PATTERNS OF THE ARTIST
IN ENGLISH-CANADIAN FICTION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyse the presentation of the artist figure in English-Canadian fiction from the beginnings of Canadian literature to the present. While a few studies on this subject have been done in the past, none have the historical scope, nor are they as comprehensive in material covered, as this one. Therefore, this study is the most thorough to date in discovering overall patterns of the presentation and development of the artist figure in English-Canadian fiction.

The study investigates the following aspects of the artist figure within the individual works of fiction: the sources of creative inspiration, impediments to creativity, the creative process, the kind of art produced and the artist figure's relationship to his society. It also analyses the kinds of fiction in which the artist figure is presented and the technical devices and images employed. Lastly, it attempts to discover overall patterns of development of the presentation of the artist figure in the fiction.

The thesis finds three major and sometimes chronologically overlapping stages in the presentation of the artist figure: the settlement state (1850s-1920s) in which the artist figure and the author of the literature are one and the form the writing takes is the journal or the autobiography, the rural and small-town stage (1920s-1950s) in which the artist figure is a fictional character and the form of the literature is usually the autobiographical novel and the urban stage (1950s-present) in which the artist figure is also a fictional character but the forms the literature takes are more varied. Concurrently with finding characteristics of the artist figure within individual stages, it discovers that the presentation of the artist figure has changed over the years. The development has been away from the presentation of the artist figure as failed in the first two stages to the successful artist in the third stage. Whereas the impediments to creativity were strong and overpowering in the first two stages, they are less so in the last stage. While the impediments to creativity tended to be external in the earlier literature, caused by nature and society, they become more internal in the recent fiction. The kinds of images employed in the first two stages are usually negative, while those in the last stage are more positive, indicating the changing state of the artist. Since the portrayal of the artist within the fiction reflects a statement by his creator on the condition of the artist in his particular time and place, the portrayal of the confident artist in recent fiction suggests a maturing literary climate in this country.

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INTRODUCTION

The subject of this thesis is a large one, patterns of the artist in English-Canadian fiction. It is a study of the artist in the novel in Canada from the beginnings of our literary tradition until the present time. This means that the study must sometimes be general, and that it cannot hope to discuss in detail every work in which there is a character who may be described as an artist. Rather, an attempt has been made to find broad patterns of development in the literature as it matures from the immigrant writing of the nineteenth century to the more sophisticated writing of today. Each section of the thesis could in itself have been expanded into a separate dissertation, and undoubtedly there will be critical studies made in the future which will develop what is here only a beginning in the study of the artist in Canadian fiction.

The term artist has been defined rather generally, in order to allow as much leeway as possible in looking at that character's development in the literature. The artist is an individual who is exceptionally sensitive to the world around him (or, it will always be understood, her) and who articulates that world through a process of reworking or patterning it through his imagination, then employing some medium, such as words or paint to express this unique vision to an audience. Not only the artist who successfully carries through all the steps of this process is discussed, but also the character who appears to have the potential to do so, or the figure who attempts to create and fails, since potential and failed artists can possibly tell us as much about the condition of being as artist in Canada as can successful artists.

The thesis is divided into three main sections which reflect the three major phases discovered in the development of the artist figure in Canadian fiction. These sections illustrate a historical development which takes place over a period of approximately one hundred and twenty years, from the early nineteenth century to the present. They are the settlement period (1850s to 1920s), the rural and small-town period (1930s to 1950s) and the urban period (1960s to present). These periods are general, and at times overlap because the development of such a large country as Canada has been uneven. For example, it is conceivable that a novel describing the artist in the settlement situation could appear as late as the 1950s when immigration to the prairies was still strong. Also, although the trend in the last two decades has been toward the emergence of literature depicting the artist in the urban environment, there are novels published in the 1970s which describe the artist in the country or small town.

An attempt has been made to discover in the course of the thesis not only a definition of the artist in Canadian fiction and any development that this figure is given within the fiction, but also patterns of situation, environment, success or failure, and imagery and symbolism associated with his development. Lastly, an investigation is made of the kinds of fiction in which the artist is presented, to see whether there is any change in form and technique as the tradition develops.

The thesis concentrates solely on the artist figure in Canadian fiction without making comparisons with similar figures in English, American and other literary traditions. This is another area of study that must be pursued in the future but time and space do not allow for it in this work.

Some analysis has already been done of the artist in Canadian fiction, or of the condition of culture and the creative imagination in Canada. A brief review of the important works on the subject will serve as introduction to the present study.

In the late nineteenth century, several literary critics and writers in Canada expressed concern about the state of Canadian Literature, which did not emerge as strongly after Confederation as some Canadians had hoped it would. Among these was Sara Jeanette Duncan, whose articles in The Week state that Canadians are for the most part an "unliterary people", "Philistines" more concerned with practical matters like business and trade than with the pursuit of the arts.[1] She observes that those Canadians who do read do not receive Canadian writing very well, but rather are dubious about it. They prefer American and British books. Similarly, reviewers and publishers in Canada ignore Canadian works. She attributes these problems not only to the utilitarian outlook of Canadians, but also to the sheepishness of her fellow countrymen who wait for foreign critics to set the standards and choose the books that they are to read.[2] However, Americans are indifferent to Canadian Literature, and the British are semi-contemptuous, so that not much encouragement is to be gained from them. She also points out some practical reasons for another problem that inhibits the growth of a vital Canadian Literature, the fact that Canadian writers so often seek publication in America. They do this, she maintains, because there is a better market in America for books and periodicals, and therefore it is easier to publish there than at home. However, she sees grave danger in Canadians writing for a foreign audience; they will have to adjust their content to suit the tastes of the audience, thus undermining native concerns. Indeed, Canadians writing for an American audience write with an American spirit, she claims.[3] For all these reasons, Canadian Literature is a "void". Canadians are self-deprecating, a mentality that inhibits creativity and the full flowering of Canadian Literature.

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[1] Sara Jeanette Duncan, "Saunterings", The Week, September 30, 1886, p. 707. I am indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Carl Ballstadt, for directing me to the articles by Sara Jeanette Duncan that are referred to here.

[2] Sara Jeanette Duncan, "Saunterings", The Week, January 13, 1887, p. 781.

E.K. Brown, in a famous chapter of his book On Canadian Poetry (1943), "The Problem of a Canadian Literature",[4] discusses the problems that Canadian writers have historically encountered in trying to write in Canada. This is a very important essay in terms of a discussion of the artist in Canadian fiction because Brown is one of the first modern literary critics to analyse our culture and to recognize and express the causes of the frustrations of the artist that are mirrored in our fiction as well as in our poetry.

Brown's thesis is that although a Canadian Literature exists, it is not internationally recognized, and is even inadequately appreciated in Canada because of three inhibiting factors. The first is that Canada is still culturally a colony. Brown asserts that although Confederation may have made Canada at least nominally a nation, there is a colonial spirit that has remained and which psychologically inhibits the recognition, investigation and appreciation of Canadian culture. A colony, says Brown,

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[3] Sara Jeanette Duncan, "American Influence on Canadian Thought", The Week, July 7, 1887, p. 518.

[4] E.K. Brown, "The Problem of a Canadian Literature", in his On Canadian Poetry (Ottawa: The Tecumsah Press, 1973 [1943]).

> lacks the spiritual energy to rise above routine, and lacks this energy because it does not adequately believe in itself. It applies to what it has in standards that are distorted, and therefore artificial and distorting. It sets the great good place not in its present, nor in its past nor in its future, but somewhere outside its own borders, somewhere beyond its own possibilities.[5]

The colonial mentality has seriously inhibited the Canadian imagination, Brown claims. If a Canadian wants to set his novel in an interesting place, he will not be likely to choose a prairie farm or even a city like Halifax, but rather he will employ Paris or London or Rome. The colonial mentality will also inhibit him in the choice of characters, themes, images and situations. Thus he will not be likely to come to terms with the Canadian reality, but neither will he be profound in bringing to life a world that he has only read about second hand. In short, his writing is likely to be mediocre.

A related problem that emerges as a result of Canada's colonial mentality has to do with publishing, Brown tells us. Canadians are hesitant about reading a book that has not come from the United States or England. They do not have faith in their own writers as having anything important to say. Canadian publishers are hesitant to print anything that has not first proven successful in other countries, and this of course makes it difficult for a Canadian writer to find an audience. The implication for the Canadian writer is that he will first have to find a publisher abroad before he can hope to have his work appear before a Canadian audience.

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[5] Brown, "The Problem of a Canadian Literature", in *Masks of of Fiction*, pp. 44-45.

The second inhibiting factor in the growth of Canadian Literature and the Canadian imagination is what Brown calls the frontier spirit, which has made Canadians, even those who no longer live in the frontier situation, suspicious of anything that is not practical or utilitarian. Leisure time is considered almost a crime, in this kind of society, and leisure activities, like painting or writing, that do not result in any practical use are regarded with suspicion as being corrosive of society's standards.

The third factor that Brown says is germane to the limitations on the Canadian imagination is the strong Puritanism that he feels characterizes Canadians. He notes that Canadian writing is conspicuously lacking in colourful language and controversial subject matter. He is convinced that Puritanism is a dangerously restrictive and repressive force that deters the writer from experimentation and makes him unreceptive to new ideas.

Hugh Hood analyses the Canadian mentality in an article entitled "Moral Imagination: Canadian Thing".[6] In it he affirms that a colonial attitude has characterized Canadians, who for the most part are hesitant about their identity. Unlike Americans, who are an imaginative people, prone to creating national cultural myths, Canadians tend to exist more as minorities, subscribing to different cultural patterns in different areas of the country. However, Hood does identify a national characteristic; Canadians are concerned with matters of morality and conscience. He feels that if these concerns could be wedded to imagination, then Canadians would "illuminate our conscience through poetry" or, find a native expression. Calvinism and Puritanism do not have to be impediments to creativity, but can be the subjects of artistic articulation.

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[6] Hugh Hood, "Moral Imagination: Canadian Thing" in William Kilbourn, ed., A Guide to the Peaceable Kingdom (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1970), pp. 29-35.

Northrop Frye in his "Conclusion" in Literary History of Canada (1965) defines characteristic attitudes and situations found in Canadian Literature. Frye notes that Canadian Literature is a literature of failure in that the ambitions of the writers are not achieved, but that it is the job of the Canadian scholar to analyse the social and historical setting and to balance the writers' designs with the cultural reality.[7]

Frye contends that English-Canadian Literature is characterized by tensions caused often but not exclusively by the conflict between an English literary tradition and the North American situation. He also observes that the characteristic mentality revealed in the literature is the "garrison mentality", a defensive attitude toward the vast frontier which overwhelms the inhabitants of the isolated small towns that form

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[7] Northrop Frye, "Conclusion", in Carl F. Klinck, ed., Literary History of Canada (University of Toronto Press, 1965), pp. 821-822.

Canadian society.[8]

Not many studies have been made of the artist in Canadian fiction. Margaret Atwood includes a chapter on the artist in Survival (1972),[9] entitled "The Paralyzed Artist", in which she describes the artist as an individual who, "in order to make sense of his roots, becomes a creator".[10] Atwood concentrates on artists, particularly writers, who came to maturity in Canada in the nineteen twenties to the nineteen sixties. She agrees with E.K. Brown that a native audience and a native tradition are important to the artist in any country, and observes that during the period she is discussing, even into the mid and late sixties, Canadian writers found an absence of both. Rather, readers and critics concentrated for the most part on writing from the United States and England. Like Brown, Atwood attributes this to the cultural colonialism of Canada during the period. She notes that if Canadian Literature was discussed at all, it was often referred to as "regional" or "provincial", because foreign standards were applied to it, and, of course, it was found wanting. She notes too that because of the audience being reluctant to buy Canadian Literature, and because of economic difficulties generally, it was very hard to get a book published in Canada.

Atwood's study goes beyond Brown's by pointing out that as a result of the colonial situation, certain kinds of images occur in the literature about the artist during the period. They are images of claustrophobia and images of mutilation. Images of claustrophobia occur because the artist in Canada feels on the one hand isolated from the mainstream of writing in the world, and on the other hand that he lives in a society that is culturally and artistically narrow and limited, not appreciating or understanding his aims and ideas. Images of mutilation occur partly because of feelings of victimization in the artist in this situation, and partly because of feelings of failure. The latter occur because the artist never feels that the creative process is complete in this country; in order for it to be so, it is necessary to have an audience. If no one reads or sees the finished work of art, then it is not really alive, and the artist's work has been in vain.

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[8] Frye, "Conclusion", in Literary History of Canada, p. 830.

[9] Margaret Atwood, Survival (Toronto: Anansi, 1972).

[10] Atwood, Survival, p. 181.

Atwood does not see very optimistic alternatives for the artist in Canada during the post First World War period. On the one hand, he can stay in Canada and go mad crying out where there is no one to hear, or, on the other hand, he can go abroad, where the artist is better respected and understood and not articulate the Canadian condition, but become a "permanent tourist"[11] because the expectations of the publishers in these places are not ones that encourage serious analysis of Canadian problems or conditions.

Atwood does, however, find a happy note on which to end the chapter. She observes that while, on the one hand, Canadian writers have not had an easy time of it, paradoxically, through articulating their frustrations in their writing, they have created "memorable works of fiction".[12] She also senses that Canadians at the time she is writing (1972) are becoming a more responsive audience to their own artists and that Canadian publishers, partly as a result of this, are more deliberately publishing Canadian works today.[13]

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[11] Atwood, Survival, p. 190.

Optimism that the problems of Canadian Literature may be receding with the development of a mature literary tradition is expressed in Warren Tallman's essay, "Wolf in the Snow", which first appeared in Canadian Literature in 1960.[14] In it he discusses five Canadian novels which he feels reveal the old and new directions of Canadian fiction. He employs Ross's As For Me and My House, Buckler's The Mountain and the Valley, Mitchell's Who Has Seen the Wind and MacLennan's Each Man's Son to epitomize the patterns of isolation and even failure that he feels characterize early Canadian fiction. He discusses Philip Bentley, David Canaan, Brian O'Connal and Alan MacNeil as silently suffering, deeply sensitive characters, out of tune with their respective societies. He employs primal images of the Canadian landscape, snow and wolf, to describe their condition. But he sees a new departure in Canadian fiction in

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[12] Atwood, Survival, p. 191.

[13] While Margaret Atwood talked with me about my thesis in the fall of 1974, she made the comment that the artist figure in our literature "is changing", that the failed or frustrated artist she describes in Survival is being succeeded by a more successful one. This "new artist", which I had also discovered, is discussed in the last section of this thesis.

[14] Warren Tallman, "Wolf in the Snow", in Canadian Literature, V (Summer, 1960), pp. 7-20.

Mordecai Richler's The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz, in which the central character is not the painfully self-conscious, inward-looking, intimidated individual that his predecessors were, but rather is one who meets his society head on, for better or for worse, "giving as good as he gets". Tallman feels that Richler's novel anticipates a new trend in Canadian Literature away from isolation to a full, confident occupation of the Canadian terrain. His article is helpful in a study of the Canadian artist, because the development of that figure conforms to Tallman's thesis about the general contemporary trend of Canadian fiction.

Pierre Cloutier's master's thesis, "The Function of the Artist in Five English Canadian Novels",[15] looks at artist figures in Sara Jeanette Duncan's A Daughter of Today (1894), Morley Callaghan's A Passion in Rome (1961), Robertson Davies' Tempest-tost (1951) and A Mixture of Frailties (1958) and Mordecai Richler's A Choice of Enemies (1957).

Cloutier is particularly interested in the tradition of the Canadian artist as exile, as expressed in these novels. Tempest-tost does not fall into this pattern, but apparently Cloutier employs the novel to point out certain inadequacies in Davies' humour and point of view which Cloutier feels are inherent in the novel's domesticated setting and which he feels are overcome in A Mixture of Frailties, set in England. Basically the limitation that Cloutier sees in Tempest-tost is that the novel does not move from the society that Davies ridicules in the novel toward any kind of vision of change or alternative. Rather, the domestic novel is characterized by a tone of stasis and status quo that is engendered by a very conservative and cautious society. Cloutier does make some observations about the artist as exile, particularly remarking the concern about money and the ties with family that characterize this figure, and also the reluctance to ally himself with any really bohemian or outré lifestyle or sensibility.

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[15] Pierre Cloutier, "The Figure of the Artist in Five English Canadian Novels", unpublished master's thesis, University of Montreal, 1971.

The form Cloutier's thesis takes is a movement from failed Canadian (sic.) artist abroad in A Daughter of Today to rejection of the need for exile in A Choice of Enemies, and an awareness that what is needed now is not so much involvement in international artistic movements (which are found to be decidedly inadequate for the Canadian artist) but rather the weeding of one's own garden, back home in Canada. However, the period of exile has been intrinsic to the maturation of the artist figure.

Cloutier does not include a conclusion at the end of his thesis, but presumably his arrangement of the novels analysed in the thesis to end with A Choice of Enemies suggests that the Canadian artist has developed from early hesitancy and emulation to a mature kind of self-realization.

Pierre Cloutier also has an article in Canadian Literature entitled "The First Exile"[16] which discusses the artist figure in Canadian Literature. It is an analysis of Elfrida Bell in Sara Jeanette Duncan's A Daughter of Today.

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[16] Pierre Cloutier, "The First Exile", Canadian Literature, LIX (Winter, 1974), pp. 30-37.

Cloutier is certainly correct in discussing Elfrida Bell as an artist, but he is mistaken in assuming that she comes from Canada. He tells us in his article that Elfrida Bell "returns to Sparta, her small, drab Ontario hometown, after one year of art courses in Philadelphia".[17] But Duncan makes it clear early in the novel that Sparta is not a small town in Ontario, but in Illinois,[18] and that Elfrida is, of course, an American, which really takes the point away from Cloutier's article, since he proposes in it that Elfrida begins a tradition in our literature of the Canadian artist as exile. A Daughter of Today, then, is Duncan's story of an American girl abroad.

By considering Elfrida as a Canadian artist figure, Cloutier seems to miss a great deal of Duncan's irony in her presentation of the girl's character. Very subtley and gradually, in a manner similar to Henry James, whom Duncan admired, the novelist gives us the portrait of a person whose early self-delusion concerning her artistic abilities changes to a conscious deluding of others concerning her character and talents in order to promote herself. Cloutier seems to feel that Duncan has sympathy for her heroine, but this is hardly the case. Elfrida Bell is not the only character Duncan has developed with a detached irony. By assuming that Elfrida is a Canadian, Cloutier has missed, it seems to me, Duncan's point, that the American artist abroad is an opportunist, schemer and phony. A version of the Canadian artist abroad is given by Duncan instead in Cousin Cinderella, which is discussed in the first section of this thesis.

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[17] Cloutier, "The First Exile", Canadian Literature LIX, p. 30.

[18] Sara Jeanette Duncan, A Daughter of Today (Toronto: The Toronto News Company, 1894), pp. 2, 3.

Another thesis about the Canadian artist is E.F.H. Kluge's "The Artist Hero in Modern Canadian Fiction" (1972),[19] in which the relationship of the artist hero to society and to nature is examined. Kluge particularly attempts to define the orientation of the artist hero to the "tower" or "fount ",[20] that is, toward isolation or participation in society. In Chapter One, which discusses the artist novel between 1889 and 1940, Kluge discusses Grove's The Yoke of Life (1930), Knister's White Narcissus (1929) and Simes' Our Little Life (1921), all of which are early twentieth-century novels about the artist in the rural setting. He observes that the central aspects of these novels are that the artist is on the land, but wishes to leave it because it demands too much of his time and energy, that personal relationships between the artist and others in that setting are poor and that there is no clear tendency on the part of the artist to accept or reject society (that is, toward the fount or the tower).

In Chapter Two, which discusses the artist novel between 1920 and 1940, Kluge discusses Buckler's The Mountain and the Valley (1952), Ross' As For Me and My House (1941) and McCourt's Music at the Close (1947).

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[19] E.F.H. Kluge, "The Artist Hero in Modern Canadian Literature", unpublished master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1972.

[20] Kluge borrows this approach from Maurice Beebe whose book Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts (New York: New York University Press, 1964) employs the pattern of the tower and the fount to analyse the novel of the artist.

He notes that once again these novels have rural settings, the artist figures want to leave the land, personal relationships are poor, there is no general preference for the tower or the fount but there tends to be an acceptance of modern society.

In Chapter Three, which studies the artist figure from 1960 to present, Kluge investigates Hood's white figure/white ground (1964), Bacque's The Lonely Ones (later retitled Big Lonely, 1971) and Cohen's The Favourite Game (1963). He observes that in these recent novels dealing with the artist figure, the settings are urban, there is a more positive attitude toward the land than there had been in the earlier novels, where the artist had been dependent for survival on working it, but that the artist is alienated from society. Once again, personal relationships are poor.

Kluge's conclusions are that in general the artist in twentieth-century Canadian fiction enjoys poor personal relationships, prefers the fount, when dependant on the land he tries to leave it, when free of it tries to return, and that the arena of his struggles over the period generally shifts inward. Before 1960 the obstacles to creativity are generally external and after that they become more internal.

As this review of the literature suggests, authors and critics have addressed themselves to the question of the creative imagination in Canada (there are more articles on the subject than have been referred to here; this is a general sampling) but few have done detailed and comprehensive studies of the artist figure as he is presented in the literature. The most imaginative studies of the artist are by Tallman and Atwood, although they are brief. The theses of Kluge and Cloutier are more comprehensive in material covered but still limited in their scope.

CHAPTER I

CABIN SYLLABLES[1]

Susanna Moodie's Roughing It In the Bush (1852) stands at the beginnings of Canadian fiction in which the central character is the artist figure. One may question the use of the term "fiction" in describing Roughing It In the Bush, for it is certainly a documentary or a journal of Mrs. Moodie's experiences in the Cobourg and Douro Township areas of Ontario between 1832 and 1839, but there are several reasons why the term can be used, with some qualification. For one thing, the book was not published, and perhaps parts not written, until as late as 1852, twenty years after Mrs. Moodie's arrival in Canada. Surely some of the events described, therefore, must be tinged at least in part by the influences of memory and the imagination. Also, as the editor of the New Canadian Library edition of the book, Carl F. Klinck, observes, Moodie does portray herself as a full, well-rounded and psychologically developed character much more than the author of a typical travel journal is likely to portray himself.[2] Mrs. Moodie dramatises events and her reactions to them to the extent that we feel at times that we are reading an adventure novel or a romance. A good example of this is the exciting chapter, "The

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[1] This phrase occurs in F.R. Scott's "Laurentian Shield", in Milton Wilson, ed., Poets Between the Wars (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), p. 91.

[2] Susanna Moodie, Roughing It In the Bush, ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1962), p. XIV.

Fire". Further, Mrs. Moodie develops as a character. What is most interesting in her book is not so much the experiences of settlement, although they are interesting enough, but the series of steps, particularly psychological, that this English gentlewoman takes in developing a relationship with a landscape that is initially foreign and threatening but that changes with time and familiarity. The real action of the book occurs within Mrs. Moodie. Another reason for looking at Mrs. Moodie's book as more than a journal is that it does contain certain examples of literary artistry not often found in standard travel literature. The fact that Mrs. Moodie's development as a character throughout the novel is a strong unifying device has been suggested above. Also, as Dr. Carl Ballstadt has observed, Mrs. Moodie was an English gentlewoman strongly aware of the literary traditions and conventions of her day, and she is particularly indebted to Mary Russell Mitford in the use of the literary sketch, and to the taste of the time in her use of a rhetorical style.[3] Roughing It In the Bush did not spring full-grown from the Ontario backwoods. It is one product in a literary career that extends over sixty years in England and in Canada, and includes children's literature, poems, didactic novels of manners and romances.

