing of time brings about wear and decay: this persuasion is apparent in the myths and rites of regeneration that play so important a part in all repetitive societies." Raging against the "wear and decay" of old age is Mary's friend Jack who is 75: "In the Yucatan people thought he / was her grandfather because they often held hands / in the street."

From the book on "Mexico City" we learn that "The Maya had two calendars," one sacred, the other based on the solar year. "The two calendar cycles were like two cogged wheels, revolving endlessly alongside each other, with the cogs meshing as the wheels turned." This description explains Mary's contemplation of herself in Toronto and Mexico simultaneously. In Mary's experience, the traditional Mexican environment is populated by women named Mary (or variations of the name) representing the universal female as victim and, as in the female effigy in the Mayan exhibit at the Toronto museum, as "vessel." Back in Toronto, Mary of The Blue House is the universal mother figure:

> On the Parliament Street bus, Mary reads the "Vocabulario Espanol-Maya" — a birthday present from Jack. A businesswoman sits beside her. The hem of Mary's loose dress blows against the woman's briefcase. *Mother. Madre. Na.* . . . Inside the blue walls of her uterus, the baby shifts, presses down against the pelvic bones. Mary closes her eyes and feels her cervix begin to open.

While the archetypal underpinning of this book sometimes lacks subtlety, the

visual descriptions are compelling in their simplicity:

> . . . boys lounging outside a row of multi-coloured houses, the green doors of a bar reserved for women, a red door blazing in a turquoise and blue building.

Here we feel the primitive sexuality of the boys, boys like those who earlier "followed the women up and down the beach," and whom Mary sometimes brought home. They loiter where the mature women are. The red flares with sexual heat. The "blue building" is the tie to Mary and her blue-walled uterus.

In visual descriptions such as these lie the most satisfying and the most significant moments of *The Blue House*. In *Abraham*, rather than reiterating the attributes of the well-known archetypal figure, Colin Browne works around him, concentrating on the unfamiliar figure of the young boy Abraham. It would seem that big archetypal figures work best when kept at arm's length.

LAVINIA INBAR

FEMALE/FEMALE

Fireworks: the Best of Fireweed, ed. Makeda Silvera. Women's Press, $9.95.

Dykeversions: Lesbian Short Fiction, ed. Lesbian Writing and Publishing Collective. Women's Press, $8.95.

Fireweed is a feminist magazine produced by "collective volunteer labour" aiming "to reflect the lives of women in all their diversity" and stimulate "dialogue, knowledge and creativity among women." Judging by this anthology drawn from the twenty-two volumes published between 1978 and 1986, it is successful in achieving its aims; although the editorial collective (unnamed, except for Makeda Silvera) admits to some mistakes. One blunder was the tasteless poster for a women's playwriting competition showing a nude blonde bombshell cuddling an electric typewriter, the cord of which hangs between her legs like the string of a tampon. The collective was naïvely surprised to receive outraged letters, from women and men alike. They defend the poster as a satire, by "conceptual artist" Tanya Rosenberg, on two female stereotypes, "Miss Efficiency" and sex-object. Although they publish their defence and a selection of letters, they do not allow Rosenberg (who is the woman featured on the poster) to make her own statement.

There are other strange omissions and silences, of names and dates, for example. "Organising Exclusion," a blistering attack on racism and classism in the feminist movement, consists of a discussion by six "women of colour," identified only by their first names — surely a form of linguistic condescension? The reader is left to guess at their origins — East Indian, West Indian, African? Surely women of racial minorities (as well as others) might be pleased to know who their champions are? But the interlocutors bitterly reject being regarded as spokespersons for their communities as a form of "tokenism." They resent the assumption that they are instant experts on the "problems" of the "Third World"; and are irritated at the condescension of their white sisters:

> One white woman came up to me and said she wanted to write short stories about our oppression for us to read because most of the things that are out on the market are too hard, too intellectual for us to read. This is supposed to be feminist?!

No dates are given for the factual pieces in the anthology, and there is no attempt to update information. From internal evidence, Makeda Silvera's "Immigrant Domestic Workers," an exposé of exploitation by Canadian immigration and employers, must have been written in 1979: are the Draconian labour laws restricting the movement and employment of immigrant domestic workers still in force? Does

the British Columbia farmer still deduct $1.50 from the $2.50 paid to East Indian women for picking a flat of raspberries, to pay for the ghastly living quarters he provides?

Fireworks contains a range of material: sociology, literary criticism, feminist theory, interviews, fiction, drama, poetry and art, and there are some interesting juxtapositions. Stolid Marxist-feminist analyses are counterpointed by more vivid fictional portrayals of racism and classism, like Nila Gupta's "So She Could Walk" or Claudia Lambert's "Lessons." While the former is tragic — Paki-baiting as seen through the eyes of a Sikh child — the latter combats oppression by humour. A hotel dishwasher/potato-peeler tries to find "lessons" in her daily life to pass on to "the girl" (her daughter) the kind of lessons her mother never taught her. Lambert's comic, sardonic tone is a refreshing change from the earnest Marxist theoreticians. Another series of contrasts is in the lesbian material. Cy-Thea Sand in "Lesbian Writing" gives an overly gloomy view: of feminist literary critics for their "erasure, heterocentricity and blatant denigration" of lesbian writing; of Women's Studies for "heterocentric biases"; and of lesbian writers themselves — Willa Cather burnt her love-letters to a woman, was unable to create lesbian characters; Cather and May Sarton sought male approval; Gertrude Stein wrote about sex in code.... Sand chooses to ignore Elsa Gidlow's affirmation of lesbian sexuality in her fine lyric poems; or the jolly lesbian picaresque of *Ruby Fruit Jungle*, as opposed to the doomed "invert" of *The Well of Loneliness*. Sand's tone is irritating and pompous: "A woman denying a lesbian presence is a woman afraid to confront patriarchy at its core." By contrast, Susanna Benns explores the "steamy" side of lesbian literature in "Sappho in Soft Cover: Notes on Lesbian Pulp"; and there is a more comedic view of lesbian life in Mary Schendlinger's radio soap opera "Flux." (Maggie tries to "come out" to her mother, while her daughter Jana objects to a "puberty party" in the commune celebrating her first menstruation.)

The poetry reflects the general preoccupations of the editors: immigrant domestic worker; woman on welfare; a mother huddling in bed with her children in an underheated apartment, cursing the landlord; hungry children "betrayed / by an insane world"; the underpaid worker — "Here is the woman hurt all her life / by money... / How she took in ironing 8 hours a day & fought / for the pay from that." The poems of loss are the most poignant. Edna King's "To My Nephew Wherever You Are" is an unusual poem about an aunt lamenting her separation from her nephew, longing to reassure him of his father's love. Bronwen Wallace wrestles with the death of a friend in the elegiac "Coming Through": "Some people are a country / and their deaths displace you. / ... part of you in exile / for the rest of your life."

Fireworks has much of interest. Susan Taylor explains why she created "Pink Lullabies," an installation of an archetypal little girl's room in pink. A tomboy as a girl, she "had to come to terms with the colour pink. I had to discover the pink in me and realize that it wasn't bad." She also had to teach her daughter that "having her drawers neat and tidy wouldn't necessarily make her live 'happily ever after'." The room is "frightening," an icon of femininity: ballet slippers, white lacy gloves, a canopy "princess" bed, statues of the Virgin Mary side by side with toy make-up kits. (But why is the Interviewer of Taylor anonymous? A sign of feminine "modesty" perhaps?) Two of the outstanding literary pieces in *Fireworks* are Helen Weinzweig's "My Mother's Luck," a brilliant, wry monologue of

a Jewish mother speaking to her silent daughter; and Himani Bannerji's "The Story of a Birth" with its powerful symbolic mingling of birth and death in an Indian prison. There are no notes on the contributors: for feminists concerned with racial and class backgrounds, another strange omission.

Dykeversions: Lesbian Short Fiction is the first Canadian lesbian anthology. Like *Fireworks*, it is edited by a collective, and similarly contains an attack by the lesbians of colour caucus on the insensitivity of white lesbians and their manifestations of racism and "white privilege." The "networking" of the collective does seem to have been inadequate, for there was no material received from disabled, Native, Maritime or Northwest Territories writers.

Such a collection allows lesbians, so often invisible and marginalized by society, to see images of themselves reflected in literature, a kind of validation of their existence. This is most clearly expressed by Nila Gupta in "Out of Her Skin, Out of Her Voice," as her heroine picks up a book of lesbian short stories:

> I found myself hungry and unduly grateful for these lesbian perspectives, even though what I was reading wasn't saying a whole lot about my life, about what affects me as a young Indian woman. I prayed to the *Devi* that one day, one day, I would have more than these shards of broken mirrors to see myself reflected in.

The Indian family tries to silence a *kush* (lesbian) daughter:

> They want us to keep quiet, keep quiet, keep quiet. But that's not enough for them; they want Shirani to change her life; they want me out of her life. They want her not to be *kush* any more, not to get involved in politics, not to speak out against lies. . . . We can't even talk about our lives.

Shirani's twelve-year-old sister dismisses her politics as "depressing": "all this wife assault and rape, and this woman dead and that woman murdered." Leelaka is "into the preppy style with an attitude to match. . . . Always putting everyone down . . . everyone except white rich people because they have 'style'." The story works up to a grim climax as the two sisters settle down to watch a horror movie on television: the narrator screams as she recognizes herself on the screen as the victim about to be attacked. Her scream is in a sense symbolic, at once an expression of horror and of protest at violence against women/lesbians/pakis. The others try to silence her but she won't shut up: "I can't keep quiet — I can't be kept out of my voice any longer."

Gupta's story is the most political in the collection, the most direct in confronting both heterosexist and racial oppression. Nora Randall confronts heterosexist silencing in a more comic way in "The Haunting of Blue Lake." The heroine, Maureen Haggerty, from a large Irish Catholic family, "grew up as a ghost" — a gay ghost; homosexuality was never mentioned, as if mentioning it would cause it to exist. To escape ghostdom, Maureen must go to the city, where she comes out in full "dyke regalia," plaid flannel shirt, work boots, or tuxedo and top hat. "I am so blatantly gay I am festive," she boasts as she swaggers down the street with her girlfriend. But when she returns home for the wedding of a friend, she finds herself returning to ghost status. She is "appalled" by the "oink" behaviour of the ass-pinching bridegroom, twenty years older than the passive bride, who has become "a body without a spirit." Like the "*kush*" of "Out of her Skin" she makes an assertion of lesbian existence — she hires a plane to skywrite above the wedding party "Lesbians have more fun." Heterosexual life is seen by Randall as hypocritical and vile, a constant covering up and silencing of hideous truths. At the same time Randall's touch is light and sardonic; she does not preach or rant.

Men figure negatively in many of these stories: violent and brutal in Candis Graham's "Aprons and Homemade Bread"; foolishly jealous and possessive, like Uncle Fred married to a glamorous younger woman in Marlene Wildeman's "One Became a Roofer"; or simply a figure of scorn in Janine Fuller's "Dining Out with Charles." Gay men, who often provide moral support and friendship to gay women, are surprisingly absent, except for a brief "flat" character in Heather Ramsay's "Turning Thirty-One."