Roughing It In the Bush, then, is on the threshold of being an autobiographical novel, and is very important in terms of the development of the artist figure in Canadian Literature, for Mrs. Moodie is not only the wife of a British half-pay officer who hopes to make a living off a piece of land in southern Ontario; she is also an artist with literary aims and accomplishments who wants to continue in Canada a career begun in England. Her account of her experiences of the difficulties of physical survival in difficult circumstances and of adjusting psychologically and artistically to a new landscape tells us a lot about the difficulties of being an artist in Canada, not only in the eighteen-thirties and forties, but also, as Margaret Atwood has observed, today, for Mrs. Moodie has come to represent in Atwood's vision some of the archetypal problems of the artist in this country.[4]

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[3] Carl Ballstadt, "Mrs. Moodie and the English Sketch", Canadian Literature, LI (1972), pp. 32-38.

The most basic problem in the backwoods for Mrs. Moodie and for her family is that of physical survival. So much energy has to be expended on the necessities of food and shelter in the pioneering situation that it is difficult to find the leisure and strength for writing. This is especially a problem for Mrs. Moodie who has been raised a middle-class English gentlewoman, accustomed to having servants perform the elemental tasks of day-to-day existance. A considerable amount of Mrs. Moodie's time is spent, therefore, accustoming herself to the rituals of bread-baking, garden-planting and the like. As these rituals consume most of the time of even the most experienced farmer, it can be seen that there will be little time left for creative work. Also inherent in the immigrant condition in Canada are the dangers of isolation and of a land that, even once known, can be capricious in its climate and elements. Cold, wild animals and fire are only some of the dangers that must be coped with.

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[4] Margaret Atwood, The Journals of Susanna Moodie (Toronto; Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 62-64.

But even more interesting in Roughing It In the Bush is the study it gives us of the psychological aspects of the middle-class English immigrant artist, and the adjustment that had to be made by that individual to the new landscape. The problem is that Mrs. Moodie comes to Canada with certain established notions about class, colonies, aesthetics and literary expression, and finds that her a priori ideas do not necessarily apply in her new surroundings. At times she is indignant and offended, as when she angrily observes that the working class does not show proper respect for its betters in Canada, or she may become despondent, as when her frustrations make her homesick for what is dear and familiar and loved. But Mrs. Moodie does not remain a static person; she adjusts and tempers many of her notions in the course of her experience. She cannot be a casual tourist detached from her surroundings in the backwoods; rather through the hard struggle demanded by circumstance, she is forced to develop a deeper and, in the end more rewarding relationship with the new landscape.

In Roughing It In the Bush Mrs. Moodie records her mental struggles to adapt to Canada. They extend over a period of seven years, and develop from feelings of downright fear of her new landscape to a rather surprised admission of love. The constant and recurrent theme of the struggle is the contradiction between the mental ideal to which Mrs. Moodie wants the land to conform, that is, her nineteenth-century romantic English attitude to landscape, that it should epitomize and symbolize the sublime and the picturesque, and the reality of the Canadian woods which may be very fine from a distance, if one chooses the right artistic perspective, but which can be very frightening and oppressive if one lives in them, far from any hint of civilization. At times in the book Mrs. Moodie attempts to wax eloquent in the accepted English manner about some noble scene in nature, such as the prospect of Quebec City as viewed from the St. Lawrence River, but these lofty points in the novel are often undercut by exclamations of disgust or disappointment, as when on the same occasion Irish peasants cavort indecently in front of Mrs. Moodie, interfering with her attempt at aesthetic contemplation, or when annoying insects render a scene that would be lovely in watercolours, uncomfortable. The unevenness of the style and language of Roughing It In the Bush mirrors Moodie's cultural tensions. Mrs. Moodie longs for a world that will be beautiful through her English eyes, eyes accustomed to a well-cultivated, country-garden kind of landscape, and of course she is frustrated and disappointed at what she does find, much of the time. One of the most recurrent images of the unpleasantness of the new landscape for Mrs. Moodie is that of the fallen trees that mar the tidiness and order of the forest floor. The general darkness and the mystery of the forest, home of wild animals, psychologically undermine Moodie's apriori idea of God's well-ordered universe, forcing her to reconsider some of her most fundamental premises.

Not only is there a problem of Mrs. Moodie's aesthetics conflicting with the Canadian terrain but there is the problem initially of cultural isolation. Mrs. Moodie at home was used to intellectual stimulation; she was a member of a large literary family, and ideas and discussion were alive there. She also communicated with a coterie of people interested in the arts. We can sympathize with the shock it must have been to Moodie to find herself in a rude log cabin, with only her husband and a few books for intellectual companionship, surrounded by neighbours who were poor and illiterate and had no idea of or interest in the social graces, miles from any hint or suggestion of what, in her terms, could be called civilization. The situation was only relieved when the Moodies moved closer to Susanna's sister, Catharine, and when Mrs. Moodie started a written communication with the Literary Garland which began publication in Montreal in 1838. In fact, the letter from the Garland soliciting contributions provides Mrs. Moodie with more joy and hope than any experience in the bush hitherto: "Such an application was like a gleam of light springing up in the darkness; it seemed to promise the dawning of a brighter day".[5] Mrs. Moodie is partially happy because she knows she can bring in some much-needed money through her contributions to the Garland, but what really delights her is that at last there is a spark of audience for her thoughts. From this time on we have the image of Moodie sitting up by candlelight, long after the rest of the family is in bed, pouring out her thoughts on paper, the mail a kind of life line between her and the audience she so desperately needs. One has the impression that Mrs. Moodie's writing is of psychologically therapeutic value as well, confirming for her her civilized characteristics in the face of the dark, threatening forest.

Physical hardship, the contradiction between the ideal and the real landscape, and isolation lead to Mrs. Moodie ascribing certain qualities to the backwoods that really are a reflection of her own difficulties and frustrations in adjusting to it. Images of sadness, strangeness, claustrophobia and even terror appear throughout her narrative like the dark, fallen trees of the forest. When the guide who has brought Mrs. Moodie for the first time into the forest, ahead of her husband, gestures to leave, she feels "terrified at being left alone in this wild, strange-looking place".[6] The stream that runs by her new house "wails" and "moans"; "its restless and impetuous rushings against the stones which choked its passage, were mournful types of my own mental struggles against the strange destiny which hemmed me in".[7] After the autumn leaves have fallen, she shudders at the "bleak" and "desolate" "waste" that is left.[8] As she looks at her surroundings, she feels like a "condemned criminal", her only hope for escape "being through the portals of the grave".[9] The oppression of the terrible cold of winter is described as a "yoke".[10] When her husband does not return one night from a twelve-mile trip Mrs. Moodie's mind inflates with "unreal terrors and fanciful illusions"[11] which are mirrored in the crying of the wolves in the nearby woods.

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[5] Moodie, Roughing It In the Bush, p. 212.

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[6] Moodie, Roughing It In the Bush, p. 69.

[7] Moodie, Roughing It In the Bush, p. 100.

[8] Moodie, Roughing It In the Bush, p. 100.

[9] Moodie, Roughing It In the Bush, p. 100.

[10] Moodie, Roughing It In the Bush, p. 106.

[11] Moodie, Roughing It In the Bush, p. 130.

The road toward acceptance and love is a difficult one, and we have the impression at the end of *Roughing It In the Bush* that Mrs. Moodie never makes a total and absolute connection with Upper Canada in terms of accepting it for what it is. She will always be an English woman living in a colony and attempting to transpose English customs, attitudes and values to the new soil. After her experience in the backwoods (from which Mrs. Moodie resourcefully extricates herself by writing a letter, behind her husband's back, to the Governor, asking for a civil service posting for him), Mrs. Moodie lived in colonial gentility with her teacups and lace curtains in Belleville, writing poetry, novels and contributions to journals, especially the *Literary Garland*. She worked hard to promote "culture", which in her terms, of course, meant emulation of the literary genres and forms of England. As Atwood has observed, Mrs. Moodie as a prototype of the Canadian artist does have negative connotations, because she does represent a colonial attitude which promoted an articulation of Canada within a foreign framework that did not really get to the heart of the Canadian situation and Canada generally. However, Mrs. Moodie does play her part at the beginnings of a tradition which of necessity had to emerge from somewhere. In succeeding years the trend among successful writers would be to spend less time emulating, and more effort discovering the new reality that was just emerging at Mrs. Moodie's time and was yet too young to be known. *Roughing It In the Bush* represents our necessary and vital prenatal days, before the cord that tied us to England was cut and we realized ourselves as entities.

Although Mrs. Moodie remained very much a part of the English tradition, she also made a great deal of progress, in the course of her years in the backwoods, toward loving the new land. Years of cultivating it, walks through its woods, naming its vegatation, bearing and raising her children on it, all resulted in a familiarity and association that are expressed in terms of love on the day that she leaves the backwoods settlement.[12] The scene that was once coarse and frightening has been tempered by time and familiarity. Idealistic expectations have matured into a more profound understanding:

> Many painful and conflicting emotions agitated my mind, but found no utterance in words, as we entered the forest path, and I looked my last upon that humble home consecrated by the memory of a thousand sorrows. Every object had become endeared to me during my long exile from civilized life. I loved the lonely lake, with its magnificent belt of dark pines sighing in the breeze; the cedar swamp, the summer home of my dark Indian friends; my own dear little garden, with its rugged snake-fence which I had helped Jenny to place with my own hands, and which I had assisted the faithful woman in cultivating for the last three years, where I had so often braved the tormenting mosquitos, black flies, and intense heat, to provide vegetables for the use of the family. Even the cows, that had given a breakfast for the last time to my children, were now regarded with mournful affection.[13]

Mrs. Moodie's experiences, recorded in Roughing It In the Bush, illustrate the slow and difficult journey of discovery, physical and mental, that the immigrant artist had to make in order to begin the process of articulating this fresh, new place, a process that Mrs. Moodie suitably expresses in epic terms:

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[12] Dr. Carl Ballstadt, in an article entitled "Proficient in the Gentle Craft" (Copperfield, V [1974], 99-109.) observes patterns of poetic response to water in Roughing It In the Bush which mirror Moodie's gradually changing attitude to her surroundings.

[13] Moodie, Roughing It In the Bush, p. 231.

> Many a hard battle had we to fight with old prejudices, and many proud swellings of the heart to subdue, before we could feel the least interest in the land of our adoption, or look upon it as our home.[14]

As a work of art, Mrs. Moodie's book is imperfect, mainly because it was only partially conceived of as art by its author. Mrs. Moodie states at the conclusion of Roughing It In the Bush that her purpose in writing the book has been to warn the English gentleman that the backwoods of Canada is no place for him. However, as a psychologically realistic study of the frustrations of the immigrant artist, the book anticipates the tradition of the autobiographical novel of the artist by such writers as Lawrence and Joyce which set a trend in the twentieth century and which found its expression in Canada with such writers as Buckler, Janes, Nowlan and Munro. The form of Roughing It In the Bush is not consistent or sophisticated. It is basically straightforward narrative, chronologically arranged, interspersed with the literary sketches of which Moodie and her contemporaries were fond. The style of the book is at worst inflated and rhetorical, usually when Mrs. Moodie is being patriotic toward England or describing a grand and noble scene in nature. It is best when describing the homely activities in the forest home, or when expressing the artist-heroine's feelings during her experiences there. But it should be noted that many of the difficulties that Mrs. Moodie describes in coming to terms with Canada are problems that still occur in Canadian writing about the artist several generations later. Feelings of isolation, lack of audience, physical difficulties and the need to emulate a stronger and more established cultural tradition are still strong in many later writers, because subsequent writers are an extension of a cultural tradition and condition that begins with the early immigrant writers like Mrs. Moodie. It is a tradition that is consistent in its themes and images but that gradually matures as it is worked and reworked by its participants. The process of expressing and embracing a new land is a long and arduous one that does not find its total expression easily or immediately. It is a process of moving from the a/priori culture (although never leaving it totally behind, in that the roots of the new tradition lie there) to understanding, physical, psychological and then artistic, of the new place. Mrs. Moodie still looks exclusively toward England, and rightly so; Canada as a separate entity did not exist when Roughing It In the Bush was written, and a Canadian tradition of writing did not exist (or at least was not recognised) in her day. A distinctly recognizable Canadian culture has only gradually emerged and crystalized after years of history, experience and experiment have resulted in the patterns that we are able to discover today.

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[14] Moodie, Roughing It In the Bush, p. 139.

Another writer who, like Moodie, expressed the situation of the of the immigrant artist in Canada, although at a later time. is Frederick Philip Grove, who came to Canada in 1892.[15] Grove's novels are usually about pioneers and their physical and mental struggles to survive in a land that is capricious in its weather and in a world that is characterised by odd twists of fate. But in his autobiography, In Search of Myself (1946), Grove tells us something of his own experiences as a writer in Canada. Many of the frustrations that made it difficult for Moodie to write also hamper Grove.

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[15] Douglas O. Spettigue has proven fairly conclusively that much of Grove's "autobiography", In Search of Myself, especially the account of the years spent in Europe, is exaggerated or untrue. For my purposes here I am referring to In Search of Myself as Grove presents it, and will discuss its inaccuracies at the end of this section on Grove. Spettigue's arguments and proof are contained in his book, FPG: The European Years (Toronto: Oberon, 1973).

Like Moodie, Grove attempts to write in a frontier situation. At first Grove led the life of an itinerant farm labourer, traveling from job to job as the seasons dictated in the western United States and Canada. He presents images of himself taking books to the barn to be read between chores, or sitting up late at night writing in a time-keeper's shack. As with Moodie, books are a kind of lifeline to the outside world; Grove describes reading as a kind of swimming, or staying afloat in an environment that could swamp him intellectually and imaginatively. Like Moodie, Grove complains of the lack of leisure time in which to think and write in a consistent manner. When he does attempt to settle down to a career in teaching in Manitoba in 1912 the situation is not greatly improved. The time involved in teaching and preparation is not really less than that demanded by earlier jobs. Again, there are images, reminiscent of Moodie, of the writer sitting up late at night, often in the cold and working by the light of a single oil lamp (actually, Moodie, as noted above, used candles).

As with Moodie, what seems to be the heaviest cross to bear, however, is not so much the physical struggle to find time and energy to write in the frontier situation, but rather the mental condition of feeling oneself an intellectual exile or outcast in that there are few or no people in the area who are interested in creativity. Throughout In Search of Myself Grove does not once describe a close or a warm friendship shared with a neighbour or a colleague. Rather, he uses the term "exile" to describe himself, and observes that people do not understand his sensibilities, language or interests.[16] The one person who does share Grove's faith in his writing is his wife, who supports him by teaching, even after she has had their child, in order that he can devote himself full-time to writing. But as the years go by and the manuscripts are rejected, Grove feels guilty about his wife's having to share his failure. There is also another problem inherent in married life for Grove, and that is that he has the uncomfortable feeling that the writer should be detached from his environment, and he is concerned that a settled, regular, routine life style might destroy his artistry, or, as he puts it, "engulf" him.[17] One has the impression from reading between the lines that during these times of failure and frustration Grove is tempted to take to the road once more, with only a few possessions on his back, and start life again in a new place that may offer fresh beginnings. Perhaps this accounts in some part for the almost annual moving from town to town in Manitoba that characterizes the Grove's married life.

There is another problem for Grove as writer, one that Mrs. Moodie was able to overcome more quickly, and that is a lack of audience. Not only did Grove not find many people in his travels in the west with whom he could exchange ideas, but also he was turned down again and again over a period, he tells us, of twenty years, by the publishers to whom he sent manuscripts of his work. Mrs. Moodie, as we know, found a relatively early publisher of her poems and stories in the Literary Garland. Presumably she was aided in her favorable reception by the fact that she brought with her from England a reputation as a writer (as Grove observes, it is always easier to publish in Canada after one has published elsewhere)[18] and by the fact that she wrote the kind of literature (patriotic, inflated, didactic, romantic) that the magazines found fashionable and highly publishable at the time. Grove, of course, did not bring with him a reputation as a writer, nor did he have the contacts in England, the United States and Canada that Mrs. Moodie had. Furthermore, his choice of subject matter (everyday pioneer life) and his naturalistic approach must have seemed a little radical to Canadian publishers, who suffered from culture lag and were still publishing romantic fiction in the early twentieth century.

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[16] Frederick Philip Grove, In Search of Myself (Toronto: MacMillan Company of Canada, 1946), p. 235.

[17] Grove, In Search of Myself, p. 241.

This lack of a positive critical response, and repeated failure to publish, had, of course, a very depressing effect on Grove. At one point in the early twenties, spurred on by a fairly positive reaction by the Saturday Evening Post to his description of A Search for America, he typed each line of the manuscript three times (his ribbon was worn out) and sent the work which had been rejected by several other publishers, in time for a deadline, only to be turned down once again. The rejection of his work was particularly defeating for Grove in that he had a kinetic theory of art that insisted on the importance of the audience or the recipient of the work. Grove felt that unless his writing was read and made some impression, that unless there was a give and take between the writer and his audience, the work of art virtually did not exist. It only becomes alive through its recipients. At least twice in the autobiography he uses the image of the tree falling unheard in the forest to describe his own lack of audience.

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[18] Grove, In Search of Myself, p. 400.

By the end of In Search of Myself, which was written in the last decade of Grove's life, we feel that Grove still considers himself a failure, although most of his works have been, by this time, published. Certain things happened, even after Grove started to publish in 1925, to dull the edge of the feeling of completion he had expected through recognition. For one thing, there was a very negative reaction among Canadians to Settlers of the Marsh (1925) because of its frank discussion of sex. Further, Grove's books did not enjoy heavy sales, and especially after the start of the Depression, sales declined markedly. This meant that during the thirties, even with a reputation established, Grove had a great deal of trouble getting his books published, once more. Even late in life, then, Grove's success as a writer was qualified, and his financial circumstances, never stable, were precarious. These conditions, combined with indications of poor health, lend a pervasive tone of melancholy to the autobiography. The informing image that initiates the book, of himself as an elderly man bogged down in a car in the mud in a bleak, chilly rural landscape, is Grove's statement on his artistic career in

Canada.

Although success seems to have come too late to Grove to really allow him to find satisfaction from it, there are ways in which his writing does show a progress beyond Moodie's in terms of expressing the Canadian artist's experience. Grove was writing in a different period from Moodie, in fact he was writing over half a century later, and the new forces in fiction had a profound influence on his approach to his craft. Whereas Moodie was basically a romantic who attempted to find patterns of the ideal mirrored in nature, Grove belonged to the naturalistic-realist school which studied the world more empirically in order to discover its intrinsic qualities. Grove's approach proves to be a more successful one, given the quality of the state of Canadian society at his time. It has already been noted that Moodie's method resulted in very obvious incongruities in that nature often did not mirror the order that she hoped to find there. Grove's writing does not portray this constant tension between the ideal and the actual and the disappointment that results when Moodie's apriori vision is not confirmed by the backwoods experience. Rather, by looking at the prairie realistically, Grove is able to experience both the negative and the positive relatively objectivity, and to develop a more satisfying relationship with experience. A good example of this is his autobiographical Over Prairie Trails (1922)[19] in which he describes his thoughts while riding over the same piece of terrain in the fall, winter and spring of one year. He accurately and sensitively responds to both the beauty and the terror of nature, depending on the circumstances, giving the reader a more balanced and penetrating study of the artistic sensibility than Moodie does in Roughing It In the Bush. One feels that Grove sees Canada more clearly as it really is than Moodie does, and goes a step further in truly expressing the artist's relationship to this terrain.

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[19] Frederick Philip Grove, Over Prairie Trails (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1966).

Grove also consciously attempts to define Canada as a distinct entity whereas Moodie, because of her different historical stance, sees Upper Canada as an extension of England. He observes that Canada is not just an enlarged Europe, manifesting the same attitudes and goals, but that it has different objectives which must be fought for with the soul. It will never be truly embraced or understood from a preconceived point of view, through foreign lenses or in a facile manner. He also distinguishes between Canada and the United States by observing that the United States is more materialistic in its orientation than Canada, which preserves higher moral and ethical values.

There is another difference in the attitudes of the two writers. Moodie consciously attempted to impose English culture in Upper Canada as an antidote to the crudeness of the "Yankee" culture that had spread from south after the American Revolution. Therefore her writing is didactic, its purpose often being to raise cultural standards in the colony. This is especially apparent when she contributes lofty patriotic prose and verse to the Literary Garland. As a middle-class English gentlewoman, Moodie felt it her duty to preserve British standards in the frontier, thus also preserving the Empire. Grove seems to have had no such design. A German who had read catholically in Europe in archeology, philosophy, history and literature of different European traditions (he admired Wilde, Mallarme, Gide, Hardy and Shakespeare) he did not have as rigid a set of preconceived ideas and intentions as Moodie. That is not to say, of course, that he did not have a consistent attitude in his writing. He did admire naturalism and his writing subscribes to its tenets. However, the naturalistic approach allowed him much more leeway in delving into the essence of the North American experience than did Moodie's genteel English romanticism.

Grove talks more about himself as an artist in In Search of Myself than Moodie does about herself in Roughing It In the Bush. He is more conscious of writing the autobiography of an artist (again, he has the historical advantage of familiarity with the tradition of the artist-hero in Joyce and others) whereas Moodie's account seems to slip out almost accidently in a book that is intended primarily as a documentary account of pioneer life and its inherent woes. For this reason, Grove's book has a clearer purpose and consistency of form. Grove talks about his aspirations as an artist, and particularly his desire to fashion all that he sees into a form that will last forever.[20] Grove's method is to take the raw material of his own experiences and mold it, through his imagination, into a permanent shape. Occasionally the external world of experience interferes with the artistic process. When Grove glimpes a man who suddenly epitomizes the pioneer for him, he tries to block from his hearing the real-life story of that man so that it will not interfere with his own symbolic conception of him. Grove's method, then, is not simply to mirror the world as it exists around him, but rather to try and find its essence and express it through certain representative characters, landscapes and situations. In this way his writing tends to be archetypal rather than just descriptive in its expression, and to move a step closer to patterning the Canadian experience consciously. There is an overall design to Grove's writing, in which he attempts to capture the development of Canada from primitive settlement to a more complicated, mechanized society.

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[20] Grove, In Search of Myself, pp. 229-30.