The most resonant stories are those of unrequited love. In "The Ballad of the Deep Blue Sea" Jean Roberta describes a painful love triangle. Marguerite, "trying to develop into a cool and sensible dyke," is in love with Daria who lives with Eileen. Marguerite poses as the trusty friend and confidante of the couple, meanwhile secretly lusting after Daria. The story is cleverly told in the first person, with Marguerite's inner comments on the conversations of Eileen and Daria and her own hypocrisy. In an ironic twist, it is Eileen who, misinterpreting Marguerite's behaviour, makes a pass at her. To Marguerite's horror, Daria sees Eileen kissing her, and feels she has been betrayed. There are many ironies in the story, and the reader becomes involved as a spectator/judger of the intricacies of behaviour of the other three. Marguerite does not care a whit for Daria's "causes" — feminism, ecology, abortion rights, women against violence, peace, "the preservation of the Ukrainian language which she no longer speaks." Hypocritically she goes to demonstrations and signs petitions, but she admires Daria's breasts rather than her politics: "Anything for you, my General, I thought." Her hypocrisy reaps its own reward; the reader can see that she will never be a "woman warrior" in Daria's imagined band of Amazons.

Jennifer Lee Martin's "An Unposted Letter" is a more ambitious experiment with form, with the act of writing itself. She uses the permutations of a love-letter, the dream of "a transformation that would allow me to be yours," as opposed to the nightmare vision written on a washroom wall: "There is no love in the world anymore." The act of writing can assert that there is love in the world; that love can be created by the writer. The love-letter provides a possibility, an invitation evoking a response (perhaps from the reader?).

Although love is a dominant theme, two stories explore darker and more tragic avenues. Mary Louise Adams deals with the taboo subject of the battered lesbian in "A Figure of Speech," describing the masochism of the woman who wants, waits to be battered by her lover. Jena Hamilton in "Chemo Dreams" confronts sickness and death. Louise has to beg to be allowed to visit her dying lover Amy in hospital, for she is "not her father, mother, sister, husband, child" and the relationship of homosexual lover is not recognized by patriarchal society. Louise fiercely *wills* her beloved Amy to live, to fight the old crone, cackling hag, vulture, "sly-backed bitch" Death. She imagines Amy heroically conquering death, slamming her fist into the hag's face, and then making love to her, Louise. Her fantasy of orgasm — "Moon in your mouth between my thighs. I take your whole fist, hug it hard and come in wedding rings around it" — is interrupted by the announcement of Amy's death: "She's gone."

The writing in *Dykeversions* does not always reach this level of intensity and bold experiment. The collection is uneven; some pieces even seem unfinished or underfinished. The "stars" of the Canadian lesbian literary scene — Daphne Marlatt, Suniti Namjoshi — are represented by fragments, as if they had dug something out of a bottom drawer. But the editors certainly present a range of les-

bian writing. Women writers are in a state of flux, trying to redefine human relationships, whether female/female or female/male. Butch/femme, the lesbian imitation of the heterosexual world, role-playing, are no longer satisfactory models. Diana Meredith in "Lacey Love Letters" tries to substitute more equal, more powerful images:

> We are such strong women. Volatile, alive. Like great electrical towers zinging with energy. . . . Two towers looking each other in the eye, amazed at finding another with equal, yet different strength.

Some of the writers in *Dykeversions* are, like Meredith, "taking risks — leaping off cliffs." Others retain more conventional images and forms.

ROBERTA BUCHANAN

LASTING REGARDS

RON CHARACH, *The Big Life Painting*. Quarry, $9.95.

RALPH GUSTAFSON, *Winter Prophecies*. McClelland & Stewart, $9.95.

ANDREW PARKIN, *Dancers in a Web*. Turnstone, $8.95.

THESE THREE BOOKS both require and provide reviewing: though widely divergent in their concerns, they all ask their readers to look, and look again, at geographical, temporal, or linguistic "scenes." Each offers a different aesthetic, a different way of looking both through and into poetic language.

Andrew Parkin's volume *Dancers in a Web* begins with an epigraph describing filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein and alluding to that artist's rejection of traditional aesthetics, but among these books, Parkin's is most obviously filtered through the conventions of an established literary canon. His book is nostalgic in both form and content. It often works through allusion to the classical, European and Oriental traditions, and while its frequent use of traditional forms is deft, it rarely offers genuine innovation. For instance, the title of one piece, "Something Borrowed," demonstrates an "appropriate" self-consciousness of its use of a conventional formal pattern and matrimonial theme, but it takes that perception no further. Another piece, titled simply "Poet," establishes re-vision of poetic antecedents as a dominant concern, especially in its implicit layering of allusion — through Marvell to the classical past:

> this is the hour of the poet
> seeker of old realities
> the fresh truth of
> the never-quite-dying faun.

The central poem sequence "Guided Tour" makes the shift from a contemporary setting to a classical one explicit, first "touring" the Cretan landscape, then its mythology. Formally, it is a "dialogue poem"; it also offers some sense of historical dialogue in its poetic practice as well as its use of myth.

There are twists elsewhere. "Last Reel," which develops an extended film metaphor and applies it to historical events, and "Tears are Never Enough," a response to the popular fund/consciousness-raising song, both adapt contemporary themes to the sonnet. The haiku frequently appears too, although it is perhaps most fruitfully used where it is most modified. "Venice," for example, a kind of "mock-landscape" poem, employs a haiku-influenced structure (three stanzas rather than three lines) and image pattern, but reveals that its tranquil "scene" is not just filtered by memory; it is mediated by a slide projector.

The elegiac tone of the volume as a whole is perhaps best represented by the striking "Flame Song" or "Bomber: 1945," but in "For a Friend Found Murdered," remembrance becomes a stated theme:

I offer just a fading memory
and a lasting regard, faint bell
ringing from youth, and tender
tolerance, if they can heal your hell.

Nostalgia is conspicuously absent from Ron Charach's *The Big Life Painting*. This volume, the second in Quarry's New Canadian Poets series, deliberately directs our gaze to a conventionally "unpoetic" contemporary landscape and language. A title like "No Poems; He's a Short Order Cook" draws attention to this anti-aesthetic aesthetic. Especially in the work's last section, "The Big Life Painting," Charach uses to his advantage prosaic phrasing, and a colloquial voice — or rather voices, since his style here involves a sort of dialogue with snatches of everyday urban talk: conversation in a diner, a shopkeeper chanting out the price of Clorets, or a vagrant commenting on what we come to think of as city "property values":

ev'ry goddam inch o' this town
belong t'someone;
ain't a place you can go
for t'spend the night
without some fucker comin' out an' sayin'
"you haul yore ass
off my prop'rty!"

Charach's "Medical Series" poems focus with macabre irony on such unlikely poetic sites as the x-ray room ("I keep my back to the machine at times / so I'm done the same / both sides . . .") and the psych ward, relying on a black-humorous combination of medical ethics and aesthetics. "Abraded Back (On the Burn Unit)" develops a scenario that might almost be read as a literal, stomach-churning inversion of Eliot's "The Hollow Men" in which dissolution takes place from the *outside in*:

This is a room for getting scrubbed dead.
Some point and mouth the O sign,
astonished by skull poking through
where face should be; some philosophize:
we are the ones in life who got burned.
No poetic wax . . .

The "metaphysical" metaphor of illness is clearly central to this volume. *The Big Life Painting* investigates various manifestations of "urban blight." "A Madison Avenue Emergency," for example, documents the escape of "the (cancer) / cowboy" from his cigarette ad, and in "Such a No Contest Feeling (*God or Spadina*)" mutual dependence on the Toronto streetscape results, not in a sense of community, but in an atmosphere where immigrants and vagrants are "like two intensive care patients / hooked up to a single monitor." Both the medical metaphor and the same sardonic tone that infects the "Medical Series" is at work in the "Dagwood Poems." These elaborate the tragic side of a "comic pattern": in *The Big Life Painting*, Herb Woodley is dead, Mrs. Dithers barren, and

. . . Dagwood, Blondie, Cookie and Chip,
[are] sick as Middle America
from some kind of new wave flu.

The first section of the volume is only slightly different in tone. "House Broken Poems," a subtle, elliptical sequence that lives up to its polysemous title, traces strained relationships, the dismantling and rebuilding of the family/home.

While Parkin and Charach are both first-volume poets, *Winter Prophecies* is Ralph Gustafson's twenty-sixth book of verse, and it shows no signs of poetic fatigue. The volume opens with a series of "Poems for the Times," and like both Parkin and Charach, Gustafson shows a concern for contemporary issues. "Times," however, is here significantly plural: the noun brings together a series of poems that involve historical/political, as well as disparate seasonal, evolutionary, life, day and night times. In "Flowers for Hiroshima," for example, 8:16, the exact time of the disaster, places the speaker in relation to the historical moment.

As the title of this book indicates, Gustafson is also concerned with future states.

The authority of a prophetic voice, however, is absent. Rather, a sense both of longing and prolonging prevails, often combined with the recurrent metaphor of music. Prophecy is not here a matter of pre-dicting, a definitive "saying before," but of a kind of anticipatory writing that looks both backward on itself and forward to an extension of significance. In "Variations on a Theme of Indian Summer":

> The falling leaves so many
> There was ending, the meaning
> As in a music ending
> Come to and its music wanted.
> This was prophecy . . .

The same sense of longing pervades the sequence "Twelve Landscapes," as well as Gustafson's other "nature poems," partly, it seems, because they both seek and refuse transcendence, in their poetic voice, and the significance of their subject.

Because the last section of the book, "Appoggiatura," is most explicit in its dealings with the issues of language and communication, it prolongs *Winter Prophecies* by implicitly turning its readers back to review their previous (and present) acts of reading. "An Elegy for Discourse" repudiates the pessimistic view of linguistic indeterminacy in favour of joy in the fertility of language, and in "On the Island of Torcello" the speaker concludes an eloquent description of the island with an ironic disclaiming of his ability to communicate:

> I am definitely not up to it:
> I order a four minute egg
> In Italian at the Osteria
> Al Ponte del Diavolo
> And get four eggs.

Like meaning, perspective, in this volume, is never final. Always implicated in a *process* of perception, it offers a lasting — never a last — regard:

> This is the lesson to learn:
> The wave is only the force it loves
> That carries it breaking.
>
> A position only,
> It is not wave.
> The gull squawks for refuse.
> The fact of metaphor
> Is alone the truth.

MANINA JONES

WOMEN ABUSED

KATHERINE GOVIER, *Between Men*. Penguin, $10.95.

THIS NOVEL TELLS the story of Suzanne Vail Cummings, a history professor at Calgary, who oscillates between Ace Cummings, the husband whom she is divorcing, and Simon, an older man from Ottawa who offers a "grand love affair." As framework to this action stands Suzanne's research into the violent death of Rosalie New Grass in 1889. The title is explained by Suzanne's friend Gemma, who habitually says that she is "between men"; after trying for years to catch a husband (and finding only temporary acquaintances), Gemma organizes a support group called SWARM: Single Women After Rich Men. But the title has more sinister overtones for Rosalie New Grass, a Cree girl who was brutalized in a room above a bar, where a group of men heard her moans but did nothing; later, the men of the jury voted that the murderer was "Not Guilty": between men, violence toward women seems acceptable.

Between Men is Govier's best book so far. Suzanne's life, her research, and her decisions create a resonance lacking in *Random Descent* (1979) or in *Going Through the Motions* (1982). Whereas Jennifer's abortion in *Random Descent*, revealed near the end, makes only an ironic counterpoint to the sufferings and survivorship of her foremothers, Suzanne's abortion, also revealed near the end, is connected with the story of Rosalie New Grass, and explains many of Suzanne's choices. Suzanne comes to under-

stand the story of Rosalie through a fictional reporter, Murphy. In Calgary's newspaper articles, Rosalie is both "a dissolute squaw" and "the flower of her race"; Suzanne discovers the name of the actual reporter, but invents Murphy, whose private reminiscences gradually reveal the sordid history. Rosalie, pregnant by Murphy, carried money (found after her death) to pay the abortionist; she had understood the grisly actions of her killer as part of the abortion procedure.