There is a final, rather complicated aspect to Grove's autobiography, and that is that while it purports to be a true account of his life, recent attempts to authenticate the narrative have proven that much of In Search of Myself, particularly the description of the European years, is fabricated. There are certain aspects of Grove's early life in Germany, Italy, France and Switzerland that he simply wanted to leave behind when he came to Canada, not in 1892, as he tells us, but in 1909.[21] Grove was, in fact, born Felix Paul Greve, in Germany, not in Russia, and not of the wealthy parents he so lavishly describes in In Search of Myself; in fact, his father was a minor civil servant in Hamburg, displaced, like so many others, from a rural agrarian life, and his parents separated while he was still a young boy. Greve attended Bonn University and did well enough, but instead of acquiring a degree, amassed a stupendous debt that he tried to pay off by selling hurriedly executed translations of contemporary and classical writings. The expenses of a mistress and the debt accrued by Greve in imitating Oscar Wilde in matters of taste resulted in Greve turning to desperate means of acquiring money. He defrauded a trusting and wealthy university friend in Bonn which led to his being condemned to a year in jail. This ugly stain on Greve's character was not easily removed; an attempt was made to acquire the affections of the author Gide in France, but that failed. Gide had been warned about this interesting German con artist, and also was apparently not attracted. Having exhausted all possibilities of reentering an established social and literary coterie, Greve chose to simply disappear from the European scene; he left a suicide note with his mistress, which effectively burned his bridges and sailed to the New World. Greve also left behind the qualified reputation he had acquired as translator, poet and novelist in Germany, and took on a new name and character.

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[21] For a very thorough account of the inaccuracies in In Search of Myself, see Douglas O. Spettigue, FPG: The European Years (Toronto: Oberon, 1973).

It can be understood that for practical purposes Grove in Canada would attempt to keep his past to himself. But why was it necessary to fabricate such an exotic past in his autobiography, one that has some basis in fact in terms of chronology and place, but that is tremendouly fantasized? Here we have to come back to Grove as artist in the late thirties, when he says he wrote most of In Search of Myself. At this point in his life, having been in Canada for approximately thirty years, and having made a reputation for himself among men like Lorne Pierce and Archibald MacMechan, Grove looked back over his life, particularly as a writer. It is hardly surprising that a man who had come to see the world around him in fictional and archetypal terms (as described in his account of the creative process in In Search of Myself) should find it difficult to restrain himself from waxing dramatic in describing his own life, especially since there seemed to be noone around to contradict. In fact, the mythical recreation of his own life in Europe had started orally years ago, when Grove arrived in Canada, and started covering his tracks. It emerged gradually over the period of time in Canada, with changes and embellishments along the way. It remained then only to be crystallized into that perfect form, the work of art, before it was complete. What we have in In Search of Myself is Grove taking some of the basics of his own history, but distorting and molding them to conform to his own detached, artistic conception of himself as artist. Hence the apocalyptic fire one hour after his dramatically premature birth in an exotic Russian setting, the luxurious mansion home with its myriads of servants and its formal traditions and rituals, and the exciting travels, before the age of twenty-one to Siberia, Hong Kong, Java, India, Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

Even the North American experiences are exaggerated, although not as extravagantly. Grove tells us that he started writing A Search For America (1927) not long after his arrival in the United States in 1892. However, we now know that he did not arrive in North America until 1909, and so the work could not even have been begun until several years later. It is not possible that the manuscript could have existed for as long as Grove claims that it did, and therefore his account of the long history of its being rejected by publishers must be amended. In fact, it seems possible that Grove may not have written many of his books as early as he says he did, and that they may not have undergone as many of the revisions and rewritings that he claims. The discrepancies in his autobiography that

Spettigue has been able to prove make the rest of his account suspect at best. One is suspicious of exaggeration of the difficulties of writing and publishing in the account of the Canadian years, and one is confirmed in one's suspicions of the distortions in the description of the European years.

What can be concluded, then, about In Search of Myself is that the book is actually fictionalized autobiography being moved quite consciously toward the autobiographical novel. There is little doubt that Grove wanted his audience to read the work as an autobiography, but in choosing to depart from the accurate (and often dull or shoddy) aspects of his real life, Grove moves toward a more creative form. What he in fact does, by making the European years so grand, such a Golden Age, and by depicting the Canadian experience as so gruelling a struggle, is, as both Stanley McMullin in his introduction to A Search for America[22] and Douglas O. Spettigue in FPG: The European Years[23] have observed, to mythologize the North American artistic experience.

The archetypes that find their expression here are those that less consciously and fictitiously can be found in Moodie: the experience of having left a secure, known space, and like a kind of Adam or explorer forging one's way across the Atlantic and into the interior of a new and sometimes alien space; the feelings of artistic exile and isolation; the epic struggle toward acceptance and even love of the new terrain. By deliberately fabricating a personal mythology, for whatever reasons, Grove moves a step beyond Moodie in expressing the experience of the immigrant artist in Canada, and is the link between Moodie's and other documentary accounts (like the journals of the explorers which follow much the same pattern of archetype) and the autobiographical novel written by indigenous Canadians in the twentieth century.

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[22] Frederick Philip Grove, A Search for America, ed. Stanley McMullin (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1971), pp. ix-xv.

[23] Spettigue, FPG: The European Years pp. 218-220.

CHAPTER II

POPULAR FICTION OF THE POST-CONFEDERATION PERIOD

Before moving on to treatments of the artist figure in the twentieth-century novel, it will be useful to look at some novels about the artist written by Canadians in the late nineteenth century. These are romantic novels, written for the popular market, often for publication abroad, and most are not satisfying as works of art on the basis of style or probability, but as a group they do express something about the attitudes of their respective authors toward the artist during this culturally colonial period.

Thad. W.H. Leavitt's The Witch Of Plum Hollow (1892)[1] describes a Canadian girl in whom artistic ability is innate. Rue Jahns, however, does not find it easy to obtain sympathy from her family concerning her artistic endeavors. Her father, a United Empire Loyalist descendent, was educated in Europe and travelled on the continent. He is a trained barrister, but has never practiced. Once he married and settled down in Ontario, near the St. Lawrence, he gradually degenerated into a life of drunkenness. The reasons for his degeneration are not elaborated on by Leavitt, but presumably he is at or near the end of his family line, there is no vitality left in him, and he succumbs to a passive life of alcoholic oblivion. It could be that he represents the pattern of the third and fourth generations of some of Canada's first families who brought with them to the New World certain ideals from the Mother Country which gradually became lost in the new environment in which it was harder to be a "gentleman". Jahns still reads books, but rather than relating them to his environment, he locks himself in his dark study and apparently cuts himself off from his surroundings. We have the impression in the slim portrait that Leavitt draws of Jahns that here we have a man out of tune with his place and time.

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[1] Thad. W.H. Leavitt, The Witch Of Plum Hollow (Detroit: The Wells Publishing Company, 1892).

Rue is brought up by a step-mother; her natural mother died at her birth. The step-mother is a practical, hard, uncouth German woman, formerly Rue's nurse. This woman torments her husband about his drinking and has no appreciation of his refined temperament. In a sense she represents all that Jahns probably finds most appalling about Canada. She does have a shrewd instinct for survival, and were it not for her cultivation of cabbages and other less lofty products, Rue and her father might well feel more discomfort than they do, for Jahns has long since spent the family fortune. The language that the step-mother uses is coarse and colloquial; her attitude is completely pragmatic. She has absolutely no understanding of Rue's desire to paint and to possess pretty "pictures"; art is to her a waste of good, useful time. She continually nags at Rue to help with the cabbage hoeing and it is only when she promises to bring Rue a pretty picture from town that Rue is willing to help with the cabbages. However, when the step-mother returns from town she does not carry the cherished prize, but rather brings Rue a stout pair of shoes which Rue promptly throws in the fire. The step-mother and Rue never develop past this impasse. Mrs. Jahns considers Rue lazy, Rue considers her step-mother a Philistine. Needless to say, there is no communication between the two on any but the most basic level. Rather, the step-mother is a definite hindrance to artistic aspiration. As Rue observes, she cannot both hoe cabbages and maintain her imaginative processes. The two are antithetical. The step-mother in this novel anticipates the use of practical, pragmatic characters to represent a general environment of utilitarianism in other Canadian novels about the artist.

As Rue lives in an isolated cottage with her parents, there is not much development of her character in relation to friends and neighbours, although one or two influences will be noted below. The primary initial influence in her development as an artist is nature. First, however, Leavitt makes it clear that Rue does contain within herself certain qualities which make her a responsive and sensitive creature. Whereas her father represents the decadent end of the Jahns line, the colonial degenerate, Rue summarizes all that has been best in the family, a heightened emotional and spiritual sensitivity that culminates in her. Her artistic potentials are, therefore, inherited.

These qualities may have been latent in Rue's father, but they were never developed. It is Rue's identification with the land and forest near her cottage that makes the difference in her development. Nature is Rue's one true friend and confidant. As observed above, she has no close friends or family, but she does not let this trouble her. Rather, and perhaps because of the lack of stimulation at home, she goes out and searches for and finds stimulus in the Canadian landscape. She has a favorite place under a spreading chestnut, on the grave of the original owner of the area, where she sits and listens to the messages of the pine trees which tell her to paint. She gives names to the squirrels which are tame in her presence. When we first see her, she is described as a child of the woods; her legs are scratched, her hands brown, her hair wildly unkempt. Not only is she in love with this natural world, but she translates it through her imagination and limited, untrained skill, into paintings. Her materials are the simplest: birchbark, cake blueing, a stubby lead pencil, a spoonful of yellow ochre and some crude venetian red. She uses her fingers to apply the colours to the birchbark. Using these humble materials, she translates the land around her into imaginative, fresh paintings. Of course, she does not discuss her art with her parents, nor does she even take it home; rather, she keeps her work rolled up under the tree and the gravestone in the forest.

Apparently Rue has never found an appreciative audience in whom to confide regarding her art, because when Carl Martyne, a young New York lawyer visits the backwoods and accidently comes across her, and admires her work, she cries with pleasure at having found a kindred spirit. Martyne is so taken with this rude genius that he leaves money in trust for Rue's schooling and for art supplies.

It is Rue's education that leads to the next important development in her artistic character. Of the local school and her friends there we learn little, except that Rue has a strong personality and is not easily intimidated. What is emphasized more, however, is her interest in books which opens up new and glorious horizons. Rue devours books (from England and Europe) about fine art, although she never copies them. She is still close enough to the Ontario forest that her imagination remains strong.

However, as a result of her awareness of places like the Cistine Chapel, she develops the ambition of going to Europe to see first hand these masterpieces. Her desires in this direction inspire her to learn French with great rapidity. There is an old French Canadian in town who has books about European art and who teaches her French. At this point, Rue starts to think of Canada as a half-savage country, which offers only the raw material of art, a beautiful setting. There is no audience to speak of in whom one can confide, and there are no old masters to serve as inspiration. Craft and technique have not been developed. Rue realizes that her art is not accurate or ordered, that her imagination, which is intuitive and unrefined runs riot, and that she needs tutoring in order to acquire control and technique. Her solution to this is to go to Rome; the St. Lawrence calls her to the ocean.

But in the meantime, there is the practical difficulty of being poor, and so Rue resourcefully sets about acquiring money by selling her sketches to the wealthy Americans who have homes or who stay at resorts on the Thousand Islands. The novel is interesting at this point in terms of the obvious distinctions it makes concerning Americans and Canadians and their respective attitudes to art. The Americans described in the novel in this connection are wealthier and have more interest in art and spending money on acquiring it than do the Canadians. In fact, Rue sells all her paintings to Americans. There is never a hint of a Canadian buying a painting. Another aspect of the situation is that Rue, a Canadian, has, of course, in order to find a market, to appeal to the interests and tastes of Americans who are basically looking for post cards or tourist pictures to take back home. It is fortunate that Rue just happens to do this kind of painting. If she were interested in a more penetrating and innovative exploration of the Canadian situation, she may have had a harder time getting to Europe. The question of Canadians having to appeal to American taste in order to sell their art, whether paintings or books, is one not only characteristic of Rue Jahns. This has had, at times, rather unfortunate limitations, of course, on the Canadian imagination, as noted earlier in the review of literature on the creative imagination in Canada.

Another interesting situation at this time is Rue's relation to the wealthy Americans. She paddles her canoe to the fashionable landing of one of the summer resorts, and carries her brown parcel of canvases to the prospective clientele. But as she approaches, she is consumed with shame concerning the contrast between her plain, homespun dress and the beautiful clothing and sophisticated manners of the Americans. She is described as feeling an "outcast", a "pariah". She very nearly turns back, her sense of inferiority is so strong. The problem of Canadians being intimidated by Americans economically and culturally is one too that is not vanquished in Leavitt's day. Leavitt sees Canada as picturesque, placid, natural, a "sylvan Beauty", a place of retreat from the hurry and commerce of larger American cities, and he sees the United States more in terms of civilization and man-dominated images like palatial residences and summer cottages. The relative "savagery" of Canada, Canada as a gem in the rough, is clear here. It is a paradoxical description. On the one hand, there is civilized brilliance, on the other hand, natural beauty. Leavitt, being of the romantic camp, sees the latter as superior, although we have the feeling he would like to be able to have both. Rue has to make her stamp abroad before she can return to Canada with a sense of accomplishment. By the end of Book III, Rue Jahns has conquered her fears, become highly successful with the American tourists, and has left for Europe.

Before we follow her there, however, there are two indigenous sources of inspiration and assistance that Rue does find in Canada. One is a man who has seen her art at a resort, a Canadian named Percy, who invites her to visit his studio in Bellville. She does, and falls on her knees at the sight of a painting of his that was exhibited in the Salon in Paris. At this point, Leavitt rather histrionically observes, Rue is no longer a child, but becomes an artist.

The second source of inspiration in Canada is a copy Rue finds of Francis Parkman's The Jesuits in North America. She is moved greatly by the faith, the strength, the love and the goodness of the Jesuits in Canada, which opens a new facet of life to her: that is; the moral and the spiritual. At this point Rue begins to become concerned about the content and message of her work, and starts to strive to represent the absolutes, particularly moral, that the Jesuits represent. Unfortunately, of course, the didactic quality that this implies about her art, and the bent that it will of necessity take, are no longer fashionable, but are instead rather embarrassing today. However, the revelation about the Jesuits starts Rue articulating her country's past; her canvases portray Indians and voyageurs at this point. It appears that the notion of belonging to a native tradition helps Rue find the inspiration she needs in her work.

There also occurs on the eve of Rue's sailing to Europe an unfortunate meeting between her and a rather degenerate Italian aristocrat, Majeroni, who is self-centered and unscrupulous toward women. Majeroni determines that he will have Rue, who is instinctively afraid of him. Apparently it is not only her virtue that is threatened by Majeroni, but more importantly her artistic freedom. Majeroni thinks of her only in terms of his sexual desire; he has no respect for her as an artist. Consequently, in his presence, Rue feels stifled and afraid. The moral question is important too, however, given the nature of Rue's ideals; Majeroni represents the exact opposite of the altruism and purpose Rue has come to admire in the Jesuits. Leavitt describes Majeroni as evil incarnate, and symbolically he offers a strong threat to Rue's artistic development.

Majeroni is counterbalanced in the novel by Carl Martyne, the New York lawyer (again, notice that Rue's greatest admirer is American) who has magnanimously given the little money he has toward Rue's education. Martyne believes strongly in Rue's talent, contrary to Majeroni.

In Europe Rue goes through her greatest struggle. Life in Canada had been relatively simple. But here, without her great friend nature, and in the presence of the masterpieces in the galleries, Rue almost despairs of her ability ever to do anything good. Leavitt describes her as feeling the great art "trumpeting" at her. When she does paint, she finds she is only imitating. It is not until she conjures up in her mind examples of unarticulated greatness in Canada's history that match those of European history which she sees in the galleries that she begins to have a glimmer of what she must do. She feels that by painting the great heroes of Canada she can in some way repay them for the role they have played in contributing to the development of ~~her~~ country. She feels a part of the process that has resulted in her place in history.

In the Collegio Romano she finds a translation of the Jesuit Relations, published by the Canadian government and reads it with ardour and devotion, letting the story of the brave martyrs enter and fill her soul. The General of the Jesuit Order at the Church of St. Ignazo gives her permission to "perpetuate the heroic martyrdom of the heralds of the Cross in the Great Northland".

It takes many attempts and near failure before Rue finally achieves the great painting that she envisions. In fact, what seems to provide the impetus that finally pushes her over the brink is Majeroni, who turns up and asks for her hand, telling her to leave her art which will never be any good and which is a waste of time. His words raise Rue's fighting spirit, and give her the strength she needs to finish. She resists the European's degeneracy and concentrates her energy on immortalizing her ancestors' deeds.

The painting is exhibited in the Salon and it is all that can be desired in terms of Rue's ideals. Its power is so great that it brings confirmed sinners to their knees in repentance. Not a person can walk by it without being profoundly touched by the moral and spiritual message of Brébouf and Lalemant who stand in flames, cruel tortures afflicting their mortal flesh, a shaft of light and angels appearing though the mountains in the background.

After her great success, Rue returns, exhausted, to Canada (an unsuccessful attempt at rape is first made by Majeroni, who is not heard of again except in passing to observe that his yacht is wrecked somewhere in the Solomons, and it is assumed that cannibals do their worst). Here she finds happiness with Carl Martyne, that same lawyer of the early part of the novel, who returns to find her once again, no longer a child, under the spreading chestnut tree. They live happily ever after. Leavitt does not say whether Rue will continue to paint or happily become the contented housewife, like so many of her contemporaries in romantic fiction. The implication seems to be that she has achieved artistic success, and that all that is needed to make her complete is to find personal happiness. The artistic success alone would not have been enough for Leavitt, or for his audience.

The book does obviously have many romantic elements, but it is important in what it implies about conceptions of the artist in Canada in the 1890s. If she is a woman, it seems important that in order to find total fulfillment, especially emotional, she must find a husband. In order to be a success, no matter what the artist's sex, it seems necessary to go to Europe in order to find a critical response and an intelligent audience. Apparently too, the subtleties of technique must be acquired abroad, in Paris or Rome. Canada can provide the raw material of art, but a finishing period in Europe is necessary. The Canadian artistic audience is almost nonexistent, in fact, Canada, as symbolized by Rue's stepmother, is a frontier in which many of its inhabitants are concerned too much with practical matters, and have little time for leisure refinement. The United States offers a better milieu for the artist with respect to audience and financial success, although its superiority may be intimidating.

Europe is once again the testing ground for the Canadian artist in Maud Ogilvy's Marie Gourdon, A Romance of the Lower St. Lawrence

(1890).[2] The novel begins in Father Point, a little village on the St. Lawrence River in Quebec. Marie Gourdon, a natural-born artist like Rue Jahns, sings like an angel. We first see Marie sitting romantically under a huge boulder by the river in a summer sunset singing "A la claire fontaine". Noel McAllister, a young man also of that town, accidentally comes upon her; he has been away fishing for several weeks, and is moved to declare openly the love he has felt for Marie for some time. Marie responds positively, and all should go well for this simple pair, except that Noel, who, along with Marie, and a third character in the novel, Eugene Lacroix, has been educated with great care by the local curé, M. Bois-le-Duc, is bored with Father Point, fishing and his humble cottage home. His mind has been stimulated by the reading of Virgil and Plato, and the curé's talk of the lands beyond the ocean has made him restless. He is also tired of being poor, of a "struggle for bare existence". Even Noel's romantic yearnings to see the places he has read about and to have a better life would probably not come to much, were it not for a remarkable occurrence at this time.

Two men from England arrive in the tiny village to inform Noel that he is entitled, as the last surviving male in the direct line of an important branch of the McAllister family, to the family estate and title. There is a condition concerning the inheritance, and that is that Noel, in order to receive it, must reside in Scotland for the rest of his life as Lord McAllister, and must marry his cousin, Janet.

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[2] Maud Ogilvy, Marie Gourdon, A Romance of the Lower St. Lawrence, (Montreal: John Lovell and Son, 1890).

Noel has to make up his mind quickly, and decides without too much hesitation that he will go to Scotland, disregarding the declaration of love he has so recently made to Marie. In fact, when he tells her about the offer, and she selflessly tells him to seize it, he uses her encouragement as a justification for his own selfishness; he tells himself that it proves she never truly loved him. Thus Marie, who is very much in love with Noel, is betrayed.

The setting next shifts to Scotland, and Noel's country seat a few years later. We see what a life of luxury and ease abroad has done for the Canadian boy. Noel is described as fat, lazy and bored; he has developed a weak chin, is a poor manager of his estate, is a silent member of the House of Lords and is unhappy in his marriage. Any ideals or dreams that the cure or books may have implanted in him in Father Point are gone.

He and his wife, Lady Janet, are invited one evening to dinner and entertainment at their neighbours', Lord and Lady Severn. The entertainment will be provided by the famous soprano, Mlle. Laurentian, the Canadian who is taking Europe by storm. It will come as no surprise to learn that Mlle. Laurentian and Marie Gourdon are one. Marie has spent the years since that betrayal at Father Point more profitably than has Noel. She has become famous and accomplished through her own hard work and natural talent.

We first see Marie sitting quietly in Lady Severn's garden, isolated from the guests at her own wish, meditating before her performance. She is a woman about whom there are rumours of a great sorrow in her past. Few people are close to her. She lives a quiet, private life when she is not performing. On this occasion, Marie is described by Ogilvy as being dressed like a "saint", in a white robe with diamonds and pearls. When she starts singing, Noel is pierced with memory. As he approaches her, he recognizes his old love of the St. Lawrence. When Marie recognizes him, and he addresses her by her old name, she is cold and aloof. She asks him not to address her in familiar terms, remarks on the weather, and observes that she is happy that he left Father Point. Apparently she feels that she has been spared a great mistake.

More time elapses, during which Lady Janet dies, in a fall from a precipice while training a pony. At this twist of fortune, Noel rushes to Marie's cottage to inform her that he is now free, and hers. Marie turns him down flat, observing that she has no need of him now. It should be noted here that Marie has remained true to her native upbringing by refusing to live in the city, which she finds stifling and oppressive, even when she is performing. Rather, even in England, she lives in the country where the air is clear and bracing, and takes a carriage to her work.

Shortly after this last scene, Marie attends an exhibition in London. The centre of attraction is a painting by a Canadian artist about whom all of London is talking. It is a painting of a curé in a small fishing village, and the simple, pure faith of the townspeople in the miracles that the church can perform. The painter is, of course, Eugene Lacroix, older and worn by years of artistic struggle. Marie congratulates Eugene on his success, and invites him to visit. Apparently Eugene has always been attracted by Marie, but since his affections had been eclipsed by those of Noel, long ago, he has never dared search her out.

The meeting between Marie and Eugene leads to their pledging love, apparently on the basis of memories of a shared past, and mutual respect. Eugene feels that he has not yet achieved his full potential as an artist, so he will continue to paint, but Marie will sacrifice her career as a soprano in order to provide a home life for her husband. Marie's manager peevishly remarks that she is not a true artist, and the reader may be inclined to agree.

Marie and Eugene marry and return (Marie swaddled in furs) to Father Point to receive the blessings of their original teacher, the curé. In the epilogue we are given a brief glimpse of Noel McAllister staring sullenly into angry waves in Scotland, and a more extended look at Marie and Eugene, basking in their love for each other. The two spend two months of each year at Father Point, and the only time that Marie sings now is in church there.

Marie Gourdon is structurally a better novel than The Witch Of Plum Hollow (half of which describes the adventures of Carl Martyne searching for gold in Australia) but it is also prey to many of the failings of Leavitt's book, particularly in terms of lack of thorough character development, and a rather incredible plot. However, like The Witch Of Plum Hollow, it is important in terms of getting some idea about notions of the Canadian artist held by Canadian writers in the 1890s. It is interesting to note how similar Leavitt and Ogilvy are in their implicit statements. Both describe artists who spring full-grown, if somewhat rude and untutored, from the Canadian soil. Both artists have to be finished or refined in Europe,[3] and both have to go to Europe in order to find a responsive and discerning audience. In Leavitt's novel Rue returns permanently to Canada after finding success abroad, and in Ogilvy's novel Marie and Eugene return for two months of every year. The impression is that Eugene is a more serious artist than Rue after marriage, and apparently the serious artist, according to Ogilvy, must continue to ply his trade abroad, although he may come home for inspiration. There is the impression too that Canada is where Eugene's heart lies, Europe is where he must go in order to excel. There is a strong note of national optimism in both novels, in that both authors send their Canadian artists abroad, and describe them as taking the salons and the opera houses by storm. There is also a strong moral and religious emphasis in both novels in the paintings that Rue and Eugene create: Eugene's painting of the miracle of St. Anne, and Rue's painting of the martyrdom of Brebouf and Lalemont are important basically because of their content and message. Nothing is really described of their technique. However, each does choose a native theme for inspired treatment. Both writers too find it necessary to resolve their stories by pairing their respective artist-heroines with suitable husbands. Fame and fortune are not enough, they seem to say, for the female artist, but it is the heart that is at least as important for Rue, and more so for Marie. There does not seem to be any consideration of the women mixing marriage and career. In conclusion, the two novels reveal that Leavitt and Ogilvy, in their attitudes toward the native Canadian artist, are colonial in that they still look to Europe for standards and evaluation; they are Victorian in that they emphasize the emotions and morals, yet they are also patriotic in that they desire to see Canadians make a name for themselves abroad, and take their places in the international arena. Marie Gourdon does go further than The Witch Of Plum Hollow toward consciously patterning the Canadian artistic experience. There are allegorical qualities to the novel, for example in the naming of the town from which Marie, Eugene and Noel emerge in Canada (Father Point) and in Marie's chosen stage name (Mlle. Laurentian). Apparently Ogilvie felt that place is very important to the Canadian artist, even if he or she must go abroad for recognition; the quality that makes Noel such a superficial character, for whom we have little respect, is his lack of loyalty or sensitivity to his native land.

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[3] This is still a pattern that one finds in some recent novels about the artist, such as Robertson Davies' A Mixture of Frailties (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1958).

A novel about the artist whose setting is a small Ontario town called Ovid,[4] is Joanna Wood's Judith Moore: or, Fashioning a Pipe (1898). In some ways Ovid anticipates, or is a forerunner to the small town that occurs in the writing of Buckler, Ross, Nowlan, Janes, Davies and others in the twentieth century. It is a town characterized by narrow-mindedness, especially, Wood tells us, toward art. One of the chief pleasures taken by the people of Ovid is in gossip, for everyone seems to know, or pretends to know, everyone else's business. Another important topic of conversation is the weather. People do their work seriously without apparently a thought about things of the soul or spirit and are not much interested in aesthetics, creativity or books, which do not have much to do with their limited little world. As Wood expresses it early in the novel, "the Ovidian mind was not prone to poetry".[5]

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[4] Joanna Wood wrote an earlier novel, The Untempered Wind (New York: J. Selevin Tait and Sons, 1894), in which the small town (Jamestown) is even more like the narrow, conservative and even cruel town that comes later in our literature. It is not a novel about the artist, but about an unwed mother; however, the images of persecution are startingly like those in, for example, The Mountain and the Valley (Buckler) and "The Wanton Troopers" (Nowlan) discussed later.

The central character of the novel, Andrew Cutler, who has been away from Ovid, studying in the city, has returned to help his parents, who have experienced financial difficulties on the farm. Andrew has done a great deal of reading, and is sensitive to beauty and art. Because of this, and a tendency not to fit into the accepted patterns of Ovid, Andrew, although not persecuted (he seems to be held in awe by most of Ovid) is referred to in such dubious ways as "having a crank on books"; as not "claiming religion" and as being rather "high-minded". Needless to say, Andrew's social life is rather limited in Ovid; he spends most of his time alone, working in the fields or walking in the woods and forests near his home. Andrew also reads: Shakespeare, Suckling, Quarles and Herbert are mentioned. But he keeps these books tucked away under the bed, apparently feeling that they would not be understood, even by his parents and perhaps too wanting to preserve in close proximity a world that means a great deal to him and which he feels is threatened in

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[5] Joanna Wood, Judith Moore: or, Fashioning a Pipe (Toronto, The Ontario Publishing Company, Limited, 1898), p. 9.

Ovid.[6]

Andrew is relatively happy with his farming, for he loves nature, and his thoughts sustain him through the drudgery. He is not as frustrated with his lot as a later farmer-artist, David Canaan,[7] although Wood does remark that tree stumps are a source of irritation at ploughing time (a rock will later prove a symbol of frustration for David Canaan in similar circumstances). Like many later Canadian artist figures, Andrew also identifies very strongly with the birds and animals around him; he is reluctant, for example, to harm the nest of a wild bird that has settled in his field, and he ploughs in a wide circle around it, in order not to upset it.

There is a pattern connected with Andrew which suggests a strong affection for his native land. In the winter he likes to hire a guide and travel to the north of Quebec where he wanders through the forest, following streams and enjoying the frozen, white beauty of the place. As he walks through the silent solitudes, he yearns to find some way to express the "mystery struggling for elucidation"[8] that he finds there. He seems to want to find a pattern or order, some "great central truth" that will set all our jangling dreams in chime". Apparently Wood in 1898 was aware of the need to articulate and name the qualities of the Canadian landscape in order to create a native literature. In fact her book, as will be pointed out at the end of this discussion, is an allegory expressing Wood's optimism about the possibility of literature emerging in Canada.

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[6] It is interesting to note here that a similar pattern of hiding precious writing occurs in a small town, Jubilee in a later novel about the artist. (Alice Munro, Lives of Girls and Women [New York: New American Library, 1971]).

[7] David Canaan is the central character in Ernest Buckler's The Mountain and the Valley (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1952).

[8] Wood, Judith Moore, p. 57.

Andrew's yearnings for fulfillment are solitary until a visitor comes to Ovid, a beautiful European opera star, Judith Moore, who has happened upon the town in a quest for peace and rest from the exertions of her successful, but exhausting career. Judith is, to say the least, a singular creature in Ovid. She is frail and fragile, whereas the Ovidian standard of beauty tends to run to the more buxom type. Her dress is romantic and impractical; she wanders about the fields in silk stockings and high-heeled shoes, and wears the best fabrics, appointed with whimsical accessories. Judith obviously epitomizes art, stepping into the rather prosaic world of Ovid, and of course contrasting rather dramatically with the natives. But Judith is not offended by Ovid's simplicity and homely occupations and preoccupations. Rather, she finds the pace soothing and the people enchanting after Europe. She applies delicate touches to the landscape which remove it from the mundane and expose its potential for art; she drapes ribbons on sheep, and is inspired by beautiful sunsets to sing enchanting melodies that excite in Andrew Cutler possibilities of a different world to the one Ovid hitherto represented. Wood describes Judith's function this way: she "inhales the commonplace ether of the prosaic world, mingles it with her breath, and sends it forth glorified to the world".[9] She is also described as a delicate Aeolian harp, vibrating strongly to the winds that sweep over her.

Needless to say, Andrew falls deeply in love with Judith, who entrances him with her beautiful voice.[10] The two happily spend the summer wandering through the fields of Ovid, transforming it into a world of ideal truth and beauty through their vision of it. However, a problem steps into the scene, in the form of Judith's manager, who insists that she has obligations to perform, and carries her off for an American singing tour. Andrew is, of course, left desolate.

A remarkable thing happens during the following winter. Andrew is back in the woods he loves, and one white night, as he lies on his stomach on the snow, and looks up at the stars, he hears Judith calling to him. It is indeed fortunate that he has this vision, for Judith is lying near death in New York, her sickness more one of the heart than of the body. Since she left Andrew, she has been extremely unhappy, and her constitution has crumbled. Andrew rushes to New York, and his appearance at her bedside is enough to precipitate her recovery. Andrew and Judith return to the Canadian countryside.

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[9] Wood, Judith Moore, p. 93.

[10] One cannot help but compare this novel, and Andrew's fascination with Judith's voice with Duncan Campbell Scott's "The Piper of Arll" published in 1898 also (note the similarity in the titles of the novel and the poem) which uses music to symbolically describe the yearning for art on the part of an artist figure in a limited landscape. Scott employs a tight little cove to symbolize the narrow environment and a mysterious ship from which beautiful melodies float that comes and goes in the harbour to symbolize the desire to create (Duncan Campbell Scott, "The Piper of Arll", in Malcolm Ross, ed., Poets of the Confederation, [Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1960], pp. 91-95).

The plot of *Judith Moore: or, Fashioning a Pipe* is typically romantic, as far as the period is concerned, but it can be seen that what Wood has written (even her title epitomizes this) is the most consciously symbolic novel of this group, expressing an optimistic myth about the possibility of art in the Canadian setting. The melding of the native spirit (Andrew) and technique and sophistication (Judith) can result in a fresh creation that will answer the need expressed in the silent Canadian woodlands. The process involves an awareness of a European tradition (Andrew's books and Judith's origins) but also progress toward understanding and articulating the native landscape (Andrew's walks in the forests and his love for the land). Wood goes beyond Ogilvy and Leavitt in that she sees the possibility of the Canadian artist remaining in Canada.

Wood's myth seems facile today; we know that the process of finding a native expression is a long, hard, difficult one that did not emerge as a totality in the nineteenth century. But put into historical perspective, and given the nature of so much of the writing of her period, which did not conceive of the possibility of art in Canada, indeed did not even attempt a Canadian setting or Canadian characters, Wood's novel is refreshing.

One of the most successful books of the period, and one which deals very delicately and subtly with the artist and the Imperial connection is Sara Jeanette Duncan's *Cousin Cinderella* (1908). Graham Trent is a young man who lives in Minnebiac, Ontario, and whose father runs a very successful lumber business. He receives an education at Upper Canada College and the Kingston Military Academy. When the South Africa

War breaks out, Graham enlists in the first contingent of Canadian Volunteers, goes to Africa, is wounded and returns to Minnebiac with the D.S.O. Graham does not take a great deal of pleasure in his military record, but rather looks at it in terms of doing his duty; he is happy to return to a quiet life in Minnebiac. He is a sensitive young man with a refined aesthetic awareness. Because one of his father's partners has died, Graham goes into the family business, but in his spare time he builds himself a workshop for making and carving things out of wood. His sister Mary, who narrates the novel, says that "A mantelpiece he made, with a design of fir-trees, comes back to me like a line of poetry, or a bar of music".[11] She also observes that Graham is a "kind of missionary in Minnebiac, of simple purposes and fine ideas in wood" as opposed to the other residents of Minnebiac, who, instead of appreciating art that reflects the locale, prefer "gilt and plush"; in other words, their tastes are Victorian and imported.

The novel becomes interesting when Graham and his sister are sent to England by their father whose motive apparently is to show off to England, from which he came as a young man, just how exemplary Canadians can be. Trent senior is very proud of the success he has made of himself in Canada (he has not only built up his lumber business, but has also developed international interests and is a senator in the Canadian government as well). To return himself to England would be to admit some degree of deferentiality on his part to that country which he is not willing to concede. However, to send his children to visit as part of their finishing is another question, and quite acceptable to him.

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[11] Sara Jeanette Dunca, Cousin Cinderella (London: Methuen and Company, 1908), p. 6.

Whereas his father has come to terms with England, Graham has not. He has learned through his African experience that the English "don't seem to make any sort of allowance", in other words, that they are rather fixed in their ways, and consequently do not go far toward understanding people from even other parts of the Empire, but he is still relatively innocent concerning the deeper aspects of Canadian-English relationships. This becomes clear with Graham's infatuation with a member of the British aristocracy.

But first, it should be remarked just what Graham's activities are in England, as these do tell us more about his character, the central quality of which is aesthetic sensitivity. At the beginning of their stay, he and his sister take a flat in Kensington. It is interesting to note Graham's reasons for wanting Miss Crane's flat. Apparently its tone and atmosphere, and particularly some fine old pieces of wood carving captivate Graham. One is a seventeenth-century engraving with the head of Charles I and some verses supposed to have been written by him, and another is an odd old sideboard carved with the apostles made of wood that came from the Armada. On seeing these beautiful old pieces, Graham gives his sister a nudge indicating that she is not to argue about terms; he wants the flat.

In England Graham does not do carving of his own, but impeccably collects fine old pieces of furniture. He is a purist, and if he finds that a piece he has purchased is not exactly what he thought it was, he disposes of it immediately.

Graham and Mary become fascinated in their stay with aspects of ancient English culture and art; but it is when they start to make a study of English character that the situation is more complicated, particularly when Graham meets Lady Barbara Pavisay, whose family's ancestral home is Pavis Court, parts of which date from Tudor times. Graham is greatly attracted to Lady Barbara from the start; however, she does not reciprocate. What Graham does not realize about his fascination with her is that it is not so much Lady Barbara herself who captures his imagination, but rather the whole ritual and tradition that she represents, and more particularly, when he sees it, Pavis Court. Graham confuses his intense admiration for England with personal love. He is very much an innocent, and from this point goes through a process of gaining experience that is fairly shattering to him; however, we feel that he is a more complete and mature man for the revelations he has in England.

Pavis Court itself is an almost fatal attraction for Graham. Even Mary, his sister, on first seeing the beautiful place is overwhelmed by it:

> It just caught and seized and possessed one; there was nothing for anybody to say. It put out a wonderful old claim which one answered instantly with love. It was as indifferent as you like, the austere carved gables hardly lifted an eyelid, the single stone rose-wreath that festooned the arms over the door hardly smiled, the narrow paved windows looked dimly into the past alone; but tenderness and worship it would have, the old grey thing, while one stone stood upon another.[12]

As Mary reacts herself to Pavis Court, she realizes with a jolt what it must mean to Graham, who has gone to it a little ahead of her, and has rather ominously been swallowed up by its walls. Mary has seen that Lady Barbara does not return Graham's affections, and that the only thing that might induce Barbara to marry him is his money, because Pavis Court is financially almost lost to the Pavisays. As Mary realizes the dilemma Graham is walking into, her heart goes mute and she gives him up for lost.

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[12] Sara Jeanette Duncan, Cousin Cinderella, p. 242.

There is an earlier point in the novel when Duncan makes it very obvious that the Lady Barbara-Graham Trent affair is not right. She describes one particular meeting between Graham and Barbara in sinister terms. London experiences one of its thickest fogs in years, and Graham finds Barbara not far from his flat. She does not know how to get home, the carriages are all stopped, so Graham offers to take her back to his and his sister's flat. They grope their way along in a four-wheeler, led in the fog by the driver on foot. On their way they meet a funeral procession which is lost and wandering around, as Graham observes, in a "queer and drifting and Dantesque manner",[13] always "turning up in that fatal way at one's elbow out of the fog. There must be a moral synonym for it somewhere, if we weren't so fearfully dense". Well, the ironic synonym is that the fog and the funeral and the intimations of fate are clearly meant as synonyms for Graham's own misguided and naive illusions concerning Barbara and England generally. He is basically lost himself, as a sensitive, artistic Canadian, going against the tide, becoming vitally involved in a country that holds no real and vital future for him, a country that his father left behind and that he, Graham, should only be approaching in a detached way.

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[13] Duncan, Cousin Cinderella, p. 187.

It is interesting to observe that Duncan contrasts Graham, and his idealistic relationship with England, and Evelyn Dicey, a young American girl, who has a very different attitude. Evelyn is pragmatic and shrewd and knows exactly what she wants and how to get it in England. She literally plots to buy her way into Lady Doleford's (Lady Barbara's mother's) heart, in order to marry her son, Peter, and she almost succeeds. The trouble is that Graham does not come to England with any clear idea concerning how he might exploit it, as Evelyn does, and therefore his situation is one with which we can have more sympathy.

A crucial point comes in Graham's relationship with Lady Barbara when he learns that Pavis Court is about to be lost by the Pavisays because they can no longer afford to pay the mortgage. Graham sees what a blow this is, particularly to Lady Doleford, and chivalrously proposes marriage to Lady Barbara, the idea being that he will buy Pavis Court and sell it back to the family on easy terms. Lady Barbara is then put into a difficult position by this impetuous Canadian's magnanimous offer. On the one hand she does not love him, but on the other hand her loyalty to the family and its difficult position is strong; she accepts the proposal.

At first Graham is elated at her acceptance, but it soon becomes apparent, even to him, that things are not as they should be. Although he does not tell Mary directly that he is disappointed in Barbara's apparent lack of strong feeling toward him, there are hints, especially in his sober and even troubled demeanor, that he is aware of inadequacies in their relationship. The period of the engagement is marked by coolness on Barbara's part and gradual disillusion on Graham's.

The crisis finally comes when Barbara appears at Mary's flat one evening in a state verging on hysteria. She has realized that she cannot marry Graham, even for the sake of Pavis Court. What has led her to this conclusion is the fact that she has slowly realized what a sensitive, honourable person Graham is, and she simply cannot hurt him or use him the way she has been doing by only pretending affection. She had assumed that Graham was like Evelyn, that he stepped into her life with ulterior motives, but she finds that this is not so. Then Barbara has a further revelation: that Graham does not really care for her or even Pavis Court which has lost its charm, but rather that he has made the marriage proposal merely on the basis of wanting to help the family out of its troubles. Barbara will not allow him to marry her on this basis; so the marriage is called off.

This romance is interesting in its implications about the Canadian artist in England, as seen by Duncan. She defines the Canadian in England as having much more heart and stronger feeling for the Mother Country and its problems than does the American. Whereas the American (Evelyn) exploits, or at least seeks to gain his or her own ends, often through the assistance of wealth, the Canadian is more idealistic and feels a certain degree of responsibility toward England. Also, as far as Graham as an artist is concerned, Duncan seems to say that the correct place for the serious, sensitive Canadian with deep feelings and an aesthetic sense is back at home. The Old World is too cold (as symbolized by Barbara's lack of response to Graham) and tired (as symbolized by the Pavisays who are no longer vital, and by Pavis Court with its leaking rooves and crumbling walls) to really merit Graham's full commitment. It cannot respond to his New World enthusiasm and idealism. Rather, it looks at him as being a bit odd. Also, there is no inspiration in England for Graham. He substitutes collecting for creating, an occupation he can only carry on in Canada.

Graham leaves England having lost his colonial innocence, but we have the impression that he has made progress in his enlightenment concerning the Imperial connection and his own identity. Duncan sees the importance of Canada standing on its own two feet. This does not mean total severance from England, however. Mary is engaged at the end of the novel to Barbara's brother, Peter, and Lord Lippington, an English friend of Graham and Mary, is firmly ensconsed in Ottawa as Governor General. These secondary ties are important, but in terms of the primary thrust, Canada must look westward rather than toward the east, and this is the final direction of the novel, as Mary and Graham sail for home.

One comparison should be made between Marie Gourdon and Cousin Cinderella. Like Duncan, Ogilvy sees the decadence that Europe can represent for the Canadian artist. Just as Pavis Court ominously draws Graham Trent from a more vital life, so the Scottish estate leads Noel McAllister to a life of dissipation. In order to preserve his freshness and vitality, it seems necessary for the artist to remain faithful to his New World roots.

There is another novel by Sara Jeanette Duncan in which she explores the artist figure in the international setting, and that is A Daughter of Today (1894),[14] the central character of which is Elfrida

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[14] Sara Jeanette Duncan, A Daughter of Today (Toronto: The Toronto News Company, 1894).

Bell, of Sparta, Illinois. Elfrida has been brought up by her ambitious, and rather pretentious mother (whose drawing room contains intellectual periodicals, artistically placed about it) to expect more of herself than mere marriage and settling down in uninspired Sparta. She attends an art college for young women in Philedelphia, then goes to Paris for further training. Unfortunately the girl's designs and aspirations as a painter are beyond her ability to carry them out with paint and canvas, and it becomes obvious even to her that she has made a mistake in her chosen career.

Upon hearing that her family's fortunes (and her means of support) are lost, Elfrida goes on her own to London, pawns a few valuables, and attempts the next best thing to painting, a career as a journalist, in which she hopes her high ideals concerning art and her sensitive perceptions about England will earn her success and fame. It should be noted at once that, again, Elfrida is deluding herself about her abilities. Duncan treats her heroine, as she does others (one thinks of the naive young politician, Lorne Murchison, in The Imperialist [1904] in particular)[15] with detachment and a great deal of very subtle irony. From the beginning, Duncan has developed Elfrida as a pretentious girl, aware of her own beauty, and with a histrionic tendency to play her appearance for all it is worth, disguising a want of talent and shallowness of character. Elfrida acts the part of the artist without producing anything to justify it. She also dresses very consciously for the role, and surrounds herself in her ateliers in Paris and London with what she considers to be the ultimate in self-expressiveness and artistic taste. At first Elfrida is discouraged in London by the fact that again and again her articles and essays, which she considers to be brilliant and sophisticated, (she has previously published little tidbits in the local paper back home in Sparta) are rejected by the publishers. When an acquaintance tells her that she will never be accepted until, like other young ladies, she takes her work directly to the editors and puts it into their hands, simultaneously impressing them with her attractiveness, she is at first disgusted. But pride is soon overcome by a hungry stomach, and Elfrida sacrifices her principles. She becomes successful as a journalist.

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[15] Sara Jeanette Duncan, The Imperialist (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1904).

It should be noted here that Elfrida displays certain limitations as an artistic critic and as a writer that justifiably inhibit her publication before she learns the tricks of the trade. Her most obvious problem is that she sees art in a rarified light, very much removed from the real world. She has the small-town conception of art that confuses it with morality and "culture" in the restrictive sense of the term. In short, she is very prissy, didactic and boring on the subject, which does not encourage receptiveness by the publishers. Elfrida's notions of art are, incidentally, not peculiar. There is a later small-town female artist, Monica Gall, in Robertson Davies' A Mixture of Frailties (1958)[16] who is rudely awakened in London, where she goes for voice training, to find that artists do not necessarily live in an ideal world of soul and spirit.

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[16] Robertson Davies, A Mixture of Frailties (Toronto: MacMillan, 1968 [1958]).