Suzanne's abortion is hinted at from near the beginning. The warning beeps of backing dump trucks remind her of hospital alarms: "a birth. A prolonged, dangerous birth. . . . Why had she done it, why?" But at first the reader is led to understand a miscarriage: ". . . Marlyss Vail Cummings. And she had lost her. The grief, the doctors told Suzanne and Ace, was cyclical." In revising her own life story, as she is revising Rosalie's, Suzanne now desires a child — but Simon does not (he "dumped [his] last love as soon as she wanted a kid"). Much later, she has a visionary meeting with Rosalie, who chants prayers and tells the story of her death. Suzanne remembers the beeping.

> The doctor had told her it was too late, it was dangerous. But she could not have this child. She was not ready. . . . Ace didn't know.
>
> . . . she wished she could be Rosalie again. Only this time she would walk away from the hotel door! She would throw Murphy's money back in his face! . . . She would bear her child. She would go on living and the child would go on living, and there would be more life after that.

Suzanne has finally come to the overt realization of what Jennifer's story in *Random Descent* implied.

Until the realization, Suzanne has been living according to "rules" which suppress her deepest needs. Although no man has forced her to use an IUD or to remain childless, she now thinks that the IUD is "a trick that men [play] on women." For women, and for Suzanne herself, "Love was just play. Something more lasting had to be made." Rejected by Simon, who preferred her former independent, "recreational self," she returns to Ace, telling him that she wants a child, but not marriage. Since Ace has spent the whole present time of the story trying to get Suzanne back, he welcomes her decision as a pivot for further "negotiations," though the result remains open to doubt.

Despite the general success of the narrative, some troubling problems remain. Ace's mother Miss Amy, dying but undefeated, calls in her son to give him a conscience. Mysteriously, "She had her power still, and no sooner had she said it than it was done." Her "power," however, does not otherwise appear; earlier she told Suzanne, "I've lost it" and elicited the thought "that for her whole life [Suzanne] had been listening to women tell her they were helpless, they were victims, men had done them in." Rosalie's existence as a ghost is similarly confusing: shut out from the spirit world because she abandoned the old gods, "Rosalie slept now" after telling Suzanne what happened. Did the ghost want to receive absolution, or justice, or merely to inform posterity? In sum, however, the faults of this book are outnumbered by its merits.

PATRICIA KOSTER

DESERTED VILLAGE

DAVID C. JONES, *Empire of Dust*. Univ. of Alberta Press, $24.95/$14.95.

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED to the people of Carlstadt/Alderson, Alberta. Carlstadt, "Star of the Prairie," twinkled into being in 1909, in the exciting hopeful years when the drylands of Alberta and Saskatchewan were being promoted to often

unwary settlers as some of the finest agricultural land in the world. (It was rechristened in 1915 in the middle of the Kaiser's war, when Carlstadt was considered too German-sounding. Alderson was the impeccable name of a British commander.)

On the railway line west from Medicine Hat to Bassano, Carlstadt was the quintessential little prairie town which no longer exists, apart from some rubble of buildings and a cemetery. It was the quintessence of little towns all over the planet, which were born in enticing dreams and killed off by the realities of economic and — especially — climatic adversity. Plus the fact that life was far more rewarding somewhere else.

"The range of sources is truly impressive," the book's jacket quotes from a tribute by historian Howard Palmer, and the reader will certainly concur. The pages are peppered with reference numbers to the many notes at the end of the book. Old small-town newspapers, minutes of village and school board meetings, reports of commissions — the source list is formidable. It is also a splendid guide for the novice contemplating writing anything in the social history field. Here's how and where you begin!

The reader with no special interest in social history will have some trouble with *Empire of Dust*, because its mass of factual detail seldom wears a truly human face. There is a huge cast of characters — unscrupulous promoters; businessmen, ethical and otherwise; settlers and farmers, efficient or not. There are details of endless tragedies of varying magnitudes, typical of natural disaster whether in Saskatchewan or the Sahel. But these do not often seem live, human sufferings which can move us.

Here and there, though, Jones has chosen telling quotations from people who actually suffered the pain of the drought years. For instance, Annie Edwards of Lomond, Alberta, who wrote of her mother "leaning against the siding which was rough for want of paint," looking out over the stubble of a crop covered in sand and "weeping in silent desperation."

I wish the book contained more of the redeeming aspects of the drought years — things I experienced — more of the deep friendship and kindness, inventiveness, self-made "good times." There was in many people a deep if often inarticulate love of the prairie itself. The land had beauty in spite of its barrenness. But Jones slants *Empire of Dust*, calling the dry country Nineveh (not entirely appropriately) throughout, and using phrases such as "the vile heart of the desert" and "the town's final descent into hell" (the end of Carlstadt/Alderson). The general reader would get the 'feel' of the country better from the many local histories produced in prairie communities in the last few years.

For the specialized reader *Empire of Dust* holds many rewards. It is a history of western agriculture and politics, and also of education. One of the best chapters in the book is "Glory, Glory to Alberta" (which was a favourite song sung to the tune of "John Brown's Body"). It gives some fascinating information on the status and living/working conditions of country school-teachers in the dry belt, on the difficulties of city teachers in coping with rural students, and on the impossible expectations teachers attempted to meet. In fact "impossible expectations" is a key fact "impossible expectations" is a key theme of *Empire of Dust* — expectations of the soil, the weather, and human endurance.

"I saw faintly the headstones of the graveyard to the east," writes Jones, saying goodbye to Carlstadt. I have seen those headstones too. My cousin is buried under one of them. That graveyard has another name and is in another province but it is the same place.

ANNE MARRIOTT

SPIRIT BOXERS

PAULINE HOLDSTOCK, *The Blackbird's Song — A Novel.* Simon & Pierre, $19.95.

IN 1899 GROUPS OF Chinese began to attack foreigners all across China, encouraged by the court in Beijing. Over the previous sixty years China had been invaded by Britain, France, Germany, Russia and Japan, each invasion followed by defeat for the Chinese and treaties that forced foreign presence deep into the interior. With foreign armies came merchants and missionaries, there for their own purposes, but dependent on the support of their legations. The attacks of 1899 were led by groups of informal village militia that practiced martial arts and believed their members could become invulnerable to weapons when possessed by the gods. Though they were opposed to foreigners in general, they were particularly hostile to missionaries as aggressive bearers of a teaching that threatened traditional culture and religion. Because of their martial arts this movement was called "Spirit Boxers," or "Boxers United in Righteousness." The area of north China where they arose had long been desperately poor and afflicted with drought and famine. Their desperation helped strengthen attacks on foreign religious leaders who were opposed to the Chinese gods responsible for communal well-being. (For a detailed recent discussion of this situation see Joseph W. Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, Univ. of California Press, 1987.)

Pauline Holdstock has written a lively and interesting story about three young Canadian Protestant missionaries caught in the Boxer uprising. The book begins with the terrible ordeal of their escape, robbed of all their belongings, attacked by mobs in each town, with only limited and uncertain protection from local magistrates. It is hot, they have no food or water, and the married couple have a young boy and a newborn baby. The story unfolds in a series of flashbacks to life in Halifax and in the mission stations they had just left, far too late, after many warnings. In the end the mother, a single woman friend and co-worker, and the boy escape, with the aid of a Buddhist monk. The husband and baby are killed along the way.

The book is based on missionary records, and faithfully reflects a missionary view of themselves and the Chinese. The detailed descriptions of their life in China are believable, down to scattered comments in Mandarin. Ms. Holdstock has done a fine job of imaginatively recreating a situation she never knew, and presents the missionaries in a balanced way that allows for faith and doubt, love and contempt. They come through as the mixture of commitment and arrogance that they were. Unfortunately, the picture of the Chinese is not nearly so developed; some servants and monks are sympathetically presented, but most Chinese are portrayed in a negative way. There was plenty of cruelty, ignorance and desperation in late Ch'ing China, but the proper writing of both history and fiction demands that all the human beings involved be treated as such in their full ambiguity. A part of the problem here is the one-sided nature of the sources the author used, but there is ample material available as well on the Chinese perspective, plus good social-historical discussions. This material does not seem to have been much consulted. The result is human missionaries and cardboard Chinese. I realize that the book is intended as a good story, not as a historical novel, but it could have been a richer story with real Chinese as actors. Here the author's imagination has fallen short. I enjoyed the book as an adventure, but my sense of fairness is violated. How will those react who know nothing of China itself?

DANIEL L. OVERMYER

MUTE & BRUTE

DAVID HELWIG, *The Bishop*. Penguin, $9.95.
SUSAN HALEY, *Getting Married in Buffalo Jump*. Macmillan, $19.95.

LEFT PARTLY PARALYZED by a stroke, David Helwig's apparently perfect bishop Henry approaches death, guarded by his and the book's angel, his devoted secretary Rose. Traditionally, he confronts his past, not only through his dreams and memories, but also as enacted at his bedside. He watches the Inuit shaman Ishakak (who has brought the skull of his lost wife) struggle with the "warrior-priest" Curwan. They can be seen as the two poles of Henry's life as defined by faith, love and speech. The novel has three kinds of love: *agape* (divine love), *philia* (friendship) and *eros* (sensual love), correlated with types of expression. As a bishop, Henry's speech is rich, fluent, and explicit and even adopts the Biblical (Authorised Version) rhythm. Among friends he "descends" into the vernacular and in moments of passion words fail him completely, so that he remains unable to reach out, to communicate his sentiments.

He starts as the fluent shepherd of his diocese, floating in his boat in the middle of the river, and ends as a mute loner longing for death, accused of murder and watching the fishermen from the bank. At his funeral, before the appearance of the omen of death (white horse), God shows Rose through a patch of light that He has not forgotten His loyal servant.

Henry has been a true "lily of the field," setting out into the world as an unblemished and naïve youth, choosing to become a clergyman instead of a musician, opening his mind to other religions and devoted to his wife and diocese. His faith is optimistic and cheerful (like George Herbert's) and she sees religion as an escape exit rather than a proclaimer of damnation.

Rose is much like Henry. She is asexual (though her one-time attraction to Joanne might have been lesbian), vents her passion (which also renders her speechless) in her carpentry and feels a Platonic love for Henry. Both value *philia*. With the bishop dead and her last carpentry task accomplished, she "felt herself alone on some vast plain of space and time, mute and in dread." Ishakak and the crazy Norman are different. The first communicates non-verbally and the second hides in some dark hole in the cathedral, and has a distorted sense of love, reality and religion. Amelia did not like religion, opted for *eros*, but was possessed by some 'dark' quality.

Effective imagery (especially water and the wooden finch in its special cage), dreams and correspondences between events illuminate and reveal Helwig's concerns. His bishop loses his Gift of Tongue and *The Bishop* receives it, though, Helwig argues, language is as deceptive as love, i.e., *eros*. When Henry has his stroke and realizes what he has done to Amelia, he loses his faith in language: "Words have abnegated. . . . The magic names have been lost. Love has lost its magic name and travels under the name of murder."

If categorized, Helwig's novel is clearly Ontario WASP (like Munro, Laurence, Davies), exploring the "dark" instinctive sides of its characters, whereas Susan Haley's creation is western fiction in the Watson/Kroetschian tradition, primarily in the way it searches for new myths, or adapts (or destroys) existing myths. Benedict Malone, the absent Indian blood-brother of the groom, Alexander Bresnyachuk, dominates Haley's novel. His character balloons into a legend by Alexander, his sister Marfa (Benedict's one-time love) and Benedict's sister Annie. Even when Sophie, the bride, pricks the myth by revealing Benedict's death and true brutal masochist nature, the others in-

stantly inflate his ego again. Since readers are made to believe that they witness all her conversations, Sophie's disclosure comes as a somewhat disappointing surprise, so that most of the effect of Alexander's final words on the issue is lost.

The planned marriage bridges the hierarchical differences between Indian (the witnesses), Ukrainian (the "larger than life" Bresnyachuks) and WASP (Sophie's mother) and demonstrates the values and advantages of traditional marriage as primarily a business deal based on friendship. Affection grows during the courtship (symbolized by the two horses), but Sophie's instant lust for the noble giant's body remains unfulfilled until the wedding night. The Jane Eyre-ish fact that Alexander already has a child with Annie, involves Sophie in the central myth, but, despite her being a product of the liberating 1960's and 1970's, she remains an outsider to the wild adolescent experiences of the others.

The book's writing is uneven. The dialogues (the body of the novel) are excellent. Haley has a talent for what I would call blunt subtleties, but these clash with such phrases as "the garden in its deshabille," or "mother sat down histrionically." The chapter headings seem to be purposely naïve, combining the novel's tall tale element with Sophie's profession as kindergarten teacher and the Benedict stories. This is a potent book, but not quite one to tempt this reader to a second reading.

JOHN POUW

SOUND & SYLLABLE

BRIAN DEDORA, *White Light.* Aya Press, $8.00.
RICHARD TRUHLAR, *Utensile Paradise.* Aya Press, $8.00.
BRIAN BRETT, *Evolution in Every Directiton.* Thistledown, $8.95.

ALL THREE OF THESE poets see language itself as a material for study and comment and experiment. The poems are not exclusively about linguistic theory by any means, but the subjects of the poems are not particularly interesting in themselves. The interest lies more in what the poets do with the medium; there is a more significant exploration of language than there is of life.

Of the three, Brian Dedora raises the most interesting questions about language. His book has an assured unified flow, yet it is written in fragments. There are lines with big spacing gaps, leaps of thought-association that are not at all easy to follow (he seems to think of lettuce in a peculiar way), unfinished statements, and quick cuts. To my mind Dedora has captured the essence of modern communication. The poems put me in mind of such things as thirty-second advertisement clips, brief news "updates," and, ultimately, of the bits and bytes to which computer technology reduces information. The following passage speaks of this creative use of fragmentation, while providing a model of it:

> this thing writing any word in anyplace
> no
> need to have it here or there they all work
> but
> no a certain combination of sound and
> syllable
> the whole piece when finished it's never
> finished
> each piece slides in and . . . but makes
> sense now
> and later beside this one beside that one
> sound

His is a process approach to composition wherein writing and reading are acts of discovery:

> a springboard for the voice any mood
> now
> when read gives vent to the whole the
> poem so
> many sides lovels whatever depends on
> who is
> speaking

Dedora's approach shatters the idea of

"the artifice of eternity," as Yeats put it in "Sailing to Byzantium," because it assumes that great poetry is not the perfect stasis of carved marble, but the constant scintillation of light on flowing water.

Richard Truhlar also deals in discrete bits of information, though his work is more uneven than Dedora's. The rhythms of his long sentence prose poems are hypnotic, relying upon an extended flow of language twisting through repetitions with variations:

> They all left her, left her alone, sitting silently along and remembering, watching and remembering the doors closing softly, leaving her alone, how her friends all left her alone. There wasn't anyone anymore.
>
> She remembered also how she held on to things, how things held on to her, how she would hold a cup to her lips or a book to her eyes.

The relative absence of concrete nouns ironically gives *things* great importance. When they appear, they become objects of intense scrutiny. We remain, he is telling us, isolated from people. We can best know about them through how they act with things.

Unfortunately, Truhlar's other (non-prose) poems are weak. They tend to be analytical, but his thoughts are not particularly interesting. The prose poems are a type of sound poetry, not quite chants, but with the natural rhythms of prose considerably heightened. In them the strength of the book lies.

Brian Brett's *Evolution in Every Direction* is an even more flawed work where the weak pieces outnumber the strong. My main complaint is that Brett is too much in love with figurative language. Often he piles up an excess of poorly worked out metaphors that makes the reader stop in his tracks. "The Gaudy Dawn" provides an example:

> The gaudy dawn shuffled across the sky; the rheumy-eyed sun was a lost derelict looking for the perfect blue. Everything was shut down and somewhere else. The dawn was quiet, emptied even of bird songs. Nothing had begun, including the captains of industry and the maniacs with their nuclear weaponry, and everyone was distant like the day that hadn't quite arrived.

The morning is unusual because "the maniacs with their nuclear weaponry" are absent? The meaning is unclear.

The title poem is superior to the rest of the book, with a number of clean and moving narrative/descriptive patches:

> Rebecca Spit. Not many had discovered it then. We camped alone by the sandy beach, stuffing ourselves with clams, oysters, and the huckleberries that grew in the deep wood. But most of all, we came for the bluebacks, those small coho salmon that rushed through the waters of the strait every June. They travelled in huge schools, their fins boiling the water when they surfaced.

But even in this poem he succumbs to the urge to be literary and almost ruins the piece with a line such as "The moon poured its silver on us." The image is inconsistent with the rest of the poem, much of which is devoted to a description of the gutting of sharks.

DONALD A. PRECOSKY

DRAGON WISE

DONN KUSHNER, *A Book Dragon.* Macmillan, $16.95.

DONN KUSHNER'S THIRD book for children is a refreshing reversal of the dominant convention of psychological fantasy, in which the supernatural aids the child hero in overcoming the problems of everyday living. In Kushner's book there is no single child hero, and the normal perspective is reversed: the real world, not the supernatural, is "out there," and we focus upon its problems from the point of view of a supernatural hero, the dragon of the title. Archetypally, dragons are of course a source of evil; their function is

to be slain by the prince. This dragon, however, explicitly abandons the violence and homicide associated with his kind and adopts an unusual set of values: a respect for life in its smallest manifestations, a love of wisdom acquired from books, and an appreciation for all truly humanitarian forms of endeavour.

By manipulating the conventional elements of fantasy, Kushner gives new impact to the theme of the supernatural: his characters ignore the vital importance of the spiritual and intellectual qualities of life only at their risk. Nonesuch, the dragon hero, recognizes these values when he abandons the traditional family treasure hoard of armour, weapons and gold and sets out, the last survivor of his race, in search of a treasure worth guarding in the post-medieval world. That treasure turns out to be an illuminated Book of Hours made by Brother Theophilus, a medieval monk, and we follow Nonesuch's adventures down through the ages to the present time as he tenaciously guards this symbol of learning and wisdom, and the human beings who come into contact with it.

The human characters though secondary are vital to Nonesuch's quest; he encounters a great variety of them in his journey down through time, and though at first their abrupt and short-lived appearances are disconcerting, we soon realize that as types of human nature, they are repeated in the cycles of history. Brother Theophilus reappears later as Mr. Gottlieb, antiquarian book lover and owner of a bookstore in a small eastern town in the U.S.A.; Simon, the young stone sculptor of the medieval monastery, reappears as Samson, the avid young American book-reader; and Hubert, the thief, as Mr. Huberman, the relentless materialist and agent of the villain Mr. Abercrombie, himself a counterpart of the sinister Sir Ambrose. Through this innovative handling of time in the story, Kushner's characters achieve both depth and a thematic significance beyond their immediate natures. At the same time, the rich variety of deftly drawn secondary characters — amusingly literate animals as well as human figures — prevents the book from being overly schematized.

And that is important, for Kushner's vision of the role of the spiritual-supernatural in society is explicitly moral, more than is currently fashionable in children's fantasy. The book is brilliantly imaginative at times (as in the early stories of Nonesuch's eccentric relations), but the didactic element is evident both in the third-person narration and in the extended conversations between Nonesuch and the animals he encounters. While these are entertaining in themselves, a child might well feel that they do little to advance the action (as opposed to the meaning) of the story. But these dialogues are balanced by the rich variety of Kushner's moral concerns, by the fact that he is mostly willing to show them rather than prescribe what should be done about them, and because they are presented through the eyes of such a likeable creature as Nonesuch.

One of the distinctive features of Kushner's writing is his profound humanitarian concern for society, and many of the maladies of civilization come under Nonesuch's eye: religious intolerance, carelessness of the ecology, disease, technological pragmatism, materialism and the violent abuse of power. That the story does not founder on these themes is a tribute to the strength of Kushner's imagination, his sense of humour, and his timing. In Kushner's prose the supernatural intervenes in the real world with an effect simultaneously matter-of-fact and surrealistic: ultimate proof of the power of things unseen.

A Book Dragon is a refreshingly different fantasy. Broader than most in the scope of its concerns, it resists the current fashion to ask children to concentrate

upon their own psyches and instead opens up to them a wider world of social issues experienced through a great range of colourful characters, both animal and human. Its stylistic innovations function solidly as essential vehicles of theme and plot; they do not merely call attention to their own cleverness, and the non-human characters are never sentimentalized. This book should establish Kushner clearly in the forefront of children's fantasy writing in Canada.

MARY-ANN STOUCK

UN DEMI-SIÈCLE

Arts et Littérature, éd. *Nuit blanche*, n.p.

La revue *Nuit blanche* de Québec a édité cet ouvrage pour le département des littératures de l'Université Laval à l'occasion du demi-siècle (1937-1987) de la Faculté des Lettres. La maquette et l'illustration de la couverture sont respectivement d'Anne-Marie Guérineau et de Hasso Bruse; l'une et l'autre sont à la fois artistiques, élégantes et évocatrices. Le texte est fort élégamment présenté. Ouvrez-le à n'importe quelle page, vous y trouverez aisément des points de repère et les thèmes soulignés en caractères gras. Trois des sept essais sont suivis d'une importante bibliographie; la plus riche est celle consécutive à l'article de Jacques Désautels.

Le lecteur pourra lire les sept essais de Michel Butor, professeur à l'Université de Genève, et d'Irène Brisson, professeur au Conservatoire de musique de Québec, cinq professeurs du département des Littératures: Raymond Joly, Jean-Marcel Paquette, Paul-André Bourque, Jacques Désautels et de Gilles Pellerin. C'est Michel Butor, romancier bien connu et plusieurs fois professeur invité à l'Université Laval, qui donne le ton de ce livre en soulevant trois questions qu'on se pose devant une oeuvre d'art: "Pourquoi a-t-on fait cela? En quoi cela nous intéresse-t-il? Qu'allons-nous faire, individuellement, de cette oeuvre?" M. Butor, auteur d'un essai intitulé *Les mots dans la peinture*, aborde tour à tour dans son texte la peinture comme illustration, les titres, le livre illustré, la peinture avec texte, la crise du livre. Les arts, comme chacun sait, suivent des parallèles, comme des rails d'acier, sans jamais communiquer ni se rencontrer, sauf en cas d'accident de parcours. M. Butor, qui a travaillé avec les peintres, est parfaitement conscient de cette grave lacune. L'étude complexe et subtile des relations entre les littératures et les arts en général aboutit à des découvertes insoupçonnées.

Irène Brisson, dans son lumineux essai, "Une rencontre: Fransz Liszt et Marie d'Agoult (1833-1848)," fait ressortir le goût prononcé de Liszt pour les chantres littéraires du passé; le poète est musicien dans l'âme, de là cet échange d'idées littéraires entre Marie d'Agoult et lui; les deux aimeraient bien abolir l'espace et le temps — Dieu seul ne connaît ni l'espace ni le temps — mais ils échouent lamentablement. C'est que l'homme est, de nature, un éphémère; il est "l'ombre d'une ombre," comme a si bien dit Pindare. Raymond Joly, lui, dans son essai sur la lecture psychanalytique, étudie les deux obstacles que nous avons à la lecture psychanalytique: la langue et l'idiome, puis le refoulement. Quel dommage que son analyse abstraite n'ait pas été suivie de ses remarques fort pénétrantes sur deux *Relations* du père Lejeune en guise d'explication.