There are other, even more disturbing qualities to Elfrida that become more apparent as she attempts to climb the fickle ladder to fame and fortune in London. For one thing, she takes the advice of using her physical attractiveness to impress publishers and editors, and extends it further, to employing it to impress artists, and intellectuals with whom she comes in contact as a journalist. She does this all with the idea of advancing herself professionally. She is emotionally uninvolved and heartless toward them, luring them on sexually, but employing them for her own devices. At first she is successful with her facade, but it starts crumbling as she makes mistakes, particularly of taste. When it is suggested that a quick way to achieve fame would be to write a novel about the girl in the chorus line of the theatre, from a first-hand point of view, Elfrida seems to forget her hitherto elevated attitude to art, and plunges with enthusiasm into the scheme. The social contacts she has carefully built up are appalled by her lack of judgment. There are indications even earlier that Elfrida does not show good sense in social and artistic matters. When she goes to her first important salon, she dramatically walks across the room to kiss the hand of a startled male writer whom she admires, and has never met before. The hand is drawn back in embarrassment. This scene later becomes the subject of a satirical sketch by an artist whom Elfrida believes is in love with her; it turns out that he is only fascinated with her as a type, the American artist abroad. When this artist (John Kendal) toward the end of the book asks Elfrida to sit for a portrait, she does so, apparently flattered, and even thinking she has him wrapped around her little finger. When she looks at the almost-finished portrait, she is impressed with the great beauty that Kendal has seen in her, but triumph turns to horror as she studies the painting closer, and both she and Kendal realize that not only has he represented a physical likeness on the canvas, but he has also subconsciously and very subtly, managed to represent Elfrida's true character, that of a scheming, opportunistic, ruthless phony, as well. Elfrida, in a fit of madness at having her role discovered, tears the painting to small pieces and, when insult is added to injury and she finds that Kendal has proposed to her "friend" Janet Cardiff (whom Elfrida has used in the most opportunistic manner because of Janet's social contacts), Elfrida ends it all, in characteristically dramatic fashion, by taking an exotic poison from a persian ring she has been saving, should the occasion for its use arise.

This time the artist abroad is not so fortunate as in Cousin Cinderella. Rather than realizing her mistake in coming to England, and returning home, Elfrida pursues her goal to the bitter and tragic end. Elfrida has staked more than the Trents have on England, and when she loses all, there is only one way out. Once again, Duncan's message seems to be that the place for the North American artist is at home. Elfrida is socially and artistically a fish out of water in England, not understanding except superficially the accepted standards in these areas. She is very wrong in this setting, as Kendal's satirical painting points out. One of her biggest problems is that she has a colonial notion of art, which makes her play a pretentious and phony role that is easily seen through by the English. A characteristic that makes her different from the Canadian artist is that she has an American ruthlessness in the direction of success, and sacrifices even her colonial pose of culture and gentility in a desperate attempt to achieve it.

Another point that Duncan seems to make in Cousin Cinderella and A Daughter of Today is that while neither the Canadian nor the American artist should try to reverse the historical process, and return to England to live, it is more appropriate for the Canadian to have ties with England: Elfrida Bell is entirely unsuccessful in England, but Mary Trent does meet her future husband there, and will return; her brother, the artist, will remain in Canada.[17]

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[17] There are two more novels with artists as central characters belonging to the 1890-1914 period which are not really helpful for this thesis, but which may be of interest to the reader for other purposes. One is Susie Frances (Riley) Harrison's Ringfield (Toronto: Musson, [1914?]) which is a rather moralistic tragedy about a young Methodist missionary-minister who, in St. Ignace, Quebec, encounters a beautiful native actress who lives there in her free time, but performs on the stage in Montreal. Ringfield falls in love with Pauline, but love turns to jealousy when he finds he has a rival for her affections in the person of Crabbe, a degenerate English aristocrat who has come into some money. An accident on the precipice of the St. Ignace Falls, where Ringfield and Crabbe have met, sends Crabbe plunging to the depths below. Ringfield then realizes to what an extent he has forgotten his religious concerns, and retreats from the hard realities of life to the monastery at Oka. Pauline spends the rest of her life in seclusion, retired from the stage, having lost both of her suitors.

The novel is not about the artist as such; it is rather a romance which describes the evil depths into which even the best of men can fall, once he allows the material world to assume more importance than the spiritual. But I mention it here because it is one of the best books of its type in terms of employing the Canadian landscape for artistic purposes. Harrison brings to life the sombre river which flows through St. Ignace in a way which complements her theme. Also, she seems to be very familiar with the topography of Quebec and with French-Canadian architecture and dialect; she catalogues place names and refers often to French-Canadian history. Aside from the novel's rather romantic plot and didactic sentiment, it does evoke quite a realistic feeling of place.

The other novel is Beth Woodburn (Toronto: William Briggs, 1897) by Maud Petitt. Beth is a young woman who lives in a small Ontario town.

As one studies the nineteenth-century autobiographical and fictional writings of the artist, certain themes and patterns emerge. Usually the setting of the artist is the small town or the country, or even the backwoods. Canada is not described as a sophisticated, urban milieu. The artist is physically isolated, an exile from the more important centres of art in the world. Just as importantly, his society is not receptive to creative discussion or practice. Rather, it is narrow in its definitions of role and behavior, favoring a practical, empirical philosophy of life. It distrusts unnecessary embellishment and pure aesthetics. Art is not useful and therefore is not appreciated; in fact, it is looked upon with suspicion. The artist, therefore, must keep his ideas and work to himself. He almost never has a close friend in whom he can confide his thoughts. If he does find encouragement in his creative endeavors, it is usually from outside of Canada. There is little

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and admires the writing of George Eliot very much; she has been writing stories since she was a child. She thinks she is in love with a pale young man (associated in a dream she has with lilies) who also has aspirations to be a writer. However, as the engagement progresses, Beth feels that there is something spiritually lacking in her relationship with Clarence; he does not make her as happy as she thought she would be as a betrothed. The situation is complicated when Arthur, a dark, masculine and slightly older friend from Beth's childhood days who wants to become a missionary in Jerusalem, taking Christ to the Jews, appears on the scene. Arthur asks her why she is not truly happy; he requests a look at her writing, and notes that it does not contain the faith and hope (Christian optimism) that should characterize good writing (a little more of the same would, Arthur feels, improve George Eliot). In short, there is an unpleasant taste of cynicism in Beth's writing. In the end, Beth sees that Arthur is right, especially after she finds Clarence attempting to make love to a rather Swinburnean woman, Marie de Vere, whose flushed cheeks, red lips and hollow eyes bespeak the fatal disease that will soon claim her. The novel is typical of a popular type fairly prominent in Canada in the 1880s and 1890s which promoted a Rugged Christian ideal (a variant of which can be found in the writings of Ralph Connor [Charles William Gordon, 1860-1937]).

or no financial remuneration in Canada for artistic work. The artist consequently can only apply himself to his art on a part-time basis, being forced to work at some full-time occupation in order to support himself. This is not a society of leisure or luxury. At times the artist wonders, since his knowledge of art comes from abroad, whether it is worth expressing his condition in Canada. There is a hesitant note at times in the literature.

Writers of romantic fiction show their artist figures acquiring inspiration from the rugged natural terrain of Canada. However, they find it necessary to have them go abroad in order to acquire technique and to polish their rude native talent. In Europe there are skilled teachers, and an intelligent, critical audience. Often the experience of living abroad helps the Canadian artist discover his own identity through the detached perspective he achieves. While the Canadian artist abroad finds an environment that is more suitable to his creative temperament, still, in order to retain his truth and essence, he must remain faithful in spirit to Canada. Some writers even feel that Europe is the wrong direction and that the Canadian artist should return or stay at home, for better or worse, in order to come to terms more deeply with his own place.

CHAPTER III

ANCESTRAL MANORS[1]

In the literature that succeeds the writing of immigration and settlement the artist figure is developed further. The literature becomes more native in that its authors are born and brought up in Canada, and are often two or more generations away from the Old Country. Consequently, as one would expect, there is no concern with problems of adapting to a new country, but rather the interest is in expressing indigenous conditions. This is not to say that influences from abroad are nonexistent. These writers are not yet confident about or deeply conscious of a tradition of their own, and there is still the tendency to be aware only of non-Canadian models of art and literature. However, at the same time, we realize, as we study the literature, that it portrays a deepening understanding of what it is to be an artist in Canada. Writers in different parts of the country, often unaware of each other, explore and analyse their individual conditions and there emerges a body of literature that, while it may express regional and individual peculiarities, is quite consistent in many of its patterns.

Almost invariably the writing of this stage of the literature which extends from roughly the 1930s to the 1950s reveals as its setting the small town or the country, reflecting the demography of the period. The Canadian cities were small and few and far between before centralization and their inhabitants were, with a few exceptions, busy with the practical affairs of the nation. Even the better known and more serious writers of the period could not support themselves through their craft, but had to take positions as teachers, lawyers and journalists. Those who wrote fiction often did so in isolation, on the farm or in the small town, and naturally employed these settings, the ones they knew best, in their writing. Some did move from the country to the city, but also chose to write about the place they had left.

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[1] The title of this chapter is a phrase borrowed from Anne Hébert's "Manor Life", trans. F.R. Scott, in Robert Weaver and William Toye, eds. The Oxford Anthology of Canadian Literature (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1973) p. 207.

Without the direct ties to the Old World that their immigrant ancestors had, these writers were more free to articulate and define their respective Canadian regions and the condition of the artist in them. Their writing has a greater depth and thoroughness in this regard than that of the earlier writers, with the possible exception of Grove whose work in any case extends chronologically into this period. The writers explore the solid bedrock of Canadian culture: the dialect and rituals of the small towns and farms across the country. In doing so, they lay the foundations of the indigenous tradition in the land that had been cleared by the writers of settlement. They write of pig killings, the cry of the saw mill and prairie drought, "tunes played on the bear-trap and the hound".[2]

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[2] This is part of a line borrowed from Alden Nowlan's "Beginning" in Gary Geddes and Phyllis Bruce, eds., 15 Canadian Poets (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 115.

The form that the literature of the artist takes changes in this period. Hitherto it had been either autobiography moving toward fiction or the popular novel. Now it becomes the autobiographical novel. The writers create artist figures who, on the one hand, reflect their own creative preoccupations, interests and concerns, but who also exist in their own right as separate entities from their creators. Often the author will take the raw material of his own experience and fashion it into a creation of his imagination that does not conform in its patterns of completion (the finished novel) to his own life. Given the autobiographical nature of the writing, it often reflects an earlier period than that in which it was published, as the writer looks back on his experiences.

The artist figure presented in this literature is a well-rounded, psychologically convincing character. Often he is portrayed chronologically, showing his development from youth to maturity, with concurrent description of the growth of his artistic consciousness, in the tradition of Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.[3] Usually the novel is written from his point of view, and with sympathy toward him on the part of the author. Hence the novels give a penetrating depiction of the condition and psyche of the artist during the period.

Not only do the writers create memorable characters, but taken as a whole these characters express conditions and attitudes of the artist that are, from our present perspective in time, surprisingly homogenous, given the chronological and spacial separation of the novels. However, a confident native tradition is still lacking in the consciousness of the writers of the period, and many of the characteristics of the authors, as mirrored in the writings, are a result of the feelings of isolation that are inherent in this situation. Yet although the artist figures encounter many obstacles to expression, there is a paradox revealed in the literature, as Margaret Atwood has pointed out.[4] While it is often a literature that expresses frustration, nevertheless it is a literature, and often a fine one, and an analysis of its themes and images demonstrates that it is a consistent one as well. Through articulating their difficulties as writers, in novels that are impressive for their depth and skill, the authors of this period bring us a step closer to the mature, confident literature of the last decade and a half, the third period of development that will be discussed in this study.

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[3] James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (Middlesex: Penguin, 1965 [1916]).

The patterns of the artist at this stage in his development become clear upon close examination of the literature. One of the most apparent of these is that the artist figure is usually discovered in a narrow environment, often encompassing little more than rural family or small town. The restricted environment of the novels of the middle period symbolically expresses an aspect of the condition of their authors. As E.K. Brown has noted, the writer in Canada during this period felt that his country did not encourage and was not receptive to creative endeavor. And, as Atwood has observed, this has resulted in certain images of frustration, and even claustraphobia and paranoia in the literature.[5] The tight, limited family and the narrow parochial town that one finds again and again in the writing of this stage mirror the social and cultural conditions that the writers felt discouraged attempts at creativity.

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[4] Margaret Atwood, "The Paralysed Artist", in Survival (Toronto: Anansi, 1972), p. 191.

The family in these novels tends to be portrayed as a very conservative institution which, on the one hand, may provide the artist figure with love, and give him security but, on the other hand, because of its implicit unwillingness to change, and its expectations that its members subscribe to its values, can be an impediment to artistic growth. More often than not the family in the novels of mid-century tends to be a rather negative force in the development of the artist, mirroring the larger social reality, and his ability to cope with it will sometimes determine his success or failure as an artist.

Time and again in the novel in which the family plays an important part in the development of the artist figure, it is found that there is a basic conflict between the two. Often the family will promote traditional ideas, left over from settlement, many of which Brown defined as being major impediments in the development of the creative imagination. The most important of these are the frontier spirit, not unexpected in the rural extended family, which encourages pride in land, hard work and frugality; Puritanism, in the sense of Brown's use of the term, which promotes suspicion of pleasure and ornamentation; and finally a colonial mentality whose primary characteristics are fear of change or innovation, and subscription to what is established, often from outside. In this way, the ancestral home is a microcosm of the society in which the artist lives. The artist figure is often at odds with the family because he has insights and sensitivities which take him beyond the narrow, established mold and which he wishes to express. A study of the novels in which this contradiction is manifest will discover patterns of coping with family and a development (not necessarily chronological) in this regard. In some of the novels the artist figure is not very successful in coming to terms with his family, although the novel that expresses his frustration may be quite successful. In others he discovers ways of successfully expressing his relationship to it, without letting its limitations engulf him.

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[5] Both Brown's and Atwood's theories concerning the artist and the creative imagination in Canada are reviewed in the Introduction of this thesis.

A novel that might have been written to illustrate the description of the frontier mentality as an impediment to creative expression in E.K. Brown's "The Problem of a Canadian Literature" (1943)[6] is Martha Ostenso's Wild Geese (1925),[7] although it comes eighteen years earlier. It continues many of the patterns of physical hardships found in the writing of Moodie and Grove.

The setting of Wild Geese is Oeland, a frontier farming area in Manitoba. Here Caleb Gare, who is devoted to the frontier's ethics of work and thrift, owns a farm which he operates by exploiting the free labour of his wife and four children. So devoted is Caleb to conquering the land and making himself absolute ruler of all he surveys that he has long ago lost the natural emotion of love for his family. He greedily hordes his money, using it only to buy more land or animals and add to his dominions. He does not allow his wife to entertain the few friends who might come to their isolated home, because the time and food that this would consume would be wasteful. Also, his psychology is to keep the family's noses so close to the grindstone that they do not develop other ideas. The emotional hardness of the man is most dramatically illustrated when he turns two men, blind from a blizzard and seeking refuge, away from his door. There has been an epidemic and he is afraid they might carry the sickness into his home. The two men freeze to death. Caleb's single-minded and powerful will to control and rule the land at all expense is symbolized by his massive head and tremendous shoulders, but the limitation of his vision is represented by the lower half of his body which is dwarfish and ugly. He loves to walk out on the land at night lighting his way with a lantern, greedily tallying the profit he will make in the fall from his acres of grain. The image of Caleb carrying his own light and imposing his will on the land suggests again an unnatural man, usurping God's power. In his effort to control nature he walks "like a man leaning forward against a strong wind . . . . leaning as if against some invisible obstacle".[8]

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[6] E.K. Brown, "The Problem of a Canadian Literature", in his On Canadian Poetry (Ottawa: The Tecumsah Press, 1973 [1943]), pp. 1-27.

[7] Martha Ostenso, Wild Geese (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1925).

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[8] Martha Ostenso, Wild Geese, p. 13.

While his wife and three of his children bow to Caleb's tyranny, a fourth child, Judith, defies him. Judith represents a diamond in the rough, a very primitive form of the artist, mirroring the harsh landscape over which her father holds dominion. She refuses to subscribe to her father's idols, but instead has her own which she worships with a will equal to his. Her will is symbolized by her body which is strong and sensuous:

> She had a great, defiant body, her chest high and broad as a boy's; her hair was wild-locked and black and shone on top of her head with a bluish luster; her eyes were in sullen repose now, long and narrow; her lips were rich and drooped at the corners. She wore overalls and a heavy sweater, and stood squarely on her feet, as if prepared to take or give a blow.[9]

Although Judith knows that in Caleb's philosophy nature is a hard mistress, demanding constant attendance in order to be won, she holds a different view. She sees nature as a force of indigenous beauty and gentleness. She loves to escape to the woods at the end of a hard day's work and contemplate their majesty. The woods, with their natural, untamed freedom represent for her an escape from Caleb's narrow-minded definitions:

> Oh, how knowing the bare earth was, as if it might have a heart and a mind hidden here in the woods. The fields that Caleb tilled had no tenderness, she knew. But here was something forbiddenly beautiful, secret as one's own body. And there was something beyond this: She could feel it in the freeness of the air, in the depth of the earth. Under her body there were, she had been taught, eight thousand miles of earth . . . . Above her body there were leagues and

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[9] Ostenso, Wild Geese, p. 2.

> leagues of air, leading like wings -- to what? The marvelous confusion and complexity of all the world had singled her out from the rest of the Gares. She was no longer one of them.... There was no going back now into the darkness.[10]

A source of inspiration for Judith too is the new teacher who comes to stay in the Gare home as the novel begins. She is Lind Archer, a girl who has not had an elemental, rough upbringing like Judith. Judith marvels at Lind's delicate, soft body and fragile clothing. She handles her amber jewellery with wonder: "Wild honey! Drops of wild honey!"... "Just the color of you!"[11]

The novel takes the form of a spring, summer and autumn during which Judith's and Caleb's antithetical wills fight a battle to the death. Caleb must break Judith's desire for freedom or it will infect other members of the family and precipitate his downfall. Therefore he launches a physical and psychological campaign. He drives her like a beast of burden from sunup to sundown, milking, herding, plowing, sowing and harvesting. He does not allow her to finish school and denies her permission to see her boyfriend. Matters come to a head in the barn one day when Caleb tells Judith he has seen her with Sven (her lover) and makes crude insinuations about her character. She throws an ax at him, narrowly missing. Now Caleb has the hold he needs on Judith. He threatens to turn her over to the law if she shows further defiance of his orders.

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[10] Ostenso, Wild Geese, p. 67.

[11] Ostenso, Wild Geese, p. 12.

It appears that Judith is defeated. Lind observes that she develops a dazed animal look, having given up hope of escape. It is only through Lind's continued encouragement that Judith begins to return to her former self. Lind helps her plan the strategy of her flight with Sven on the night of the harvest ball (symbolically suggesting relief from the hard labour demanded by Caleb). On the same night Caleb, who has just found out about Judith's escape, sees a forest fire spreading toward a precious field of flax he has lovingly nurtured (it is very valuable) all summer. In a mad attempt to plow between the fire and the crop Caleb steps into some muskeg and is swallowed by the land.

Ostenso expresses an optimistic belief in the power of the artistic spirit to survive in the frontier, although survival is not easy. In fact, Judith has had to flee this negative landscape in order to develop elsewhere. However, a more mellow and natural world succeeds after Caleb's death. Martin, Judith's brother, who has had a silent dream to build a fine family home (denied by Caleb, who felt a new barn would be more practical), and whose hands are highly skilled at working with wood, will now be able to realize his vision. Ostenso suggests that once the early hardship of settlement is over, a more enlightened spirit will inherit the earth, making creativity possible. However, the quest for true articulation has only begun, symbolized by the lovely geese flying overhead, "a magnificent seeking through solitude", that bring the novel to a close.

Wild Geese is not an autobiographical novel like many in this period, but it is based on the experiences and observations of Ostenso as a teacher in rural Manitoba in the early 1920s. It powerfully describes in fictional form the difficulties inherent in the frontier condition for the artist. It is also the first of several novels to employ the tyrannical father figure to image the negative condition of the artist.

A novel which presents another negative portrait of the family as an image of the forces that inhibit artistic development is Alden Nowlan's unpublished novel, "The Wanton Troopers",[12] in which the artist figure, Kevin O'Brien, is driven mad by a family characterized by jealousy, suspicion and hatred. The world of Kevin O'Brien is extremely limited, for his family is such a dominant aspect of his growing up that he never sees the light of the possibility of escape or alternative. Rather, the pervasiveness of the narrow and petty family is so unrelenting and so without ameliorating qualities that, as the title of the novel suggests, Kevin becomes a complete victim of its influence. At the end of the book Kevin retreats into his own mental world, in an attempt to flee external reality. But even there he is persecuted by a circle of recurrent memory, composed of negative and terrifying aspects of his childhood.

As in other novels in this section, an important aspect of "The Wanton Troopers" is the family or ancestral home (the O'Briens have lived in it for several generations). This house is tall, narrow and unadorned even by paint and sits alone on a bleak piece of land outside of Lockhartville, a small backwoods town in Nova Scotia. The shingles on the exterior of the house have become dark with time and weather and inside, the rooms are small and bare. At the heart of the house is the kitchen, with the big, black wood stove, whose constant attendant is Kevin's paternal grandmother, who is slowly dying of cancer. Night after night Kevin lies alone in his room on the second floor, wind and snow beating against the windows, listening to his grandmother singing alone in the kitchen, a hot brick clutched to her stomach to ease her pain. The hymns she sings are fundamentalist, emphasizing the fallen state of man. Her favourite hymn, sung again and again, asks the Lord to cleanse her of her sin through His fountain of blood:

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[12] Alden Nowlan, "The Wanton Troopers", unpublished. I was very fortunate, in the summer of 1973, to have had access to the manuscript of this novel. Nowlan declares that he does not intend to publish it.

> There is a fountain filled with blood,
> Drawn from Emmanuel's veins,
> And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
> Lose all their guilty stains.

The grandmother's life, like the lives of others in the community, has been one of hard work and poverty, and she conceives of life generally as suffering.

The truly grave aspect about the grandmother in this novel is that she is the ruling matriarch in the family. Her son Judd and her daughter-in-law Mary live in her home and therefore must subscribe, as is traditional in the extended rural family, to her attitudes and way of life. She has on her side the strong weight of age and tradition which serves to confirm her authoritative position. It is a situation in which change is difficult at best. The grandmother formed her patterns and conceptions years ago, and they in turn undoubtedly go back to earlier generations. It is a static, deathly, backward world that Nowlan presents in this novel.

Not only does the grandmother subscribe to limited notions about the state of man in this "vale of tears", she also enforces these ideas on her son and in turn her son's son, Kevin. Mary, a force from outside (she comes from a larger town, some distance from Lockhartville) tries to awaken Kevin to the possibility of alternatives to his narrow environment. She tells him stories of brave and heroic kings and knights belonging to other times and places. Kevin's mind delights in these make-believe worlds that take him away from his drab environment. However, the grandmother always intrudes into these reveries with a hard, practical voice, telling Mary she is a fool to bring the boy up with such highfaluting ideas; he would be much better advised to get out and weed the potatoes. Her years of poverty in Lockhartville have made the grandmother almost glory in her fallen state. Her only strength historically has been her ability to survive. One has the impression she would prefer not to have this situation change, as it would take away her self-satisfaction. She rears Kevin with notions of defeat, telling him over and over again that the O'Briens have always been hard workers and have never had an easy time of it, and he might as well accept this bitter cup.

The work ethic enforced by his mother is blindly subscribed to by Judd who obviously has never had a glimmer of a notion of any alternative life style or value. He is more militant than even his mother in inflicting the work ethic on his son. He is also a figure of authority. Kevin's memories of his father are of sessions spent communicating in the shed, the instrument of communication being the strap. The constant thrashings eventually result in perverse pleasure for Kevin, as they crush his mental and spiritual attempts at rebellion, forcing him to conform.