Gilles Pellerin étudie les rapports de la peinture et de la littérature dans son essai étoffé, "Gustave Moreau et Huysmans," où il admet que "la rencontre de Moreau et de Huysmans est exemplaire des tentations mutuelles de la peinture et de la littérature." Avec Paul-André Bourque et Jean-Marcel Paquette, nous entrons dans

la para-littérature, le premier traitant des rapports entre la littérature et les *media* de masse, le second, entre la littérature et le cinéma. Paul-André Bourque traite de la marginalisation de la littérature, de la lecture, des journaux et des magazines, de la radio et de la télévision; en dépit de ce qu'il écrit, je persiste à croire que rien ne peut remplacer le livre, qu'on peut lire, voire relire à loisir, posséder même dans sa bibliothèque; la presse-radio-télévision est aussi éphémère que le journal ou la revue de la semaine dernière. Qui donc, je vous en prie, lit le journal d'hier? Homère est plus jeune. On peut en dire autant du septième art, le cinéma, sur lequel se penche un écrivain aussi compétent que Jean-Marcel Paquette. Le monde de l'image est encore aussi éphémère que celui de la parole. On peut compter sur les doigts des deux mains les meilleurs films qui ont chance de demeurer chaque année; immense est le déchet, trop rare est la réussite dans notre civilisation de l'image.

Jacques Desautels se pose la question: "Le mythe doit-il continuer à parler grec?" La poser est y répondre, car les Grecs sont loin d'avoir le monopole des mythes; on en trouve un peu partout dans toutes les civilisations. L'homme ne peut vivre sans mythe; le Québec a inventé les siens. Les mythes grecs, sans doute les plus beaux qui soient en Europe, sont plus vivants que jamais; ils ont connu, d'Homère à Virgile, cinq phases de transformation. Ils sont le produit tout ensemble des artistes et des écrivains, des penseurs et du peuple, c'est-à-dire de leur imagination créatrice. Paul Claudel et Jean Anouilh, Eugene O'Neill et T. S. Eliot, pour me limiter à quatre auteurs dramatiques contemporains, s'en sont largement inspirés, tout en les modifiant, comme il se doit; chaque génération transforme les mythes. Ils vivront aussi longtemps qu'il y aura des écrivains d'imagination. L'essai de Jacques Desautels, truffé qu'il est de citations et de références, est sans contredit le plus étoffé et le plus percutant du volume.

MAURICE LEBEL

*** SUE ELLEN CAMPBELL, *The Enemy Opposite: The Outlaw Criticism of Wyndham Lewis*. Ohio Univ. Press/Swallow Press, $24.95. Though he was born on a yacht in a Nova Scotian harbour, and thus was technically a Canadian, Wyndham Lewis was placed by the editor of the *Oxford Companion* among "Foreign Writers on Canada in English," on the strength of his *Self-Condemned*. Yet *Self-Condemned* presents so powerful a satiric image of Canada in the first half of the twentieth century that it has become a part of our fictional heritage (included in the New Canadian Library) and Lewis, who served as a Canadian war artist in World War I on the strength of his birth certificate, is curiously nearer to Canadians in his moods and motives (as was shown by his influence on Marshall McLuhan) than the other great Modernists who were his contemporaries. One cannot imagine Eliot or Joyce or even Pound reacting with the same anger, as if he were an offended member of the family, to the smugness of the unregenerated Toronto of the 1940's. That is why *The Enemy Opposite*, by Sue Ellen Campbell, is of special interest to Canadian readers, for though it mentions *Self-Condemned* only once, it provides some excellent clues to the attitudes that produced such a book. Apart from that, it is a sound analysis of Lewis's antagonistic stance, based on a rejection of the pretense of objectivity in criticism. For Lewis, honest criticism could never be objective. "Inevitably our judgments result from our special experiences and circumstances. For Lewis, the limits set by personality are not a prison but the ground of all the intellectual integrity and freedom we can have." A good place to stand in an age of shifting values.

G.W.

opinions and notes

LES STRUCTURES NARRATIVES ET MYTHIQUES D' "ANGÉLINE DE MONTBRUN"[1]

LA CRITIQUE CONTEMPORAINE considère *Angéline de Montbrun* comme le meilleur roman québécois du XIX^ème siècle: elle reconnaît la "vérité" de la peinture des sentiments et son pouvoir cathartique sur le lecteur.[2] C'est que ce roman révèle une "mutation anthropologique" qui s'est effectuée vers la fin du XIX^ème siècle dans la conscience québécoise: le romanesque s'éloignait de l'unilinguisme rhétorico-judiciaire, caractérisé surtout par l'emploi du narrateur omniscient (IL) et ses interventions au lecteur, pour accéder à un certain plurilinguisme marqué par l'emploi du JE narratif et par l'utilisation de trois techniques différentes de récit: style épistolaire, narration à la troisième personne et journal intime.[3] Cette répartition narrative que la critique a depuis toujours considérée comme une faiblesse structurale, est, selon nous, nécessaire car reliée au sens même du roman, lequel est un analogon culturel de la société québécoise traditionnelle. Il importe donc d'analyser le roman en faisant ressortir les relations qu'ont chacune des techniques romanesques avec le discours mythique d'une part, et d'autre part avec la culture québécoise.[4]

1. *Le "romanesque" épistolaire*

Contrairement aux discours folkorique et classique orientés vers la collectivité, celui du roman épistolaire, popularisé en Europe au XVIII^ème siècle, favorisait plutôt la réflexion et la sensibilité du lecteur. Intégrée à la littérature, la lettre écrite au présent — avec son JE adressé à un TU — abolissait les écrans (le narrateur omniscient, le temps passé) qui existaient entre le héros et le lecteur. La catharsis, qui s'effectuait à travers le rituel d'une action symbolique, était maintenant simplifiée par le processus d'identification au sort particulier d'un individu.[5]

La lettre occupait alors une place spéciale dans la vie intellectuelle et personnelle de la bourgeoisie, et particulièrement des femmes qui, de leur foyer, l'utilisaient pour communiquer avec le monde extérieur. Dépossédée de toute activité signifiante, sauf le mariage et la maternité, et écartée de tout lieu de productivité, la femme idéalise alors le seul rôle qui lui était dévolu, celui d'aimer. Cette conjoncture socio-historique et littéraire ne se transpose approximativement au Québec qu'après une longue période de retard. La "petite bourgeoisie" canadienne-française, encore inexistante, n'aura sa "réflexion romanesque" dans un roman tenant en partie du genre épistolaire que plus tard lorsque, après avoir pris conscience d'elle-même, lors de la Rébellion de 1837-38, elle aura reconnu ses faiblesses et ses limites en se repliant sur ses origines campagnardes.

Les lettres dans *Angéline de Montbrun* constituent approximativement les deux cinquièmes du roman. Elles développent une histoire d'amour principale et une secondaire entre deux familles. Selon une dynamique spatiale, les lettres partent presque exclusivement de la campagne où se situe Valriant, habitation des de Montbrun, pour aller vers la ville où habitent les Darville. Le mouvement des lettres s'explique par la signification de chacun de ces axes spatiaux: le pôle positif de l'idéologie ultramontaine, défendue par Charles de Montbrun, déverse son "trop

plein" vers le pôle négatif de la ville en vue de se l'approprier.

La partie épistolaire du roman n'établit aucun vrai dialogue. Le point de vue de la ville a entièrement été amputé au profit de celui de la campagne, point de vue unilinguiste et rhétorico-judiciaire de Charles de Montbrun. Valriant auquel s'identifie ce personnage relève du mythe de l'Eden. La "vision du monde" que ce lieu représente envahit l'espace de toutes les lettres: toute notion d'historicité est abolie (les lettres ne sont pas datées, atténuation du principe de causalité) à l'avantage d'une participation à une hiérarchie cosmique et du changement cyclique des saisons propre au mythe: avec le printemps fleurit l'amour qui éclôt durant l'été, pour éclater dans la tragédie à l'automne.

Après l'établissement d'une différenciation spatiale des lettres, il importe de déterminer leur distribution entre les correspondants. Malgré une forme polyphonique apparente, le cinétisme propre au genre épistolaire est absent. Un statisme presque complet se dégage du mode passif des lettres, puisque Angéline de Montbrun et Maurice Darville ne sont pas les vraies "dramatis personnae" entre lesquelles s'établit une correspondance sentimentale (un dialogue entre doubles), comme le thème central le suggère. La séparation entre personnages, qui est fondamentale dans le genre épistolaire, existe, mais cet éloignement n'amène aucune relation de séduction, tentative d'augmenter ou de diminuer cette distance entre eux.

Même l'échange entre Angéline et Maurice, sauf les deux dernières lettres à la fin du roman (181-87), relève de la confidence: la décision de leurs fréquentations vient non d'eux-mêmes, mais du père, le seul protagoniste "agissant." Si les quatre lettres entre Charles et Maurice dérivent d'un désir de puissance entre eux,[6] ce "duo dramatique" ne présente, par contre, aucune tension: les dés sont déjà jetés. Le père stipule les conditions du contrat; l'amoureux se soumet entièrement à la volonté de l'autre.

Mais Charles est déchiré par deux désirs contradictoires. Son amour paternel, auquel sa fille est entièrement soumise, tient de la *médiation interne* (la relation modèle/disciple, maître/esclave) accentuée par la mimétique dialectique entre les deux hommes. Au contraire, sa peur tient de la *médiation externe* (l'imitation de Jésus-Christ) existant entre lui, représentant d'un ordre sacré, et la loi religio-culturelle régissant ce même ordre dont la communauté dépend.[7] La médiation externe exige que le père se sacrifice au "rôle social" de sa fille qui est de se marier et de perpétuer la race. A partir des deux lettres de Charles, il est possible d'identifier une nouvelle problématique socio-culturelle: l'exigence individuelle (le désir), contrôlée autrefois par le mythe pour le bien social, s'est amplifiée et tente maintenant de s'opposer à la Loi communautaire.

Il faut voir dans les conditions imposées au mariage autant de déguisements du désir individuel et non pas des raisons valables au bien-être social. Le "credo," auquel de Montbrun demande à Maurice d'adhérer, dévoile également son besoin de demeurer le maître de sa fille en devenant celui du futur gendre. Par l'apologie de la franchise (39-40) et de la pureté (41-42), Charles veut s'assurer le contrôle des actes du couple (savoir-pouvoir) et préserver l'amour filial de sa fille contre "la folle tendresse" de l'amour passionné (44). Du même coup, ses recommandations invitent Maurice à se plier à l'idéologie puritaine et capitaliste de la classe bourgeoise autant qu'à l'ultramontanisme québécois dont les thèmes dominants sont l'agriculturisme, le messianisme et l'anti-étatisme.

Peu importe la vision que les personnages ont de l'amour, ils s'accordent tous sur sa structure hiérarchique patriarcale

et sur son but ultime dans le mariage. Toutefois, le texte même met en jeu la fragilité de cette institution. Avant que le dénouement tragique soit connu, le mariage, basé sur un amour réciproque vers lequel toutes les lettres tendent, semble impossible, car il est toujours dépassé et menacé, soit par une religion plus satisfaisante, soit par le paradis terrestre qu'est Valriant. Ce microcosme d'un monde enchanté et chevaleresque exalte l'obéissance de l'enfant au père et la soumission à un Dieu exigeant: passivité et mysticisme se confondent. Au contraire, ceux qui rêvent de passion dans le mariage, Mina et Maurice Darville, sont originaires d'ailleurs.

2. *La narration mytho-structurale*

Malgré les efforts de la romancière d'utiliser différents points de vue par les lettres sans qu'elle y parvienne, il n'en demeure pas moins que leur psychologie "interdividuelle" dépasse celle élémentaire des romans de l'époque. La correspondance d'*Angéline de Montbrun* offre toutefois un circuit de communication à sens unique: la confidence passive l'emporte sur le dialogue dramatique. Le poids de la médiation externe, par la "Parole" de Charles et d'Emma, ramène le texte aux structures mythiques et force même, pour ainsi dire, la technique littéraire à se transformer. L'utilisation du discours narratif rhétorico-judiciaire (IL) de la deuxième partie était nécessitée par le "blocage" des deux dialectiques amoureuses que les lettres mettaient à jour.

Les deux dernières lettres de Maurice à Angéline, par leur ton passionné, laissent l'impression que, de retour à Valriant, il l'épousera et ensemble ils vivront dans le bonheur. L'aspect féérique et pastoral du "roman épistolaire" semble suggérer cette conclusion. Pourtant plusieurs signes contredisent cette inteprétation. Dans le monologue qu'elle adresse à son chien, Angéline se montre hésitante et se sent même obligée à cette union: "*Prends garde* Nox . . . Il *faut* l'aimer" (84, nous soulignons). Quant à l'autre dialectique amoureuse, absolument rien ne laisse présager un mariage: Charles, préférant sa fille, "dédaign(e)" toujours Mina qui jalouse leur intimité (84).

Ainsi la correspondance ne débouche pas sur la réalisation de la "quête" d'unité, fonction même des lettres. Au contraire, sa rupture dévoile une problématique que l'auteure à travers ses personnages est incapable de surmonter. Le mouvement introspectif de ceux-ci, s'il avait continué, aurait mis en lumière le dilemme de leurs relations amoureuses basées sur la jalousie et l'inceste. Incapable de ce niveau d'introspection, qui aurait révélé sans doute à l'auteure son propre secret, celle-ci se voit obligée de recourir au mode narratif pour relancer son récit et le conclure.[8]

Délaissant l'analyse lucide des émotions à laquelle elle était trop étroitement liée par le jeu cathartique de JE, l'auteure reprend son récit à la troisième personne du singulier. Elle se distancie ainsi de la problématique suggérée par les dernières lettres: que l'amour était impossible et que seule une tragédie pouvait résulter des paradoxes amoureux eux-mêmes. En ne pouvant laisser ses personnages êtres responsables de leurs émotions et les faire agir en conséquence, Laure Conan évite la plus grande complexité psychologique, morale et littéraire vers laquelle la technique épistolaire l'entraînait. Elle utilisera plutôt la forme consacrée du romanesque traditionnel, caractérisée par l'emploi de l'imparfait, du passé simple, et surtout du *Il* de l'auteur omniscient (l'Oeil qui voit tout), retournant ainsi au discours rhétorico-judiciaire mythique. Pendant trois pages (85-88), le roman, "tombé" dans l'aventure, accorde la priorité aux événements aux dépens de la conscience individuelle.[9]

Le destin atténue les liens de la causalité humaine pour amplifier ceux du mytho-cosmos. Comment expliquer que chaque protagoniste principal des deux dialectiques émotionnelles subisse un accident entraînant la rupture de ces relations, alors que celles-ci, par leurs caractères légitimes, auraient dû aboutir au mariage? Il faut voir, dans le pur hasard qui est responsable de la mort de Charles et de la tumeur, dans l'édition originale, ou de l'accident qui défigure Angéline, l'oeuvre du "bras justicier" divin condamnant et punissant les transgresseurs du tabou de l'inceste. Par après, ces victimes se métamorphosent en autant de signes de la puissance de Dieu: leurs destinées promulguent à nouveau la Loi communautaire.[10]

Cependant le décès de Charles provoque chez les deux femmes qui l'aiment un même "désir d'appropriation" au delà de la mort. Toutes deux se rendent inaccessibles aux autres hommes. En entrant au noviciat (87), Mina rejoint spirituellement l'amoureux qui l'avait refusée sur terre. Quant à Angéline, grâce à l'accident causé inconsciemment qui la "marque," elle se *consacre* avec amour à la mémoire jalouse de son père.

Obsédée par le "signe victimaire" qui flétrit son visage, Angéline n'a plus qu'à se retirer de la vie sociale et à s'enfermer à Valriant comme dans un tombeau. Elle se métamorphose en prêtresse, rendant un culte à son père et à l'idéologie mytho-collective qu'il représente et à laquelle tous deux ont été sacrifiés. Le journal intime qui suit offre les lamentations douloureuses de cette victime déchirée par l'ambivalence sacrée de sa condition victimaire, en situation intermédiaire entre le "spirituel" diurne et la "passion" nocturne.

3. *Le journal intime mytho-initiatique*

Dans la partie épistolaire, le Sujet transcendental (l'Etre sacré: le *Il* omniscient) ne participait pas à la rivalité mimétique des protagonistes. Mais en dernière instance, afin d'assurer la résolution (sacrificielle) finale, les pages narratives rétablissaient l'ordre universel en éliminant le désir. Ce court texte, avec sa succession rapide de malheurs qui punissaient les héros sans raison évidente, ne pouvait satisfaire un lecteur de la fin du XIX^{ème} siècle à cause de sa brièveté, de son ton détaché et du changement brusque de technique. Le journal intime, en reprenant avec minutie les événements depuis le début, non seulement résolvait le paradoxe de la finale du récit, mais aussi équilibrait la correspondance et en approfondissait la teneur. D'autre part, ce mode stylistique satisfaisait mieux la "mimésis esthétique" d'une époque plus individualisée.

Dans le journal intime, popularisé par le romantisme, il faut voir non pas la cause, mais le résultat d'une transformation de la notion de personne suite à l'avènement d'une civilisation industrielle et à l'arrivée au pouvoir d'une bourgeoisie capitaliste.[11] En France, depuis la disparition du mécénat royaliste, la "petite bourgeoisie," désillusionnée de ses rêves, se sent "victimisée" par le pouvoir en place. De cette situation proviennent les "littérateurs du moi" et, en particulier, les "intimistes" qui, pour diverses raisons, sont coupés de la vie économique, politique et même sociale.

La "petite bourgeoisie" québécoise à laquelle l'écrivain appartenait, en plus d'être influencée par la pensée française et sa littérature, se trouvait dans une situation semblable. L'échec de la Rébellion et le pouvoir économique concentré entre les mains du capitalisme anglais reproduisaient les conditions précédentes. Il en résulta le glissement progressif d'une littérature au héros symbolique à une littérature d'analyse de l'incertitude, au héros non-héroïque assimilable à la victime émissaire.

L'oeuvre "classique" et le roman populaire sont reliés par l'esthétique de l'ordre du mythe.[12] Dans les trois, la "différence" y est vécue par un personnage identifiable au mauvais double. Dans l'oeuvre romantique et, par conséquent, dans le journal intime, la différence est intériorisée dans le héros même: il est atteint de ce "mal du siècle," caractérisé par une hypertrophie de la sensibilité et de l'imagination, qui l'incite à une mélancolie extrême et à un désir de révolte.

Comme l'initié chez les peuples "primitifs" qui, entre l'enfance et l'état adulte, est considéré tabou, le diariste se caractérise par une marginalité qui l'empêche d'agir. Le malaise à l'égard de l'Autre est typique de cette littérature. En réaction se fait sentir une tentative de préserver le moi de la déperdition: démarche de transcendance propre au rituel initiatique. Dans le journal d'Angéline, il est possible de retracer les trois étapes communes à tous les rites de passage: la préparation, la mort initiatique et la re-naissance.[13] En effet, l'héroïne à la fin semble accéder totalement à la médiation externe de la Loi chrétienne qui prêche que le "véritable avenir, c'est le ciel" (175). Elle promet "d'accomplir le grand commandement de l'amour" (180) dans lequel les désirs terrestres s'annihilent au profit d'une glorification après la mort.

Coup de théâtre, cependant. Au moment même où nous croyons qu'Angéline a atteint une certain sérénité, les deux lettres finales présentent, pour la première fois, un vrai duo dramatique: un face-à-face où les doubles, dans un ultime effort, tentent de posséder l'Autre. En devenant inaccessible, l'héroïne remporte la victoire. Maurice, blessé d'avoir été rejeté, est hanté par "un remords continuel" (181). Froissé dans son honneur et son orgueil, il "se mépris(e lui)-même." Il se sent "humilié" parce qu'Angéline l'oblige à manquer à sa parole (182).

Angéline a inconsciement visé juste. Le seul moyen de s'attacher Maurice "à jamais" (1984) — formule finale de la lettre de ce dernier — était de se rendre inabordable. Accepter le sacrifice de Maurice aurait démontré une "faiblesse" de sa part, ce qui lui est impossible dans son désir de perfection. Malgré tout, Maurice garde encore un certain pouvoir sur Angéline: celui de la faire rougir de son amour passé, de sa dépendance vis-à-vis de lui, époux modèle autrefois choisi par le père. Jusqu'à la fin, le comportement de l'héroïne demeure teinté d'un immense orgueil. En ne signant pas sa dernière missive et en la "clôturant" sur une exhortation contre "les lâches faiblesses" (187), Angéline veut s'assurer une maîtrise complète. Semblable jusqu'à la fin à son père, qui l'avait donnée à l'Amour sauveur afin de la posséder au delà de la mort, Angéline, de façon identique, voue son amoureux au Seigneur afin qu'il ne soit jamais à une autre femme qu'elle-même.

Angéline de Montbrun, influencé entre autres par Chateaubriand, Byron, Goethe, demeure un "roman romantique." La partie du journal présente une nouvelle perspective du mécanisme victimaire, aidant ainsi au processus historique de "démythification." Par contre, à la complexité de l'héroïne romantique du journal, s'opposent les structures manichéennes d'inspiration mythique de tout le contexte idéologique manifeste du roman. Entre la "vision du monde" ultramontaine et le projet intimiste et psychologique de la romancière existe un conflit insoluble. L'auteure ne pouvait conduire son oeuvre à maturité sans refuser le surmoi socio-culturel de son milieu.

L'ultramontanisme désavouait alors toute licence romanesque individualiste: ainsi les critiques du temps reprochèrent le côté passionnel d'*Angéline de Montbrun*. C'est pourquoi, d'ailleurs, par la suite, Laure Conan n'écrivit plus qu'en suivant les normes clérico-littéraires de son époque qui favorisait le roman histo-

rique et son corollaire, le roman-idylle du terroir.

Pendant longtemps au Québec, les multiples censeurs, convaincus de la valeur du roman d'utilité morale, se sont attaqués aux mauvais livres, c'est-à-dire à ceux offensant les moeurs de l'honnête homme classique. En attribuant un rôle secondaire à l'amour, en le reléguant pudiquement dans le mariage, ces moralisateurs contribuèrent à la disparition d'un élément constitutif de toute littérature. Interdite, l'expression de la sexualité, "fondement immuable de toute littérature romanesque," le "Chant des Sirènes" comme l'appelle Maurice Blanchot,[14] la sexualité, disions-nous, doit se masquer pour se sublimer à l'exemple d'*Angéline de Montbrun.*

NOTES

[1] Cet article est le texte intégral d'une communication présentée à l'"Association for Canadian Studies in the United States," à Montréal, le 8 octobre 1987.