> This was defeat. He had been conquered. His soul, finding it impossible to escape the pain, ran back and embraced it. He had been beaten until he was no longer capable of hate, no longer capable of rebellion. It was finished. . . He felt that he had deserved his whipping. It had been a purgative, cleansing him of secret sins. He was a vile, worthless thing and he loved his father for having thrashed him.[13]

Another aspect of Judd is that he is emotionally castrated. He is ashamed to show his feelings. He is the product of a very parochial rural society which feels that emotions are unmanly, and he detests his wife for the love she lavishes on Kevin, thinking that she is ruining the child. One incident particularly exemplifies Judd's emotional hardness and Kevin's difficulty coping with it. Judd has taken Kevin, who is a very young boy, hunting for the first time. Kevin is entranced and transported by the beauty of the woods. A gentle deer comes into sight. There is a sharp blast and the deer lies covered with blood, kicking. Kevin is so overcome that he faints. There are two other times when Judd's hardness is a source of pain to Kevin. Once Judd takes a cat which has got into some sausage in the house out to the woodshed and kills it with an ax. Another time a cow in the barn steps on his foot and in a fit of fury he stabs the cow again and again with a pitchfork. On these occasions Kevin is appalled and horrified at his father, and feels the pain inflicted so strongly that he faints or cries out.

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[13] Alden Nowlan, "The Wanton Troopers", p. 26.

However, there is also a pathetic aspect to Judd; secretly he craves an expressive outlet. Occasionally Kevin catches a glimpse of him sketching a horse, apparently a symbol of freedom. However, the act is performed covertly, and the sketch quickly destroyed as if a thing of shame. Drawing does not fit into the rural community's definition of acceptable occupations.

Eventually the tension between Mary and Grandmother O'Brien comes to a crisis point. The grandmother has constantly made a martyr of herself, pretending that she has had to do all the work in the home since her daughter-in-law came to live there. She has consistently frowned on Mary's love of fun and people and her need for escape from the O'Brien household. Mary has been so driven by unhappiness in the home that she has taken to going to the local Saturday night dances which for her epitomize life and vitality. The grandmother hints to Kevin and Judd at sin and lust on Mary's part, equating dancing with the devil. She even tells a story of how Satan attended a dance once, long ago, attended by some of her friends, and left the burning imprint of his hand on the shoulder of his partner. The grandmother deliberately tries to drive a wedge between Judd and Mary, and succeeds in planting seeds of doubt in Judd's mind. The situation becomes so intolerable for Mary that she leaves her husband and son and the dark O'Brien house forever.

What happens to Kevin after his mother's departure has been hinted at above. Even the stories they have created together fail to sustain him in the atmosphere of negation emanating from father and grandmother, and he gradually retreats into a tormented world of memory, images of persecution and cries for help that go unheard:

> The skin torn from his palms, blood gushing from his nostrils and dribbling from his mouth . . . .
> A dead raccoon by the roadside. An empty rum bottle lying on a grave. . . .
> His mother's hands on his body. Oh, Scampi, there isn't anything worse than being dead! . . .
> Yes, laddie, when God was on earth, women like her [his mother] were stoned tuh death!
> Yuh'll burn in hell, me girl! Yuh'll burn in hell! . . .
> Conceived in sin! Conceived in Godless, filthy lust! . . .
> Don't kill me, daddy! Please don't kill me, daddy!
> Oh, please God.
> Please
> Please, God.
> Don't let mummy leave me, God.
> Don't let him say it again, God.
> Don't make it so I have to fight him. God.
> Make them stop, God.
> I promise I won't ask you for anything else. I'll never ask you for anything else again. Please, God.[14]

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[14] Nowlan, "The Wanton Troopers", p. 192.

At the end of Nowlan's novel, the "wanton troopers" have won, leaving Kevin symbolically as lifeless and dead as the deer Judd shot in the forest. Kevin had the potential to break from his environment, evidenced in his strong imagination and love of story-telling as a child and in bursts of vision as an adolescent, for example, when he goes skating on a frozen pond and glimpses the complexity and miracle of water turning solid and the possibility of walking on water. At moments like this Kevin is seized with an awareness of the infinite possibility of life and he experiences great joy, transcending his unhappy situation at home:

> Strange! At all times he was called Kevin O'Brien, yet sometimes Kevin O'Brien was one person and sometimes another. There was Scampi and Kev and Namesake and Young Feller and Mister Big Britches and Laddie and Key-von -- seven Kevin O'Briens at least, and tonight, at this moment, he could look at all of them in wonder and pity!
>
> Tiring, he slowed and looked up at the moon. He skated on the moon. Yet the moon still floated in the sky. In the worlds of Scampi, Kev, Namesake, Young Feller, Mister Big Britches, Laddie and Key-von, this would have been impossible. In the world of this luminous, moonstruck Kevin O'Brien nothing was impossible. In this world, the earth was liquid and the water was solid. Solid like the water that was ice. And here, he was Kevin - David, King of Israel. . . . This was a miracle! Oh, he knew everything now. But most of what he knew could never be told, because there were no words; even in his own mind, he could not think of it in words: it had to be felt.[15]

A mature Kevin O'Brien might have gone on to find the words that would express his wonder at life, but Kevin is not allowed to mature in the novel. Nowlan in the mid-1960s, at the time of the writing of "The Wanton Troopers", apparently regarded backwoods environments like Stanley or Lockhartville as being virtually impossible as places of inspiration and encouragement for the artist.

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[15] Nowlan, "The Wanton Troopers", p. 177.

The problem of finding words expressed in the passage quoted above may also refer to another aspect of Lockhartville as it is depicted in the novel. Kevin, like the other children of this town, is brought up to think of school, books and abstract learning with suspicion. Since he does not live in a very articulate society, the ability to use words precisely and imaginatively would not come naturally, contributing to the general problem Kevin has of not being able to externalize his feelings and ideas, and his direction inward at the end of the novel. The problem of language and its usage is one that appears in several of the novels in this section.

In conclusion, the world portrayed by Alden Nowlan in "The Wanton Troopers" and symbolized by the family is a narrow, limited world of poverty and defeat. Man is considered a limited being more on the side of the devil than the angels. It is an ugly, dark, fallen, harsh Old Testament world presided over by stern figures of authority and negation. Imaginative release is almost unthinkable in this environment. Pressures are too strong on the individual to conform to society's hard, practical definition of life.[16]

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[16] Nowlan has published a novel entitled various persons named Kevin O'Brien (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1973) which also deals with Kevin O'Brien as an artist figure. However, "The Wanton Troopers" was chosen for a discussion in this thesis because it presents a more concentrated description of the artist in the rural situation than the published novel, which shows Kevin as an adult looking back in time from a relatively detached perspective at his youth and adolescence, thus giving a more mellow impression of life in Lockhartville. "The Wanton Troopers" portrays Kevin

A novel in which the family is as negative a force as in "The Wanton Troopers", but in which the artist figure, Juju Stone, makes a physical, if not a mental break, is Percy Janes' *House of Hate* (1970). Janes portrays family with much the same images as Nowlan, although he grew up in Cornerbrook, Newfoundland.

In this novel the family home is also a monument of ugliness. It has been hand-built by Saul Stone, started when he found that his girlfriend, Gertrude, was pregnant, and decided it was time to marry -- that

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in present time, more immediately, from infancy to adolescence and illustrates more vividly the problems of the artist in the rural environment. Nowlan prefaces *various persons named Kevin O'Brien* with an interesting note on the topic of the artist trying to find the words to express life, a theme referred to in the discussion of "The Wanton Troopers", above. It is interesting to note that for the mature artist words are still inadequate to express all that he feels and wants to communicate, although he is obviously more confident in their usage than the young Kevin O'Brien described in "The Wanton Troopers", who is totally unable to find expression. Here is Nowlan's preface to *various persons . . .* :

> *Perhaps I should begin this book with a page containing nothing except a question mark. As a child I ached to put the question into words, but never could. Nor can I find the proper words for it now. That child, Kevin O'Brien, would stop whatever else he was doing when he felt the question returning. He would press his chin against his knees, screw his eyes shut and tighten his fists on his temples like the two halves of a vice: doing to his body what I, the man Kevin O'Brien, do to my mind.*
>
> *Probably it's a mistake to call it a question, since that implies that there could be an answer, and maybe it's a mistake to refer to it at all, since by its very nature it refuses to be put into words, and therefore anything I or anyone else may say about it will be more or less a lie.*
>
> *But it's a little like this: a dumb aching wonder at how strange it is to be here inside this body and in this world. It's somewhat as if I had awakened in a stranger's body on another planet. Or, and this may be closer to the truth, it's as though I were dreaming and knew I was dreaming but couldn't remember who I was or where I lived when I was awake (p.1).*

is, the house was built by necessity rather than some high principle. The physical repulsiveness of the home is best described by Juju (the artist figure), who hardly finds it an image of inspiration:

> Our home was a one-storey frame house of matchless ugliness, built on land so steep that in our basement there was head clearance of ten feet on the lower side, while on the upper there was hardly room to push a shovel between the sill and the ground. This gave the building a towering, up-ended look and made one feel, as do so many of the terribly exposed houses throughout Newfoundland, that a good stiff offshore breeze would tumble the whole place right down into the salt water.
>
> Brown was the permanent outside colour of this monstrous great box, a matt brown like that of unsweetened chocolate.[17]

The interior is not much better:

> There had scarcely ever been a time when I had not suffered from the barren ugliness of our home both outside and within. There was our room, for instance -- the boys' bedroom, with absolutely nothing in it but two beds, a chair, and a dresser in mass and design like some half-hewn boulder. There was the hideous flowered paper on the walls made more hideous by the roughly parallel lines of the partition boards showing through, and the whole gaunt box of a room biliously lit up and exposed at night by a single fly-specked, unshaded bulb hanging down from the ceiling. I was pained by all this horror, and must in my child's inarticulate, yearning way have pined for some touch of art or beauty as an antidote to the poison of clashing colour and grating disproportion all around me.[18]

The house operates in the novel as the symbol of an environment that is at odds with the aspirations and dreams of the artist figure.

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[17] Percy Janes, House of Hate (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970) p.33. Although this is a relatively late novel, it still portrays the characteristics of frontier isolation and spirit found in earlier novels, revealing the uneven development of the literature of the artist in Canada referred to in the Introduction.

[18] Janes, House of Hate, pp. 141-142.

As in "The Wanton Troopers", the family portrait presented in House of Hate is not a pleasant one. The Stone family consists of only two generations, the parents and their six offspring. Saul and Gertrude Stone are depicted as physical grotesques, Gertrude grossly fat and Saul so lean his adam's apple bobs conspicuously. Like Judd O'Brien, Saul is conceived of by his children basically as a figure of authority. He is a dour, bitter man who has worked in a menial position in the local pulp and paper mill all his life (Judd O'Brien also worked in a mill, although it was a much smaller saw mill) and feels that life has not treated him fairly. He is, however, fiercely proud of the fact that he has been a hard worker all his life, and forces the same ethic on his children. One has the impression that Saul is afraid of having his sons better him in life by becoming successful at higher-status jobs. When they are young he ruthlessly works them around the house, inventing improvement projects that require back-breaking toil, as if he were trying to break their spirit. He is so bitter at his own heavy cross that he inflicts it on his family, whom he constantly refers to as "useless good-for-nothings".

Like Judd O'Brien too, Saul is an emotionally hard man. He never expresses love or tenderness toward his wife or children. His actions and words are designed entirely for practical purposes. If he does express emotion it is inevitably rage, articulated through violent words and actions. One day Racer, one of the sons, mimics his father, who chances to see him; Saul beats Racer with a razor strap until the kitchen is spattered with blood and Racer lies unconscious.

Saul Stone is a figure of stern authority who is literally feared by his children and wife and described with images of darkness and steel (note the name "Stone", also implying his hardness):

> Not until there came that long, slow tramp in the lane running into our house, and that firm proprietary tred on the back steps, was our brawling quite stilled and our mingled laughing and vituperation cut as though by the stroke of a sword [underlining mine]. Dad was home.
>
> . . . .
>
> He would stand in the doorway scowling at our sudden silence, so tall and sparce and sombre his figure that I once gained the tribute of a laugh from all the rest of the family by comparing him to a lighthouse with the light gone out. His mouth sagged as though tiny weights had been suspended from the corners and blackish runnels of tobacco juice extended and deepened its whole parabolic line. At the parting of his hair, as on the opposite side, there were deep receding V's of bare flesh, bringing the central mat of hair forward to a sharp point which added to the effect of Mephistophelean acuteness made by his whole countenance. For a long moment he would stand blocking the light in the doorway, an alien in his own house, while Mom relieved him of his lunch can and scurried to take up the meal and have it steaming on the table by the time he had washed his hands in the sink.[19]

There is no room in Saul Stone's philosophy for pleasure, even sexual. His marriage, as noted above, was even from the beginning based more on physical necessity than on a more elevated notion of love and companionship. One has the impression that Saul's relationship with Gertrude after years of marriage has become one of resentment. He regards his children as the inevitable curse attached to sex, a form of punishment for sin.

The relationships within the family, vis à vis the father, are symbolized by the Saturday night card games. The one opportunity in the week for fun is poisoned by the dark passions that spill out on these occasions.

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[19] Janes, House of Hate, pp. 36, 37.

On Saturday nights the kitchen becomes a battlefield, the central protagonists being the father and mother, each of whom tries to muster support from the children, causing further division:

> On one occasion the sides were Mom, Ank, and myself against Dad, Racer, and Crawfie, with Ank sitting on the Old Man's left, or under the gun as we boys termed it. No more than a few hands were needed to hot up the game and the family temper. Each time Dad won several tricks in a row, he would neglect to pull them in one by one; instead he let the cards pile up in the middle of the table in a colourful confusion of triumph, and on his last trick would bang down his trump on the table with a knuckle-crushing thump and a defiant shout of, "There! Beat that if ye kin. Beat that and look pleasant".
>
> If, as usual, nobody was able to beat it, his two huge hands arched out over the pile of cards and swept them all toward him like the hands of a miser gathering in his gold. On and on he would rave:". . . I can still trim ye, f'r all ye t'inks ye're so smart". His lips curled half in scorn, half in triumph, and all in gloating. "And that's all by meself. What would I do if I had any partners, instead of them two? I'd sooner have a couple o' cats playin' wit me." His eye fell on Racer and Crawfie who could not accept this as humour and took refuge in looking at each other sheepishly, sharing their misery and disgust. Mom could not stand Dad's repeated triumphs.
>
> "Where in the name o' goodness do you get all the cards?"
>
> "Ha-ha! I jigs 'em," Dad always replied.
>
> "You never jug nutting."
>
> "You saw me" . . .
>
> "Tis lies you did! You jackarse."[20]

The games end in physical violence or Saul sulking off to his couch. Juju at one point describes the Stone's married life as "fifty years of war",[21] and the image is very appropriate for describing life generally in the Stone family.

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[20] Janes, pp. 50-51.

[21] Janes, p. 313.

The world depicted in House of Hate is indeed a reduced one. Communication within the family consists of grunts, growls and curses and more explicitly, as noted above, physical violence. Scatological images pervade the vocabulary, and animal imagery is employed frequently in connection with the various characters. A symbol of the reduced state of man in this environment is the use of nicknames rather than proper names for the children of Saul and Gertrude Stone: "Ank", "Flinksy", "Racer", "Crawfie", Juju" and "Fudge". One realizes too that escape from this world is virtually impossible. When Juju visits Ank, now a married man with his own family, toward the end of the novel, he is horrified that Ank's home is virtually a duplicate of that of his father. A description of this visit exemplifies the characteristics noted above of Janes' world. Ank comes home late, although he knows Juju is expected; his wife, Mavis, is furious for he is also very drunk:

> Ank came into the kitchen, mumbling obscenely at his wife and showing no concern at having missed an hour or so of my society. He was an appalling sight: boots unlaced, the grey woollen socks he wore hanging down over his boots in rolls; the fly of his pants was all open to the breeze, mouth drooling at the corners, and to complete the picture he had not shaved for three or four days.
>
> . . . .
>
> Ank himself was still in the more or less genial stage of drunkenness, though whenever he looked at Mavis his bloodshot eyes narrowed instantaneously and became as narrow and malevolent as a wild boar's.
>
> . . . .
>
> "Gimme me tea," he shouted. . .
>
> . . . .
>
> "That Morton," he giggled . . . "That bastard, he tells more lies than the Devil."
>
> "Mind your dirty mouth!" Mavis warned . . . .

> "That fucker," Ank went on with his private train of thought.
>
> "Shut up! Animal!" Mavis attacked him . . .[22]

Ank finishes his meal, vomits on the kitchen floor, then lies tossing on the sofa for a time. Mavis wakes him to tell him to take the feed out to the pigs. On his way down the back steps, Ank falls, covering himself with the gooey mash. Mavis and the children pick Ank up. Juju resumes the narrative:

> Naturally I supposed they were going to help Ank into the house and see whether he was injured, and I was just stepping out to ask if I could lend a hand when to my surprise I saw them heading down the garden path dragging Ank along between them.
>
> Jenny rushed ahead of the grotesque procession holding one of her father's boots that had come off, and opened a gate in a low fence down at the bottom of the garden. Finally they arrived at the gate with their burden. I could hardly believe my eyes as I saw them shove Ank into the enclosure -- right in among the pigs -- and shut the gate . . .[23]

Fortunately for Juju Stone who does not feel the concentrated weight of his negative environment as did Kevin O'Brien, but rather shares it with his brothers and sister, a qualified escape is possible. Juju manages at school to become interested in books which take him into exotic and faraway worlds where, at least temporarily, he is able to find happiness. He wins a scholarship to university, and for a year lives in the city, getting away from the home that epitomizes narrowness and limitation. However, his environment at home has ill-prepared him for the university, and his local patois and boorish manners do not win the respect of his professors. Also, since he is only interested in his literature course at university, and as he finds the movie theatres in the city even more effective agents of escape than fiction, his work suffers. By the end of the second term he has decisively failed his exams and returns home in disgrace.

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[22] Janes, House of Hate, pp. 202-203.

[23] Janes, p. 211.

There ensues a summer in which Juju attempts simply to relax and enjoy himself. He finds every book he can get his hands on, and lies around the house or rows out to a quiet inlet and reads. Needless to say, Saul Stone nearly has apoplexy at the image of this good-for-nothing sponging at home without contributing to the family income. And after all, how has all his learning improved him? Has it given him a fine home or a nice car? Saul's materialism blinkers him as usual to the possibility of any other kind of value in life.

Eventually things become intolerable at home and Juju goes to Toronto where he works, returns to university and is more successful, and marries. But physical escape does not necessarily annihilate the effects of the narrow, nightmarish environment that Juju has experienced at home. His marriage is unhappy, partly because he cannot enjoy a sexual relationship with his wife. Milltown has psychologically castrated him. He has inherited his father's guilt, and also each time he performs the sexual act he is filled with a sense of melancholy and regret at the possibility of another family cycle beginning. Like Kevin O'Brien, he is mentally scarred by his environment. At the end of the novel his life has become one of wandering from one place to another, trying to prove to himself that not all the world conforms to his experience at home:

> And I? Once more, seeing that Fudge [his youngest brother] was now restored to Mom's arms and probably for

> good, thus leaving her as contented as she could ever hope to be during the remainder of her life -- once more I said goodbye to Milltown and all its works. I thanked God for Hilda [his sister] but I was bent on going for good. So for the last time I took the westbound express and struck out blindly across the world in my urgent and frantic and hopeless hunt for love.[24]

Even the minimal comfort he may have had as a member of family is gone, because of his having got out of the tight little household and seen the world. The family on his occasional visits home suspects that he thinks himself superior to them, which is not the case, and only exemplifies their feelings of isolation and inferiority. The family's insularity and parochial qualities are well summarized by its suspicious attitudes toward Juju on his last visit home:

> It could only be painful to feel my blood relations covertly staring at me and studying me as though I were not only a suspicious but also a foreign character, and one who might be secretly inclined to look down on them. I could hear the thought turning behind their eyes: "Juju is after gettin' high notions," and I could almost feel the word "traitor" pushing at their lips, demanding utterance. I felt as alien as a Hottentot in the North Pole. It made no difference that I had this time arrived home from a place that had become a sister province of Newfoundland, no longer a foreign country but the mainland of Canada -- no difference at all. Acts of Parliament bear no reference to insularity and the village virus.
>
> Ank was the worst one of all in his attitude toward me, and in the unfriendliness he showed in direct proportion to any little incident or contretemps that tended to illustrate how far, for better or worse, I had travelled from the speech and manners and mores of twenty years ago on the hill. "*Pawss*," he kept saying, imitating the way I pronounced the word "pass" with a sarcastic grin and mocking inflection about as subtle as a fist in the face. The others all laughed with varying degrees of sympathy

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[24] Janes, *House of Hate*, p. 320.

> (on Ank's side). I made no protest to him, not wanting to cause any friction in the clan so soon after my return; in any case, there was soon friction enough in that crowded, steaming kitchen as the cards and insults began to fly and the heat of battle to come to its full, old-time intensity.
>
> Mom and Dad were soonest at it . . .[25]

Like David Canaan, in Buckler's The Mountain and the Valley, which is discussed in this chapter, Juju feels that he does not belong at home, yet he cannot really escape it either. He is in a kind of mental and spiritual limbo.

Before leaving the disproportioned box that sits on the slope of Milltown, there is one family member who should be looked at as an image of the backwardness and sterility of this home. This is Frederick (Fudge) Stone, youngest child of Gertrude and Saul, born when the other children are grown up. Without the protection of brothers and sisters his age, Fudge grows into the vegetable that Kevin O'Brien becomes in "The Wanton Troopers". He is diagnosed by Juju, who meets him on one of his infrequent visits home, as suffering from claustrophobia, caused by too much parental interference. The boy does not have a mind of his own. Juju is able to capture a glimmer of interest in Fudge when he reads to him from Grimm's Fairy Tales, but subsequent visits find him morose and morbidly depressed. He is totally without motivation. His mother dresses him and feeds him in the morning and puts him to bed at night long after he reaches what society considers to be adulthood. Occasionally he escapes from home, but returns because he cannot cope on his own. Physically

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[25] Janes, House of Hate, pp. 191-192.

Fudge is obese to the point of being grotesque. His face denotes a permanent dullness and vacuity. Infrequently there are bursts of emotion in which he expresses the desire to kill himself. Fudge is Janes' symbol of the ultimate human product of the limited world represented by the Stone family.

"The Wanton Troopers" and House of Hate are very similar in the portraits they present of family. Both depict raw, unrefined worlds in their rituals, emotions, vocabulary and spirit. In both novels the artist figure is deeply alienated by his surroundings and yet has a difficult time breaking away from them and finding new patterns of experience. These are obviously novels of frustration on the part of their authors who write more with a sense of hate than love. Considered artistically, these novels are not as sophisticated or polished as some others of the period, perhaps because the authors are not as distanced and detached from their subjects as they might be. The portrayal of time in the novels is simple chronological and although there are networks of effective symbolism and very skillful renderings of dialect, the overall forms and techniques are not exceptional. What is outstanding, however, is the intensity of the negative worlds portrayed, and the struggle the artist figure goes through in surviving (or succumbing) in them. Both writers are highly successful in their presentation of the psychology of frustration.

Before leaving Kevin O'Brien and Juju Stone, a note should be made on their reading habits. A point made generally in the introduction to this chapter is that the writers in this period are not conscious of belonging to a Canadian tradition of literature. Nowlan and Janes depict their characters in the 1930s and 1940s as being raised with such reading material as the mail-order catalogue (hardly literature), the Bible (very important to Kevin O'Brien because it expands his vision of the possibility of miracle in life, although it does not triumph in the end over his environment, which is a stronger force) and, for Juju at university, French prose. As helpful as the Bible and the French prose may be for providing the artist with inspiration, they must also be problematical in that they do not provide models of how to deal creatively with the situations experienced by Kevin and Juju. On the contrary, they may be intimidating (especially the French Literature which would seem very sophisticated to a Milltown, Newfoundland boy). In these novels we are given insight into the dilemma Nowlan and Janes must have found themselves in when they first began to write. On the one hand there were grand classical traditions of literature, universally recognized, and on the other hand there was the society and experience they wanted to express, for which there were no well-known prototypes. There must have been the strong sense among these writers of living in an intellectual and cultural vacuum. The task of filling the vacuum would not be an easy one.

House of Hate does show some progress on the part of its artist figure beyond "The Wanton Troopers" in that Juju Stone does make a physical break from the narrow society that so oppresses him as a boy. However, the injury done him at home has lasting effects. At the end of the novel he has become a restless wanderer, afraid of settling into the traditional patterns of family and town because of their negative associations. Both Juju Stone and Kevin O'Brien are failures as artists. Neither within the framework of their respective novels produces anything lasting or creative. However, there is also the broader perspective; Janes and Nowlan have externalized what are basically their own biographical experiences, refined them into artistic patterns, and expressed them in lasting forms, the novels.

Family is an important negative element in Raymond Knister's White Narcissus (1929)[26]. In this novel Richard Milne, a writer who has grown up in the country but moved to the city, returns home. He has come back to ask Ada Lethem, whom he has loved for a number of years, to marry him. This is not the first time he has returned to ask Ada for her hand, but in the past she has refused. Richard feels that if he does not win her this time, he will have to give up; the situation will be proven hopeless. In the city Richard has begun a successful career as a writer, but he feels emotionally incomplete. There is still a part of him that lives with Ada in the country, and his inability to convince her to come away with him threatens to interfere with his happiness, and therefore his writing. If he is unsuccessful this time, one feels that something within him will die.

Ada is a beautiful, sensitive woman who is a kind of a soul mate to Richard. Together they discuss books and ideas and enjoy the beauties of nature. Ada is a kind of muse or source of inspiration for Richard, epitomizing all the good qualities of the rural world that has formed him.

However, the reason Ada has declined to leave her home with Richard is that she is locked into a tight, incestuous world of family.

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[26] Raymond Knister, White Narcissus (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1962).

The family in this novel once again represents all the negative, restricted values of the rural situation. Richard, in pursuing Ada, is trying to take with him to the city, where there is an audience for his writing, the inspiration and beauty of his rural past, but in order to do so he must overcome the other aspect of this world. By doing so, he will be free to develop as an artist in the larger world and not be permanently scarred like Juju Stone.

The source of the trouble in Ada's family lies far back in the past, when she was a little girl. At that time, her parents had a terrible fight, in which each accused the other of infidelity. Without resolving the dispute, each parent went to his or her respective room that night, ignoring the child who had heard the whole argument from the landing on the stairway. From that day on the parents have not spoken to each other, but have lived separate lives under the same roof. Ada has grown up in an atmosphere poisoned by hatred and putrid with dwelling on an incident in the past. Being a member of the family and consequently feeling a sense of duty and loyalty, Ada devotes her life to caring for her parents, and particularly her mother who is so lacking in volition that Ada is sure she would starve if she were not there to feed her. Ada grows up in the silent rooms of this house without having experienced the natural emotion of love. In fact, she doubts the possibility of true love, based on her observation of her parents' situation. Consequently Ada does not really believe in Richard's avowal of love, fearing involvement which might result in hurt and pain. She spends most of her time reading books as a kind of anodyne to her situation.

The limitations of this tight, narrow, self-centred and backward family are symbolized by the narcissi that Ada's mother devotes her life to growing after the argument with her husband. They grow everywhere in the home and their scent, which pervades the whole house is "sickly", "heavy" and "stupefying", suggesting the life-in-death quality of the home. They also represent the selfishness of parents who expect their child to conform to their dated rituals and attitudes rather than grow and develop in the larger world outside. The physical description of the family home also symbolizes the limited mental and spiritual world enclosed within its walls. The house is described in images suggesting suffocation; it is covered with rank weeds and dust. A wild expanse of tall grass and untamed vegetation surrounds it like an impenetrable barrier as Richard Milne approaches it on his return. It cuts off the light of the sunset and sits behind a dry riverbed, suggesting a wasteland.[27] Mythically it is like a rank, overgrown castle at the centre of a kingdom of darkness ruled by a King and Queen of death.

Knister employs a deus ex machina to awaken Ada to the possibilities of a world better than the one she knows. Her father accidentally knocks over some of her mother's narcissi. At first he is horrified at his act, but then the frustration of years of preserving the old feud overwhelms him and he starts crushing the fragile plants with his feet. Mrs. Lethen comes in and sees him, and at first is convulsed with anger, but suddenly breaks out into hysterical laughter. The hatred of twenty years is released. With her mother's revelation comes Ada's; and she is released from the spell of suspicion and negation that has oppressed her for most of her life.

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[27] Knister, White Narcissus, p. 32.

At the end of White Narcissus Ada has decided to accompany Richard to the city. The implication is that Richard has triumphed over the negative aspects of the rural environment, and is left free to capture its more positive and life-giving qualities in the city where the amenities of writing (publishers, other artists and audience) reside.

Knister maintains a much more detached attitude to the family and the society it represents than do Nowlan and Janes. He has his artist figure escape from its negative qualities and find inspiration and satisfaction from its positive aspects. Indeed, Nowlan and Janes see nothing positive in their worlds. Also suggesting a greater detachment is the fact that Knister's novel is much more symbolic, even poetic, than the others. However, he does not give as penetrating a portrayal of the harsh everyday realities of the rural condition as do Nowlan and Janes.

Another novel in which the artist makes progress in coming to terms with his family is Ernest Buckler's The Mountain and the Valley (1953)[28]. In this novel family is not described in the ominous terms used by Janes and Nowlan. David Canaan, the artist, grows up on a prosperous farm in the beautiful Annapolis Valley in Nova Scotia. He does not have to endure the atmosphere of poverty and defeat that Kevin O'Brien and Juju Stone were subject to. Rather, David develops at an early age a very deep sensitivity to the beauty of the natural landscape and the qualities of tradition and ritual found in the home. This is epitomized in Part One,

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[28] Ernest Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1953).

"The Play", at Christmas when David is so full of the joy and excitement of the season that he has to be alone to contain it all. A source of tension for David in the novel is that the idyllic qualities of a youth spent in a warm, loving family cannot last forever. Forces of change and intrusions from the outside world undermine the perfect family world David inhabits as a child. When he and his father and Chris, his brother, set off to climb the mountain behind their home, a family excursion David has looked forward to for some time, they meet some neighbors who tell them there has been an accident, a member of the community has been drowned, and they must turn back to offer their help. Incidents of harsh external reality intruding into David's sensitive, ideal world, created during his youth, increase as David matures, undermining the early faith and security he feels within his family.

However, there are indications even early in David's life of inadequacies on the part of his family toward him as an artist. There are aspects of David's artistic consciousness that his family cannot conceive of or understand because it is a private, internal world of sensitivity and joy. This aspect of being a part of the family yet also being separate is represented in the novel in a dream David has and tries to describe to Chris who does not really understand it:

> "I dreamed," David said, "you and Dad and me was on the log road, only it was funny -- he laughed -- "all the trees was trimmed up like Christmas trees. And then it was like there was two of me. I was walkin with you, and still I was walkin by myself on this other road that didn't have any trees on it.[29]

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[29] Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley, p. 21.

The first time David becomes painfully aware of his family's (and his community's) inability to understand his artistic sensibility is on the night of the annual school play, described in Part One. David has the lead role in the play; the heroine is Effie, whom David loves even at this early age. Before the play, David and Effie rehearse their parts, and David becomes aware for the first time of how words have a magical quality of being able to transport one into a world of one's own making, and can also have a profound effect on others. He realizes that there is a power to words, which is the beginning of his life-long desire to be able to write and communicate his feelings and ideas to others. On the night of the play, performed before the entire community, David becomes caught up in the magical spell of the words and his sense of control over the audience. He goes beyond mere acting and starts to control the play himself. He decides at a particular moment, when the script calls for him to declare his love for Effie, that the proclamation is not enough, he should also kiss her. Of course the audience roars with laughter, and crude comments are made. David is deeply humiliated. The intense excitement he has felt in the process of creativity has been rudely burst in upon by the harsh forces of reality in a manner that is traumatic for him. Never again will he expose his inner feelings to an audience. David runs home ahead of his family, too isolated and embarrassed to face even them. His reaction is to want to escape from the whole negative situation by running away from home. This pattern of wanting to run from home but never being able to occurs several times in David's life.

David's isolation within the family is clear after the play when the family returns home, but cannot comfort him. His mother starts upstairs to seek him out in his bedroom, but turns back:

> It was no use. When the other children hurt themselves or were sick, she'd hold them and look into their faces. Strangely enough then, despite the pity or the fear, she'd feel how awful it must be for people who had no children at all. But with David, those were the only times when she seemed to lose him.[30]

As long as David plays the traditional role of son, Martha can provide the proper responses, but when he enters his private world of imagination she knows she cannot follow. The same is true of the other members of family:

> Joseph said nothing. How could he? Even when David was willing to talk he couldn't seem to find any words that fitted what he meant to say back . . . .
>
> Chris didn't speak; but after he was in bed a while he let one arm fall across David's shoulder as if it might have been a movement in his sleep. The only way of reaching out that Chris knew was touch. David was like a stranger when something was wrong . . . .
>
> David twisted away from Chris's arm and moved over to the very edge of the bed. He heard Anna come upstairs. She stopped a minute outside his door, then he heard her go into her own room.[31]

David's parents are completely a part of the traditional rural Nova Scotia mental and social patterns. Their minds are attuned to the rituals of farming which follow the seasons. It is a secure world, beautiful in its traditions but not capable of coping with anything new. Martha and Joseph long to reach out and communicate with David, but he is so different that they do not know how. Also, the use of words is very limited in the environment. In the rituals of farming they are not necessary, even superfluous, and so again there is a communications problem.

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[30] Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley, p. 85.

[31] Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley, p. 85.

As the novel, which follows the course of David's life, progresses, David's isolation within the family increases, and also the family itself begins to disintigrate as people move away or die. There is a further source of tension for David within the family and that is that at school he becomes increasingly aware of a whole cultural and intellectual consciousness that makes his own home environment seem very limited and petty. Also, David is a very bright boy, and excels at school, driving the wedge between himself and his family, who are not well educated or alive to books and abstract ideas, in further. The tension between David's fascination with the world outside Entremont (the name of his community) and his family is epitomized in Part Three when Toby, David's penpal from Halifax, comes to visit. David is suddenly ashamed of the rural diction of his family, and affects a suave, uncharacteristic style of speech that he has learned from books. He feels intimidated when he thinks how ahead of him Toby is in worldly experience and urbanity. Toby's watch ticking in the dark as the boys lie in bed together at night becomes an image to David of the sophisticated life that he is missing.

The conflict between life on the farm and life outside increases. In Part Four of the novel, "The Rock", David becomes furious at the dull, plodding, docile way in which his father unquestioningly goes about his work. He is frustrated that there is no one with whom he can discuss his feelings and ideas. The incident that instigates a crisis is the attempt by David and Joseph to move a rock which Joseph has had to plow around for years. For David the rock epitimizes all the frustration inherent in life on the farm, the antithesis of imagination and creativity. It is heavy, dull and lifeless. Joseph's attitude to the rock is different. If he and David prove successful in moving it, it will be an accomplishment that he and future generations will be able to look at with pride. This is the classic contradiction, once again, between two attitudes: the artistic and the frontier. David and Joseph strain and push at the rock for hours with the help of a pair of oxen. Just when it seems they will move it out of its hole, it rolls back again, like the rock of Sisyphus. David's mind, which has been grating "against the peevish enmity of trifles"[32] all day finally rebels when Joseph observes that all the time they have been working the block has been too short, and it will have to be adjusted. Then all David's pent-up anger and frustration are released:

> "Well, Jesus!" David said.
>
> All that grind wasted! A sudden puff of exasperation overrode the embarrassment that always stifled any exchange of sharp words between him and his father. The fatigue flared up and focused his random anger. He was struck, for a second, by the dusty look in his father's eyes. The lines in his father's face grooved paler than the day-old beard -- his father was tired too. But he couldn't stop. His anger slipped fluent into his own language.
>
> "We exhaust ourselves and then when we're halfway through you decide the goddam block's too short! If you could ever decide anything in advance. . ." His voice was high and trembly. His glance rushed about. His feet trod nervously on the ground.
>
> "Now don't get high," Joseph said.
>
> He felt struck, sick. Not by David's anger, but by the words he'd used. He'd known David possessed words like that; but he'd thought they were Sunday things, like the gold watch fob of his own that lay in the drawer. He thought now: they really belong to him. He's using them against me. He's not just tired, or quick. This place is no kin to him at all. the way it is to me.
>
> "Who's gettin high?" David said. "Anybody with any intelligence could see that. . . ."

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[32] Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley, p. 156.

> "All right, all right," Joseph said. He picked up the saw, to put it away.
>
> "Oh, go to hell!" David shouted. It didn't make sense. But those were the only words left in his head.
>
> The fuse of Joseph's own anger was suddenly touched.
>
> "Don't you want killin'," he said, "you. . . you goddam snot." His hand shot across the log and clouted David across the mouth. "Don't you tell _me_ to go to hell. . ."
>
> David's first savage reflex was to strike back, to annihilate.
>
> And then the fascinating whisper told him not to move. . . to let the blow dry on his face like the muddy water. It was more grindingly sweet than anything he'd ever known. He didn't move. Oh, he'd never wipe _that_ blow off his face. . . They made out they thought he was so smart. Then they called him a goddam snot. Oh, he'd never wipe that off either. . .
>
> "I'd like to go so far away from this goddam hole. . ." he said.
>
> "Well, go then," Joseph said.
>
> "I _will_ go," He turned and ran. . .[33]

The tragedy is that David is unable to go. He does try. He hitchhikes down the road a few miles. But the urban accents of the couple who pick him up and their sophisticated manners seem foreign to him. On the pretence that he has forgotten something, he gets out of the car. But he still has not solved the problem of where he belongs:

> He watched them out of sight. He looked toward home. He felt as if he were in no man's land. He felt as if time had turned into space, and was crushing against him. He felt as if he must leap somewhere out of the now; but everywhere it was now.
>
> He looked both ways up and down the road. Then he turned and began to walk toward home.
>
> He came to the bridge. He could see the house again. . . .Suddenly he put his head into the only place left to hide: the crook of his elbow along the rail of the bridge. He began to sob. He sobbed because he could neither leave nor stay. He sobbed because he was neither one thing nor the other.[34]

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[33] Buckler, _The Mountain and the Valley_, pp. 170-171.

[34] Buckler, _The Mountain and the Valley_, pp. 170-171.

Whether he goes or stays, David will always be an isolated figure, like Juju Stone.

David's relationship to the land is a complex one. At times, when he is forced to perform the back-breaking labour inherent in farming, he hates it. It represents maddening limitations on the imagination and the intellect and consequently on expression. However, there is another aspect to the land in The Mountain and the Valley that is only rarely found in "The Wanton Troopers" and never in House of Hate that makes it very difficult for David to leave. Over the years David has developed, in moments of leisure and introspect, a deep emotional attachment to it, a sense of roots and identity. This leads to a strong tension in David and his consequent problem in trying to decide whether to leave or stay. Buckler suggests, like some of the nineteenth-century novelists referred to in Chapter Two, that a sense of place is important to the artist. In the end David chooses to stay on the farm, and has a vision which will be discussed in detail below, of how he can come to terms with Entremont artistically. However Anna, his twin sister, who also has a strong sense of love for place as a child, goes off to the city as a young woman and never achieves the vision that David does. Like Wood, Duncan, Ogilvy and Leavitt, Buckler maintains that the artist must remain true to his place of origin in order to be vital. Buckler confirms this theme in a later novel, The Cruelest Month (1963)[35] where the artist figure, Paul Creed, born and brought up in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia, resists the temptation to marry a sophisticated female from the city but chooses instead his housekeeper, a local woman, relatively uneducated and very unsophisticated, but epitomizing the local culture. It is a matter of "creed" to Buckler that loyalty to place is the first priority for the artist. Although at times David Canaan may feel that his community is lacking artistically and intellectually, he proves in the end to value the quality of genuineness he detects there as opposed to the more "plastic" or commercial society reflected by urban visitors to the community.

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[35] Ernest Buckler, The Cruelest Month (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963).

However, after the episode with the rock David never really again is accepted as a regular member of the family. He inhabits the home, but his difference (his ability with words and his artistic detachment) from the others is conspicuous. His days are spent increasingly in the attic, reading, and he is asked less and less to help out on the farm. The split between David and the family becomes most apparent in the episode in Part Five, "The Scar", in which David is permanently scarred on the face by an accident during a pig-killing. In an effort to prove that he is not more sensitive than the rest to the killing of the animal (like Kevin O'Brien, David has a strong empathy for animal victims) David does a foolhardy thing that only proves the opposite. He climbs to a high beam in the barn to secure a rope and, overcome with dizziness, he falls, incurring a jagged facial wound. His disfigurement marks him like Cain and confirms physically the psychological scar he has borne since the play.

In the last part of the novel, "The Mountain", David's parents are dead and his brother and sister have left the farm. David, now in his thirties, lives with only his grandmother in the family home. In a sense this last section offers a cruel balance to Part One of the novel, in which the family and his place in it were such a source of joy for the young boy. The situation is almost a parody of the earlier one. The forces of change have swept away the idyllic world of youth; however, as a reminder of all that is lost, the grandmother, who is now senile, lives in a world of the past, in which she converses with people who are now ghosts: her husband, Joseph, Martha and the other grandchildren. She even talks to David at times as if he were still a child, tediously reminding him to wrap warmly when he goes out. One day, when the situation becomes intolerable for David, he sets out on a walk that takes him up the mountain that he started to climb with his father and Chris in Part One.

It is in the course of the walk up the mountain that David has a vision of how he can resolve the many contradictions and paradox that have characterized his life in Entremont: his deep sensitivity to place, yet his sense of the artistic and intellectual limitations of Entremont; his desire to go to the city where there might be people who could understand him as an artist, yet his feeling that urban society is shallow and artificial; his fascination with words, yet his inability to use them effectively; his sense of the beauty of his rural landscape, yet the hard work it demands; and a feeling of an idyllic world that has been irretrievably lost to the forces of change. It suddenly comes to David as he walks that the way to resolve these seeming-opposites is to find the clear white centre of meaning that links them all together and to express this pattern in a form that is permanent, a novel. Even this vision is paradoxical, for it is Ellen, the old grandmother, supposedly an ironic symbol of the once-beautiful family, who psychologically helps him find his solution. Ellen had been hooking a rug when David left the home, a rug in which she blended scraps of clothing belonging in the past to members of the family, into a pattern. Ellen's craft serves as a prototype for David, helping him discover how he too can revitalize and crystallize the past, thus triumphing over time and change.

A more complete description should be given of David's process of enlightenment on the mountain, for it is one of the best and most thorough accounts of the artistic process to be found in Canadian Literature. As he walks up the mountain, he turns to look back down into the little valley that is all he has ever known of life, and at that moment David is for the first time able to put his experience into a detached artistic framework. He sees the past not as memory, but in a clear, immediate pattern for the first time and thinks: "It is like a flash of immortality"[36]. As David continues his walk, voices and faces of people from his past speak to him, more and more insistently, demanding to be known and articulated. Again, they are alive in him not in a chaotic way, but one by one forming sharp patterns. David realizes that he has the ability to become them, to "give the thought to exactly how each of them was",[37] and that the medium to express the qualities of these people is that of words, because they are precise and accurate.[38] But as he continues his walk, the voices from the past do blur and become overwhelming because he realizes that he must cope as an artist not only with actual experience, but also with what might have been, with the fictional possibilities. These are so infinite that he becomes temporarily confused. Also, there is the fact that there is an additional level to be considered in articulating life, and that is the symbolic, which is not as readily definable as the literal. At this point David finds himself on top of the mountain, and once more he is able to find order, this time on a still higher level than before. The vision that brings this order is his awareness that he must tell what he knows, through the miracle of words, and particularly through finding the "single core of meaning", the unity that pervades all levels of life. This moment is revealed as a burst of clarity. David has found the solution to the predicament of artistic alienation, and that is to employ the alienation or detachment in a positive way, to better see and articulate the world around him. He will distance himself from all experience, negative and positive, and pattern it. He will, in a sense, control it, rather than the opposite. In doing so, he will create something good and lasting.

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[36] Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley, p. 288.

[37] Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley, p. 295.

[38] Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley, p. 296.

David's death at the moment of clarity is presented in symbolic terms by Buckler. Once he has had this moment at the summit of the mountain, he is no longer the frustrated, mute artist of the novel. He has transcended his old self through his conception of a grand design. As he dies, blackness turns to white, "an absolute white, made of all the other colours but of no colour itself at all. And then the snow began to fall." There is a further symbol, that of a partridge rising in the air and falling down straight into the far side of the mountain. David has escaped the tight little valley through his vision.

David Canaan is the most successful artist figure yet discussed in this period, because he does manage at the end of his life to conceive of the possibility of artistic expression. Some literary critics like Margaret Atwood, see David Canaan as a failed artist because he does not in fact carry out the design he glimpses before death,[39] and within the framework of the novel he is, if one ignores the symbolic meaning of the partridge flying over the mountain to the far side. However, once again there is a paradox (Buckler in *The Mountain and the Valley* displays a fascination with paradox) in that Buckler has performed David Canaan's task, and the reader holds empirical proof (the novel) of this.

The Mountain and the Valley is the most sophisticated novel of this period. Not only does it capture the essence of life in the Annapolis Valley in the 1930s and 1940s, it also presents it in a more complex and thorough manner than Nowlan and Janes portrayed their worlds, in that Buckler has a more balanced and detached vision of the negative and positive aspects of his world. There is therefore a rich network of paradox and irony in this novel not found in the others. Also, in his presentation of David Canaan, Buckler gives the reader a deeper understanding of the artist and the artistic process than did Nowlan, Janes and Knister. The form of *The Mountain and the Valley* is also more satisfying than those of the other novels. The novel is divided into six parts that follow David's maturation from boy to man, each having a title that symbolizes a progress in his artistic development. Further, there are a prologue and an epilogue. The prologue sets the tone for the book. In a complex use of time, Buckler presents David in the prologue on the last day of his life, just as he sets out for the walk up the mountain. We are given the portrait of David's extraordinary alienation, symbolized by the frozen landscape outside his home, at which he looks through the glass of the window pane. Touch between him and the outside, he feels, is impossible.[40] The prologue contrasts markedly with Part One of the novel which succeeds it, and portrays David as a young boy in a warm, loving family. It casts a long shadow over the incidents in David's early life, presaging his tragic alienation from his environment much as Grove's image of being bogged down in his car at the beginning of his autobiography lends a tone of tragedy to that work. The epilogue, the last section of the novel, continues where the prologue left off, taking David to his transformation on the mountain. The bulk of the book, Parts One to Six, therefore, are David's memories of his life as he climbs the mountain. These memories help him to find the pattern he does on the mountain. There is a strong sense of completion at the end of the novel as David's life is brought to a close with his miraculous vision, and Ellen completes her rug. Even the seasons are employed by Buckler to mirror the pattern the novel takes. The glorious summers of the early parts of the novel give way to the cold and alienation of the prologue and epilogue.