[2] Laure Conan, *Angéline de Montbrun* (1884; Montréal: Fides, 1967).

[3] Nous empruntons à Mikhaël Bakhtin les notions d'unilinguisme et de plurilinguisme et leur corrélation. *Esthétique et théorie du roman* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978).

[4] Le MYTHE décrit métaphoriquement le passage du désordre à l'ordre. Il raconte l'affrontement entre les deux bornes réversibles de la NATURE (soumise aux désirs instinctuels de chaque individu: le *régime nocturne* du monstreux à détruire) et de la CULTURE (soumise à la rationalité et à la collectivité: le *régime diurne* du héros salvateur) et l'établissement des "différences" (différenciations linguistiques, morales, sociales) à partir du sacrifice d'une victime personnifiant la violence indifférenciatrice (le monstrueux). Le *rite sacrificiel* religieux réitère le meurtre collectif primordial afin de reproduire son effet pacificateur. Selon René Girard, qui développe cette théorie dans *La Violence et le sacré* (Paris: Grasset, 1972) sur laquelle s'appuie notre article, tout récit dramatique ou romanesque, dépend de cette dialectique anthropologico-religieuse, le héros s'identifiant à la "victime émissaire" qui est par la suite "déifiée" comme symbole de paix.

[5] Voir Ruth Perry, *Women, Letters and the Novel* (N.Y.: AMS Press, Inc., 1980) 164; voir aussi Laurent Versini, *Le Roman épistolaire* (Paris: P.U.F., 1979) 60.

[6] D'après Girard, l'homme ne désire pas l'objet en soi, il copie le désir de l'autre. Dès lors qu'on désire ce que désirent les autres, ceux-ci deviennent des rivaux. Cette "dialectique triangulaire du désir" découle du mimétisme inhérent à l'homme, inscrit biologiquement dans le phénomène de la "néoténie" (croissance post-natale du cerveau).

[7] La *médiation externe* oblige toujours le SUJET à se modeler sur un médiateur très éloigné, le héros mythique. Elle privilégie l'idéologie mythocollective (Ex.: théocratie, ultramontanisme), le discours rhétorico-judiciaire (à la défense de l'ordre public, l'unilinguisme) et la forme narrative omnisciente (IL). Avec l'apparition de l'individualisme (le discours du JE, le romantisme, la démocratie, le plurilinguisme), la médiation se généralise entre des sujets égaux qui se miment l'un l'autre. Au conflit d'appropriation entre eux, l'on donne le nom de *médiatiton interne.* Elle permet dans une relation "interpersonnelle" soit d'être soi-même le médiateur (être maître ou modèle) ou soit, au contraire, de vénérer dans l'Autre (le double) la maîtrise et l'autonomie (être disciple ou esclave). Ces notions s'inspirent de celles de René Girard telles que présentées dans *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque* (Paris: Grasset, 1961).

[8] Plusieurs critiques ont fait la psychanalyse d'*Angéline de Montbrun*, insistant sur l'amour incestueux de l'auteure pour son père, amour qu'elle projeta sur un politicien, Pierre-Alexis Tremblay, qui avait le double de son âge. Cependant, ce dernier voulait un "mariage blanc" à cause d'un voeu de chasteté probablement lié à une infirmité ou à un complexe. Angéline refusa-t-elle cette condition matrimoniale ou est-ce lui qui, pour une raison quelconque (une "faute" de Félicité Angers), lui préféra Mlle Connolly qu'il épousa? Pour ces conjectures, voir principalement les présentations de Roger Le Moine dans les *Oeuvres Romanesques* I de Laure Conan (Montréal: Fides, 1975) 9-21; 79-94.

[9] J.-Y. Tadié, *Le Roman d'aventures* (Paris: P.U.F., 1982) 5.

[10] L'interprétation psychanalytique recouvre celle du mythe. L'attitude négative de Tremblay face au sexe (fusil destructeur) est considérée asociale: il détruit le bonheur de

Félicité et, dans la fiction, il en est puni. Quant à l'auteure, après avoir tenté de séduire son amoureux et, en conséquence, avoir été rejetée par lui, elle aurait douté de sa propre apparence et un sentiment de laideur l'aurait profondément marquée. Voir R. Le Moine, "Laure Conan et P.-A. Tremblay," *Revue de l'Univ. d'Ottawa* 36.3 (1966) : 503; 267-68.

[11] Voir Alain Girard, *Le Journal intime* (Paris: P.U.F., 1962); Béatrice Didier, *Le Journal intime* (Paris: P.U.F., 1976) et du même auteur, "Pour une sociologie du journal intime," *Le Journal intime et ses formes littéraires* (Genève; Paris: Droz, 1978) 253.

[12] Bien qu'apparentées par le mythe, il existe une grande différence entre l'oeuvre populaire et l'oeuvre classique. Le roman populaire utilise le désir à l'appui de l'ordre: la violence du désir n'y est pas purgée, on lui offre les débouchés du "bon" désir. L'esthétique classique est d'essence tragique; l'ordre s'oppose, sans rémission et sans issue, au désir.

[13] Voir Simone Vierne, *Rite, roman, initiation* (Grenoble: Presses Univ. de Grenoble, 1973) 13-54. Selon Girard, "l'épreuve initiatique n'est qu'un éclairage particulier de la crise mimétique. . . . Il s'agit de faire passer le postulant par une crise aussi terrible que possible *pour que se déclenche à son profit l'effet salvateur du sacrifice* . . . abandon à la crise mimétique (pour) assurer la différenciation"; *Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde* (Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle, 1978), 45-46. En des termes psychanalytiques, la mort initiatique — la "descente aux enfers" — correspond à un retour au sein maternel (la retraite de Valraint). Sur les liens entre la psychanalyse, à laquelle se rattache le journal intime, et l'initiation rituelle, voir Joseph L. Henderson, *Thresholds of Initiation* (Middleton, Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1967).

[14] Cité par C. Murillo, "La Sexualité dans le roman québécois d'avant 1960," *Revue Québécoise de Sexualité*, 2.1 (1981): 6.

VICTOR-LAURENT TREMBLAY

ON THE VERGE

**** JEFFREY SIMPSON, *Spoils of Power: The Politics of Patronage*. Collins, $27.95. Cleansing Canadian democracy of political corruption has been a long and painful task, as Jeffrey Simpson shows. Simpson is one of our best journalists, informed about much more than the news of the day, and in *Spoils of Power* he mingles political commentator's role with that of popular historian, not merely dealing with patronage under recent governments — those of Trudeau and Mulroney — but taking us back to the early Victorian era when the desire to get their hands on the spoils of office was at least one factor in the Reformers' drive for responsible government, which in one sense means government where the ruling party can dispense offices and favours to its supporters. Simpson is a pragmatist; he believes that some degree of patronage is inevitable and even necessary to keep Canadian democracy going, which may be true, though there is much less patronage in the British system which runs on the same lines, and virtually none in the somewhat different Swiss form of participatory democracy. But one's doubts about how patronage can ever be made decent need not diminish one's appreciation of Simpson's book as a study of its dominant rule in Canadian political life over the past century and a half. It is certainly the best book on the subject to date.

G.W.

*** *Problems of Literary Reception/Problèmes de Réception littéraire*, ed. E. D. Blodgett and A. G. Purdy. Research Institute for Comparative Literature, n.p. This is the first volume in a series of 10 to be published in the HOLIC/HILAC project (*History of Literatures in Canada/Histoire des littératures au Canada*). The book contains the proceedings of a 1986 symposium at the University of Alberta as well as an essay and bibliography, co-authored by Milan V. Dimic and Marguerite K. Garstin, outlining the theoretical and methodological framework of the project. The "polystem theory," as it has been developed by Itamar Even-Zohar and others, "is an open, heuristic theory, oriented towards praxis, that is, towards its own verification and emendation in the process of historical studies, rather than towards continuous theorizing and the logical but abstract refinement of its hypotheses." With the exception of a very few chatty and sketchy pieces, most of the essays included in this tightly edited volume fulfil this programme, as they are both well researched and argued with a view toward formulating a theory, once extensive evidence in all the areas envisioned by the Research Institute has been collected. Among these contributions are Carole Gerson's "The Reception of the Novel in Victorian Canada," Jacques Michon's "La Réception de l'oeuvre de Nelligan, 1904-1909," Lucie Robert's "L'Émergence de la notion de 'littéra-

ture canadienne-française' dans la presse québécoise (1870-1948)," Lorraine Weir's "The Discourse of 'Civility': Strategies of Containment in Literary Histories of English Canadian Literature," and others. One looks forward to the HOLIC/HILAC volumes to follow, with "Questions of Funding, Publishing and Distribution," "Prefaces and Literary Manifestoes" and "Literatures of Lesser Diffusion" to be featured next.

E.-M.K.

**** DOUGLAS FETHERLING, *The Gold Crusades: A Social History of Gold Rushes, 1849-1929*. Macmillan, n.p. *The Gold Crusades* is an admirable piece of social history, covering the classic gold rushes from California in the 1840's to the last rushes in northern Ontario during the 1920's. In between, it considers Cariboo and Klondike, Australia and New Zealand and the South African Rand. Fetherling is greatly concerned to discover why, during this period of eighty years, people responded to the discovery of gold with such peculiar intensity and in such great numbers. He sees the pursuit of wealth — which only a tiny minority achieved and fewer retained — as less important than the mass feelings of frustration as the capitalist world became increasingly industrialized and the individual increasingly alienated. The gold fields offered adventure and the prospect of individual self-fulfilment, and their call died down when the easily worked placer gold ran out and capitalists moved in to exploit the more difficult hardrock seams. Two facts emerge strikingly from this book. One is that after the failed revolutions of 1848, the gold rushes provided an outlet for rebellious impulses, and from the time of the California gold rush in 1849 until 1917 there was no major European revolution; Cariboo and Klondike, Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie had siphoned off many of the potential hotheads of the barricades. The other is how far, in these apparently chaotic movements of large numbers of men (and more women than is commonly supposed), society was sustained even when government was non-existent; the social urge to mutual aid swung into operation when it was needed in spontaneously evolved kinds of cooperation and in "miners' codes" of honesty, fairness and chivalry. Perhaps it was this aspect of the rushes that first attracted Fetherling, the quiet anarchist.

G.W.

*** W. H. GRAHAM, *Greenbank: Country Matters in 19th Century Ontario*. Broadview Press, n.p. Well over thirty years ago W. H. Graham wrote *The Tiger of Canada West*, the best book on William Dunlop, and then vanished into apparent silence. Now, having lived for many years on an old farm in the Ontario back country north of Oshawa, he has written a fascinating book. It is the history of four farms and their families in a rather late settled part of the province, compiled from memories, from haphazardly preserved documents, from the scanty public records of the nineteenth century. But Graham has a fine ability to extract the elements of a character or the essence of a way of life from scanty evidence, and his long dead people, obscure even in their times, come to life with amazing authenticity. Greenbank is a model of research and interpretation which shows how important a part in recovering our past the amateur historian can still play.

G.W.

* D. N. SPRAGUE, *Canada and the Métis, 1869-1885*. Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, $24.95. This is an eccentric bit of history-making, its heart in the right place, on the side of the native peoples, its head often in the clouds. Sprague sets out to show how Sir John A. Macdonald and his associates deliberately conspired to keep from the Métis the land they should have received during the settlement of Manitoba and later of the Saskatchewan country. Anyone who has read the available evidence critically knows all about this already, but Sprague dishes out some more facts which certainly strengthen the indictment. His concern over the importance of the weight and truth of evidence in this direction makes rather surprising and wilful flaws in his book that make one doubt the efficacy of his historical methods. For example, he treats seriously a single unsupported assertion, running contrary to the numerous other accounts of Thomas Scott's execution, that Scott actually died from a revolver shot by the Fenian William B. O'Donohue, who was among the bystanders; he even offers this single dubious assertion as weighty evidence that Riel never meant Scott to be executed but only to be scared. Nor, as a writer on the western Métis, can this reviewer accept Sprague's curious reference to St. Laurent on the South Saskatchewan as a "new colony" of the 1880's, with the imolication that it was mostly the creation of Métis refugees from Manitoba. In fact St. Laurent was founded in 1873, when there were few Manitoba Métis in the Saskatchewan country, by the western Métis under Gabriel Dumont's leadership. But Sprague is so curiously reluctant to discuss the western as distinct from the Manitoba Métis that Dumont's name is not

even mentioned, and the struggle with the federal government is personalized into one between Macdonald and Riel in a way that ignores the great part played by collective decisions, largely dominated by the activist western Métis, both before and after Riel's arrival at Batoche in 1884.

G.W.

* *Oxford Illustrated Encyclopedia*, 2 vols. Oxford Univ. Press, $17.50. A guide to events and persons in world history from "earliest times" to "the present," this volume ought to be more admirable than it is. The pictures are interesting. The quality of the text is perhaps suggested by the "facts" that Trudeau was Canada's "Premier," the U.S.A. "invades Granada" in 1983 (no doubt a surprise to the Spanish), and not a single event in Canadian history after 1885 (the completion of the CPR) is deemed worthy of mention in the chronology.

W.N.

NEW REFERENCE books include *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of The Middle East and North Africa* ($39.50), an introductory survey of history, economics, and Arabic cultural contributions to the world; *The Cambridge Guide to the Arts in Britain* ($39.50), ed. Boris Ford, the first two volumes (of a projected nine, all substantially illustrated) surveying prehistoric, Roman, and Medieval times, placing literature, architecture, and other arts in sociocultural contexts; *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English* ($37.50), ed. Ian Ousby, with a Foreword by Margaret Atwood, an admirable attempt to break out of received canonical traditions (though still focusing on British and American) and to provide basic "factual" data on writers and works from around the anglophone world, though (as with the comments on Katherine Mansfield) some of the entries seem curiously unaware of current research; and two volumes from Gale: *Black Writers* ($75.00), a selection of sketches from previous (African, American, Caribbean) volumes of *Contemporary Writers*, and *Short Story Criticism*, vol. 2 ($70.00), critical notes on writers from Atwood and Chekhov to Hardy and Salinger.

Several extended commentaries also serve primarily as reference sources. Among these are C. A. Bayly's volume on the making of the British Empire in *The New Cambridge History of India* (n.p.), a study of the interaction between company and state that constructed a politically useful version of "traditional" India. W. G. Hoskins' *The Making of the English Landscape* (Hodder & Stoughton, $39.95), an historical text sumptuously accompanied by Andrew Butler's photographs, also traces the construction not just of appearances (in this case boundary lines, canals, and terraced housing) but also of the paradigms of a cultural aesthetic. Other faces of this aesthetic are examined in two recent volumes of the Longman Literature in English Series, Bernard Richards' *English Poetry of the Victorian Period 1830-1890* and J. R. Watson's *English Poetry of the Romantic Period 1789-1830* ($20.00 and $18.75 respectively). Watson's work is repeatedly concerned with evaluation — with differences between 'the great' and 'the lesser,' and his focus remains firmly on chronology and the *corpus* of individual authors. Richards (perhaps stemming from his interest in the effects of Victorian utilitarianism) ranges more loosely across the years, organizing by strategy rather than by person; the result is a series of stimulating essays on Victorian poetics, generic conceptions, elegy, satire, responses to urban life, science, domesticity, and other issues. Both books might have addressed more the impact of empire and colonial war, but the two together provide a convenient frame for nineteenth-century Canadian poetic assumptions.

The impact of Empire shows in other ways in two books dealing with Asia and Asian immigration. Jan Morris's *Hong Kong* (Random House, $27.50) appears to ramble anecdotally through history, but the book is more organized than that: relying on a series of border metaphors — metaphysical fences, political gateways, landlord-and-tenant images — to probe the cultural politics of colonial life. Richard Thomas Wright's *In a Strange Land* (Western Producer Prairie, $22.95), by contrast, is a "pictorial record of the Chinese in Canada 1788-1923." This collection of cartoons, photographs, engravings, and drawings records a visual history — of racism, poverty, family devotion, and social distinction — which variously reconstructs and exposes the prevailing social images of the past.

W.N.

LAST PAGE

A POT-POURRI of recent notes, having mostly to do with reprints.

1. Back in print is Anthony Alpers' collection of myths, legend, and comments on island culture, under the new title *The World of the Polynesians* (Oxford, $16.50); it's the sort of book one needs as a context for the

Samoan stories of Albert Wendt, whose new book *The Birth and Death of the Miracle Man* (Viking-Penguin, $24.95) collects a series of stories about village people and their encounters with education, marriage, the law and other institutions, and with the pressures of dealing with different dimensions of language. But there's a danger in so contextualizing. Wendt demands to be read as a contemporary, not as a recidivist. The celebration of cultural difference has to be critically distinguished both from the desire for quaintness and the desire for prepackaged order. Of distantly related interest is Lynne Withey's *Voyages of Discovery* (William Morrow/Macmillan, $29.95), a narrative of history which is primarily concerned with documenting the perspective of Pacific peoples towards Cook and Vancouver.

2. L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful World of Oz* has returned in a Macmillan reprint of the original 1900 edition with illustrations by W. W. Denslow. It's as splendid as ever. One of the things that's fascinating about it is the timing. Ends of centuries repeatedly give rise to millenarian fantasies. The 1890's dreamed and fretted about the consequences or possibilities of technology. Perhaps the 1990's should be concerned more about the dangers of organizational control. And perhaps that's what lies at the heart of Julian Barnes' *Staring at the Sun* (Random House, $19.95); it tells of a woman who is a girl in the 1920's but flies into the sun a century later. But that's not precisely what concerns Barnes most. He seems most fascinated by the illusions wrought by assertive statements ("This is what happened": illusion). And he protests the inadequacy of knowledge, the failure of people to say what they mean or what needs to be said. The wittiest section is the last. Ian Wedde's *Symme's Hole* (Penguin, NZ$21.99) is yet another visionary history, reconstructing a nineteenth-century myth of Antarctica as a present territory of the mind.

3. Why is New Zealand still preoccupied with war? The Oxford reprint of J. A. Lee's *Civilian Into Soldier* ($14.95) is on the side of privates, protesting: "martinets never tire of proclaiming themselves good fellows." But Dan Davin's *The Salamander and the Fire* (Oxford, $17.95), his collected war stories, seems more determined to recapture youth, through the literary forms of a time of trial. Two collections of criticism offer some insights into this issue and others: the selected critical essays of Lawrence Jones, preoccupied with "discovery" and "realism," *Barbed Wire and Mirrors* (Univ. of Otago, NZ$24.95), and the critical writings of Allen Curnow from 1935 to 1984, *Look Back Harder* (Auckland Univ. Press, NZ$32.50), ed. Peter Simpson.

4. Increasingly, writing by women in past decades and past centuries returns to the shelves. Marilyn Duckworth's 1959 realist novel, *A Gap in the Spectrum* (Oxford, $14.95) is one, the story of a New Zealand woman trying to put together the world anew. Hannah Foster's 1797 *The Coquette* (Oxford, $11.95) is another; once treated as a moral lesson about sexuality, childbirth, and punishment, the novel is lucidly discussed here (by C. N. Davidson) as a history of women talking to women about the conditions they live with: their desire for a marriage of a different, equal kind, for example, and the significance of their choice of silence over speech. Sylvia Ashton-Warner's posthumous *Stories from the River* (Hodder & Stoughton, NZ$17.95) collects eighteen stories, including the moodily effective "Greenstone." *The Penguin Book of Australian Autobiography* (A$12.95) refuses to distinguish between fact and fiction; the desire of the editors, John & Dorothy Colmer, is to assemble — a task they pursue through excerpts and fragments, perhaps to serve a potentially theoretical purpose. Jean Devanny's autobiography (1894-1962), *Point of Departure* (Univ. of Queensland, A$34.50), tells of engagements, pressures, and disengagements — involving the New Zealand Communist Party, the working world and the political options it allowed, and the sexual options involved in marriage, childbirth, and abortion. The second volume of *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield* (Oxford, $17.50), meticulously edited, covers the years 1918-19, and primarily reveals the author retreating from Murry, Woolf, and the war, because of her advancing illness, into herself. Betty Gilderdale's *Introducing Margaret Mahy* (Viking Kestrel, NZ$19.95) is a popular biography of the children's writer, itself aimed at child readers. Lesbia Harford's *An Invaluable Mystery* (Penguin, A$12.95), by contrast, is aimed directly at thinking adults. Written between 1921 and 1924, this novel is published for the first time now; Harford at last gains a place in Australian literary history, the introduction

remarks with some edge, because her "dangerous" ideas have been deemed "safe at last." Set in 1916, it is opposed to corruption and concerned with the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.); at its heart is the world of a woman who lives on the edge of left-wing politics, and who is left out of the centre of society even while others disappear entirely — into war or (because of their German origins) into internment camps. What is especially important to note (cf. Sime, Beck, or MacBeth in Canada) is the degree to which urban protest literature lay in the hands and minds of women. *Catherine Helen Spence* (Univ. of Queensland, A$14.50) is Helen Thomson's edition of Spence's work; the book includes a novel and autobiographical material, but most welcome is the selection of her essays — this is pungent nineteenth-century journalism, direct arguments about issues literary, political, and personal: marriage, abuse, money, and in spite of all else, charity.

5. R. K. Narayan's *Under the Banyan Tree* (Penguin, $8.95) is a 1985 book, containing two new stories and a number of reprints. That Narayan still holds his place in literary history is demonstrated by several books of (largely thematic) critical survey and (largely romantic) new fiction received from Mittal Publishers in New Delhi, among them Shyam Asnani's *Critical Response to Indian English Fiction* (RS.95), C. N. Srinath's *The Literary Landscape* (RS.95), and J. P. Singh's novel of campus sex and violence, *The Curfew* (RS.65). Narayan's wit wears well. So do the comments of C. D. Narasimhaiah, in *The Function of Criticism in India* (Cent. Inst. of Indian Languages, Mysore), which reassert the importance of the *Rig Veda* and *Ramayana* in Indian writing (cf. Anglo-Catholicism in England) as a source for cultural attitude and literary mode. The Indian critic has to be able to think of himself or herself in Indian terms, he says: to be *Sahrdaya* rather than "responsive, active reader," to recognize *rasagati, dhvani, aucitya* rather than to seek "dynamism," "unstated meaning," or "congruity." Terms themselves are cultural implements. It's a lesson worth repeating.

W.N.

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W.N.

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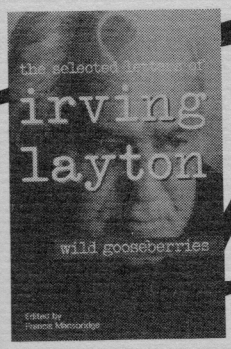

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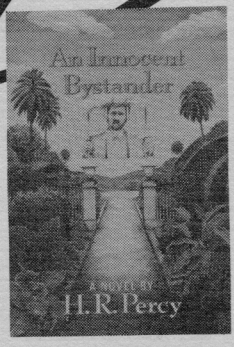

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