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[39] Margaret Atwood, *Survival* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972), p. 186.

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[40] Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley, p. 14.

Another novel in which the ancestral home is an important symbol is Alice Munro's Lives of Girls and Women (1971)[41] in which the central character is a female, Del Jordan. In this novel Del enjoys neither as initially idyllic a family as David Canaan, nor as blatantly horrifying a family as Ada Lethen, Juju Stone or Kevin O'Brien. There is neither hate nor, apparently, love in her home; rather, a kind of indifference exists between her parents and among the members of the family. The lack of any extremes of emotion in her relationship with her family leaves Del free of the scars that family has inflicted on earlier artist figures and contributes to the relative ease with which Del, at the end of the novel, determines to distance herself mentally and physically from her environment and fashion her experiences into a novel.

In Lives of Girls and Women the primary influence on the artist figure, probably because she is a female, is her mother. Her father and brother live at the edge of the town, Jubilee, where they raise foxes. Very little is said about Del's relationship with the men in her family; apparently Munro considers them relatively unimportant. The real force within the family from Del's point of view is her mother. She is one of those women who once had grand designs for herself. She scrubbed floors in order to get an education, and married Del's father because his family was old and respected. The fact that her husband does not have the interest in social mobility that she has does not impede her designs even after marriage. She launches into courses on self-improvement and moves into the town each winter in order to work herself into the social life there. She also sells encyclopedias and keeps a boarder in order to make extra money. However, as Del is painfully aware, Mrs. Jordan is looked at somewhat askance by Jubilee. She is not reserved and passive enough to conform to the ideal of womanhood.

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[41] Alice Munro, Lives of Girls and Women (New York: Signet, 1971).

Not only is Del mortified that her mother is a bit of an eccentric, but also her mother tends more and more to transfer her own ambitions to her daughter, demanding that she fulfill some of the objectives in life that her mother has failed to attain. Munro has observed herself that her own mother was an ambitious woman, and engendered in her the desire to excel and even be famous.[42] This leads to feelings of discomfort and even entrapment in Del. When she is in her early teens her mother has her memorize passages from the encyclopedias in order to impress her customers with what fine products these volumes will make of their children. At first this inflates Del's ego, but then she realizes how she is being exploited and what a fool she looks.

A crisis develops in Del's final High School year at examination time. Del has done extremely well all through school, and her mother expects her to do well on the final examinations and to take a scholarship to university. However, Del has become aware, through experiences with a bright male student at school, that brains and education are not everything. In fact Jerry Storey represents for Del the sterility that pure intellectualism without life or experience can result in. She defies her mother's wishes by starting a relationship with a young man, Garnet French, who is completely without intellectual interests, at the same time that she should be cramming for the examinations. When the marks are posted Del finds that hers are not good enough for her to get a scholarship. But she is not disappointed. She has deliberately set out on a course in life that will give her what she needs in order to be a writer, and that is experience. By defying her mother she opens the way to the life that is necessary to her.

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[42] This observation was made by Alice Munro on the CBC morning program "This Country in the morning", on May 24, 1974.

There are other negative and restrictive familial pressures on Del Jordan. They eminate from the ancestral home of the Jordan family at Jenkins' Bend, where Del's paternal uncle Craig and aunts, Grace and Elsbeth, live. The Jordans are an old and proud family of Loyalist stock. Uncle Craig once ran the local Post Office from this house, and he is still clerk of the Township. He spends most of his time sitting in his office in the old house typing slowly at a history he is writing of the county and working on the Jordan family tree. The trouble is that both the County and the Jordan family are not singular in any way; what Craig is doing is cataloguing mediocrity:

> Nobody in our family had done anything remarkable. They had married other Irish Protestants, and had large families. Some did not marry. Some of the children died young. Four in our family were burned in a fire. One man lost two wives in childbirth. One married a Roman Catholic. They came to Canada and went on in the same way, often marrying Scotch Presbyterians. And to Uncle Craig it seemed necessary that the names of all these people, their connections with each other, the three large dates of birth, marriage and death, or the two of birth and death if that was all that happened to them, be discovered, often with great effort and a stupendous amount of world-wide correspondence (he did not forget the branch of the family that went to Australia) and written down here, in order, in his own large careful handwriting. He did not ask for anybody in the family to have done anything more interesting, more scandalous, than to marry

> a Roman Catholic (the woman's religion noted in red ink below her name); indeed, it would have thrown his whole record off balance if anybody had. It was not the individual names that were important, but the whole solid, intricate structure of lives supporting us from the past.
>
> It was the same with the history of the county, which had been opened up, settled, and had grown, and entered its present slow decline, with only modest disasters -- the fire at Tupperton, regular flooding of the Wawanash river, some terrible winters, a few unmysterious murders; and had produced only three notable people -- a Supreme Court Judge, an archaeologist who had excavated Indian villages around Georgian Bay and written a book about them, and a woman whose poems used to be published in newspapers throughout Canada and the United States. These were not what mattered; it was daily life that mattered. Uncle Craig's files and drawers were full of newspaper clippings, letters, containing descriptions of the weather, an account of a runnaway horse, lists of those present at funerals, a great accumulation of the most ordinary facts, which it was his business to get in order. Everything had to go into his history, to make it the whole history of Wawanash County. He could not leave anything out. That was why, when he died, he had only got as far as the year 1909.[43]

All of this is not of much concern to Del until Uncle Craig dies and her two Aunts invite her over for tea and sweets and very subtly and nicely, particularly by reminding her of her family responsibilities, attempt to impose on Del the burden of continuing Craig's work. They ceremoniously present Del with the sacred black tin box which contains the unfinished manuscript. They are manouvering her into devoting her life to yellowed newspaper clippings and insignificant ghosts from the past. They play on the responsibility of Del's membership in the family in their attempt to lock her into a course in life that will perpetuate the glory of their musty line. They even suggest that Del attempt to acquire Craig's style (one that is little more than dry, factual reportage). They little know that Del has been trying to write creatively for several years, and what implications their demands have for her. Their allegiance to family tradition blinds them to any other possibilities of expression on the part of a member of the family.

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[43] Alice Munro, Lives of Girls and Women (New York: Signet, 1971), pp. 31-32.

When Del gets home with the coffin-like receptacle, she puts her own bits of a novel and few poems in it and puts it under her bed. Then she takes Craig's manuscript and puts it in a cardboard box in the cellar where a flood destroys it. Del is not very upset: "it seemed to me a mistake from start to finish. . . . I felt remorse, that kind of tender remorse which has on its other side a brutal, unblemished satisfaction".[44]

There is a further aspect to Del's aunts that makes them a negative influence on the girl. They disapprove of women who have ambitions. They cattily make remarks to Del about her mother selling encyclopedias, implying that she is odd and unladylike. They subscribe to the notion that men do the important work in life, and that women act as help-mates, cooking and cleaning and making the male's life easier. If they had their way, Del would spend the rest of her life tiptoing around a home, the centre of which would be her husband; she would pickle, iron, tend a garden and cook delicacies. Above all, the aunts believe in the genteel notion that to have aspirations and to fail at them is much worse than not having them at all, and living a life of comfortable mediocrity. To have ambition is dangerous and almost exhibitionistic. If they were to persuade Del to subscribe to this limited, smug way of life, her potential as an artist would be greatly reduced, if not eliminated.

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[44] Munro, Lives of Girls and Women, pp. 63, 64.

Even before she is presented with the manuscript, Del has reason to be suspicious of the traditional elements in her family. At Uncle Craig's funeral her half-witted cousin, Mary Agnes, senses that Del is afraid of the front room in which Uncle Craig's coffin lies. Mary Agnes tries to shove Del into that room, and Del bites her on the arm in return. She is not only biting her cousin because she is afraid of death, but also because she feels intimidated and oppressed by all the family pressures that the funeral only magnifies:

> When I bit Mary Agnes I thought I was biting myself off from everything. I thought I was putting myself outside, where no punishment would ever be enough, where nobody would dare ask me to look at a dead man, or anything else, again. I thought they would all hate me, and hate seemed to me so much to be coveted, then, like a gift of wings.
>
> But no; freedom is not so easily come by. Though Aunt Moira, who would always say she had to pull me off Mary Agnes's arm with blood in my mouth . . . did clench my shoulders and shake me, holding me so my face was hardly an inch from her armoured breasts, and her body hissed and trembled above me like a monument about to explode.
>
> . . . .
>
> The house was full of people pressed together, melted together like blunt old crayons, warm, acquiescent, singing. And I was in the middle of them, in spite of being shut up here by myself [in Uncle Craig's office]. As long as I lived most of them would remember that I had bitten Mary Agnes Oliphant's arm at Uncle Craig's funeral. Remembering that, they would remember that I was highly strung, erratic, or badly brought up, or a borderline case. But they would not put me outside. No. I would be the highly strung, erratic, badly brought up member of the family, which is a different thing altogether.
>
> Being forgiven creates a peculiar shame. I felt hot, and not just from the blanket. I felt held close, stifled, as if it was not air I had to move and talk through but

> something thick as cotton wool. This shame was physical, but went far beyond sexual shame, my former shame of nakedness; now it was as if not the naked body but all the organs inside it -- stomach, heart, lungs, liver -- were laid bare and helpless. The nearest thing to this that I had ever known before was the feeling I got when I was tickled beyond endurance -- horrible, voluptuous feeling of exposure, of impotence, self-betrayal. And shame went spreading out from me all through the house, covered everybody, even Mary Agnes, even Uncle Craig in his present disposable, vacated condition. To be made of flesh was humiliation. I was caught in a vision which was, in a way, the very opposite of the mystic's incommunicable vision of order and light; a vision, also incommunicable, of confusion and obsenity -- of helplessness, which was revealed as the most obscene thing there could be.[45]

Like David Canaan, Del is locked into a family in which she is really an outsider, an alienated and isolated figure, and has not yet learned how to come to terms with it.

The house itself at Jenkins' Bend is a monument to tradition and a philosophy of life based on allegiance to a stale, dead past. It was built by Del's great-great grandfather in the days when he felt a prosperous town might someday emerge there (it never did). From the veranda hang the Union Jack and the red ensign. There is also a sign indicating the importance of family which reads, "Heirs of the Living Body." Craig's office is decorated with coronation pictures of various generations of the royal family and by old yellowed photographs of the County and the Jordan family. It is furnished with a black sofa and dark, heavy furniture the drawers of which are stuffed with old clippings and artifacts. The room is kept dark so that Craig will not be distracted from his work. Craig's funeral service is held in the seldom-used front room of the house.

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[45] Munro, Lives of Girls and Women, pp. 46-48.

Once again family has played an important role in terms of providing influences, often negative, on the artist. However, Del Jordan systematically comes to terms with and resists them. In the end she decides to leave home and go off to the city where she will gain the experience she needs to be a writer.

In an unexpected projection forward in time at the end of the novel, Munro has Del look into the future and see herself trying to express Jubilee:

> It did not occur to me then that one day I would be so greedy for Jubilee. Voracious and misguided as Uncle Craig out at Jenkin's Bend, writing his history, I would want to write things down.
>
> I would try to make lists. A list of all the stores and businesses going up and down the main street and who owned them, a list of family names, names on the tombstones in the cemetery and any inscriptions underneath. A list of the titles of movies that played at the Lyceum Theatre from 1938 to 1950, roughly speaking. Names on the cenotaph . . . Names of the streets and the pattern they lay in.
>
> The hope of accuracy we bring to such tasks is crazy, heartbreaking.
>
> And no list could hold what I wanted, for what I wanted was every last thing, every layer of speech and thought, stroke of light on bark or walls, every smell, pot hole, pain, crack, delusion, held still and held together -- radiant, everlasting.[46]

Like Buckler, Munro is optimistic about the possibility of the artistic sensibility developing, but takes her artist to the city to acquire the detachment she needs to pattern her experience.

Both Buckler and Munro, who, like Nowlan and Janes write about artist figures growing up in Canada in the 1920s and 1930s, portray their central characters as not being aware of a native tradition of literature. Buckler refers to David being impressed by the subtlety of the writing of E.M. Forster[47] and Munro has Del reading Tennyson.[48] Once again, the artist figures have to find their own way in expressing their own terrain.

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[46] Munro, Lives of Girls and Women, p. 210.

One point that does emerge in a study of the early novels about the artist is how seldom the actual creative process is discussed. At this stage the writers seem to be more concerned about the external influences on the artist figure and his social and cultural milieu. With the exception of Buckler, very few of the authors attempt to show the artist actually creating or pondering his artistic objectives or aesthetics. A more elemental survival as a creative individual in an apathetic or hostile environment is the focus of these books. The articulation of the artistic process is difficult at best in any circumstances; it is remarkable how many writers today, when asked how or why they write, simply state they "have to" or that they do not know why, and can go no further in analysing their gift. This articulation is particularly difficult in the early stages in the development of the tradition of the artist in Canada. At this point most of the authors are operating on an elemental level, coming to terms verbally with a terrain that has not found expression before; the foundations of a tradition are being laid in terms of a basic description of the external forces working on the artist. Deeper, more introspective questing for theory and technique and the building of loftier, more intricate edifices will come later. Buckler's The Mountain and the Valley is a noteworthy exception to this general observation. In his novel Buckler shows his artist figure agonizing over the right word or symbol to express a particular experience or emotion. He also shows David's strong admiration of other writers who are able to express themselves accurately, and David's revelation that he also can capture the essence of life if only he writes about what he truly knows and feels. In fact, Buckler's description of the process of creativity has not been excelled in Canadian fiction, even to this day.

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[47] Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley, p. 244.

[48] Munro, Lives of Girls and Women, p. 200.

CHAPTER IV

"This Goddam Hole"[1]

The family, often dominated by the stern father figure, is not the only influence that the artist must come to terms with in the rural literature of the middle period. There is another recurrent motif in the fiction that expresses the inadequacies and limitations of rural Canadian society: the small town or rural community. Like the family, which is a microcosm of the larger society, the town or community has little sympathy for the individual who does not conform to the established mold. The values of the small town are those noted in the section on the family: hard work, thrift, piety, humility and morality. Intellectual and creative pursuits are viewed with suspicion. The novel that particularly epitomizes the narrowness of the small town is Sinclair Ross's *As For Me and My House* (1941). Before looking at this novel, however, it should be noted that the other novels of this stage in the development of the artist figure, discussed in the previous chapter, also portray many negative examples of rural society's influence on the artist. A resumé of this pattern in these novels will serve as introduction to this chapter.

In Ostenso's *Wild Geese* the Gare family is a physically isolated unit and little is felt by Judith of influences from other sources. However, there is one person in her family, her sister Ellen, who strongly resembles a figure that occurs again and again in the fiction of the artist in the rural community: the sterile woman, or Hecate figure.[2] This is a character who mentally and spiritually epitomizes all the most negative forces in this environment. She is usually the moral legislator in the community and is suspicious of pleasure, equating it with sin. Often she plays a martyr role to win the sympathy and respect of her society. She is usually smug concerning her own virtue. Her appearance reflects her attitude toward life; her hair is often pulled back severely in a bun, her lips are thin and pursed, her dress is sombre and unadorned, and her figure is angular. She is an ominous figure, for she demands that all members of the community subscribe to her values. Often there is an aura of fear that surrounds her, for she searches out transgressors against her laws and makes sure that they are exposed and punished. Sometimes the sterile woman is not so malevolent a figure in the fiction. Rather than represent the attitudes that keep the rural community backward, unprogressive and unenlightened, she can be portrayed as a victim figure, representing the effects of a sterile environment on the individual. In this form she is a figure for whom we can have sympathy.

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[1] David Canaan's description of Entremont in Ernest Buckler's *The Mountain and the Valley* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1952), p. 165.

Judith's sister Ellen is a combination of the two types of sterile woman in that like Judith she is a victim of her father's physical tyranny, but unlike Judith she affirms Caleb's narrow philosophy in a stupid, unthinking, accepting way. She rebukes Judith for talking back to Caleb and watches with disapproval when Judith does anything that might be described as pleasurable. There is satisfaction in her eyes when Judith is found out and punished by her father. Ellen subscribes to the attitude that life is a value of tears and finds smug gratification in her own ability to persevere. However, she chooses to suffer and pain becomes an end in itself, which does not make her martyrdom admirable except to herself. For example, Malcolm, a former farm hand who is about to start a farm of his own, asks Ellen, whom he loves, to come away with him. Ellen does feel an unaccustomed rapture at his proposal, but equates it with guilt and says no. Malcolm represents the possibility of life for Ellen. He is described as a horseback rider, the horse and he being one, in tune with the rhythms of the land. By denying Malcolm Ellen is subscribing to a limited, sterile existence. Another example of Ellen's limited spirit is her piano playing. She plays as a duty to Caleb and her style is mechanical and forced.

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[2] Margaret Atwood analyses the occurrence of this figure in her Survival, Chapter X, pp. 195-214 [Toronto: Anansi, 1972].

Judith detests Ellen, whom she considers to be weak and lacking in spirit. The outlooks of the two sisters are antithetical. If Caleb epitomizes the hard work ethic that prevails in the frontier situation, Ellen represents the accompanying cultural attitudes: humility, perseverence and acceptance. Physically Ellen is described as thin, pale and weak compared with the dark, powerful Judith. Her myopic vision and thick glasses symbolize her limited outlook. As a symbol, Ellen is very effective in representing the frontier outlook which one finds often in the literature of this stage.

In Alden Nowlan's "The Wanton Troopers" Kevin O'Brien lives in a small rural Nova Scotian town called Lockhartville. The name of the town itself has negative connotations, suggesting the "locked hearts" of its inhabitants and their isolation from each other. Lockhartville is a very economically deprived community, more hard hit than many eastern Canadian towns by the depression because even the land on which it sits is rocky and barren and yields the basics of sustenance meagrely. At the centre of the town is the only source of employment for its people, a sawmill which screeches relentlessly from eight until five each day, six days a week, as it tears the bark from trees and slices them into neat lumber. The sawmill has a nightmarish fascination for Kevin. As it gobbles up the surrounding forest, he fantacizes that he may someday be caught in its hypnotic works and processed into the same neat package. The mill has an oppressive influence on Lockhartville generally. Each day men file to and from it, backs bent and eyes to the ground. Hard physical labour, long hours and low wages are not conducive to an attitude of celebration. In their rare leisure moments the men of Lockhartville subscribe to patterns of survival or escape; they tend their small vegetable patches or get blind drunk. The pervasive attitude toward books or art in Lockhartville, if they are considered at all, is that they are a waste of time and unmanly. One of the most discouraging aspects of Lockhartville is its spirit of defeat. It is as if the routine of the mill has mesmerized the citizens of the town to the extent that they cannot conceive of alternatives to their condition. Rather, they glory only in their ability to persevere, and suffering becomes an end in itself. On the whole, then, Lockhartville is a physical and spiritual desert as far as the mind and imagination are concerned. There is one character in addition to Kevin's grandmother O'Brien, described in the previous chapter, whom Nowlan employs in his novel to represent its sterile qualities: Miss Sarah Minard, an elderly spinster.

The Minard home was built in better times, and contains a library brought by the family from England when it first settled in Nova Scotia. Succeeding generations, however, have degenerated from the cultural standards of their ancestors, and the library has become, like much of the rest of the genteel old house, an unused mausoleum. Sarah Minard and her two brothers occupy only the kitchen and two bedrooms. This pattern of colonial degeneracy is found in several novels of this and the immigrant period. Often the colony or new country is so concerned with practical matters that it has little time for other matters. This means that there is a period of cultural vacuum between the coming of the educated first generation and subsequent generations who begin to find cultural expression for their new environment.

Kevin O'Brien has discovered the Minard's library, and having read all the books in the little Lockhartville schoolhouse, he delights in spending his afternoons in the dark old room, sheltered from the oppressive routine of the mainstream of the town, pouring through books that take him to worlds never dreamed of by his neighbours. One day he is interrupted from his delightful preoccupations by Miss Sarah who hitherto has let him read alone. On this particular day Miss Sarah is described as being in a state of strange excitement. Kevin has never seen her like this before, and is afraid. Years of loneliness and unhappiness in Lockhartville have led to occasional periods of madness in the elderly woman, when she yearns for the life she might have had elsewhere. Miss Sarah stares at Kevin with a look of hunger and runs her fingers through his hair. She says she had always hoped that one day a fine young man like him would come and take her away from here, across the seas. Miss Sarah's appearance is compared with that of the Witch of Endor. Her fingers are dry and rough like dead twigs and her hands are "chickeny". When she touches Kevin it is like the touch of a corpse. Her library is stuffy and smells of decay. She continues:

> No, Kevin I am death. . . No, it is true I am death. I was born dead. I was dead when I grew up. I am dead now. Zuriel and Reuben [her brothers] are living corpses. . . Do you know how men make an ox?. . . They turn it into a living corpse. Almost everyone in Lockhartville is a living corpse. Not only Zuriel and Reuben and I, but all the farmers and all the men in the mill, and all of their wives--living corpses, all of them! All! . . . One more thing! They'll come for you! Some night when you're asleep in bed they'll come for you, and they'll make you a living corpse like all the rest of us! They will! You wait and see. They'll come with knives and ropes and they'll drag you out of bed, and they'll--[2]

The desperate unhappiness of Miss Sarah provides an effective image in "The Wanton Troopers" of the imaginative, cultural and spiritual wasteland that is Lockhartville. Miss Sarah's mental breakdown anticipates Kevin's at the end of the novel.

Milltown, the setting of House of Hate, is as exciting a place to grow up in as its name implies. Like Lockhartville, the lives of the people there are regimented by the whistle of the mill in the centre of the town. It is also a duplicate of Lockhartville in the limited attitude to life that resides there. Beyond work and providing for a family there is nothing more for a man to concern himself with. Leisure time is spent drinking and fighting. Again there is a reduced, defeated air of failure about the place. As with Lockhartville, there does not seem to be a way out, or an alternative for most of the people. There is a feeling of isolation from or total unawareness of a world that might have any more meaning. The town is a tiny little circle comprising all that can be dreamed of in its inhabitants's philosophies. Juju Stone refers to it with the circle image as a "Hell-Hole". The image that most effectively represents Milltown is the mill, symbol of hard, practical necessity, a giant of stone and steel:

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[2] Nowlan, "The Wanton Troopers", p. 59.

> The focal point of all these divisions was the mill, now a vast amorphous pile covering acres and acres, from the peninsula of bark that kept creeping out into the harbour back to the enormous pyramids of pulpwood that lay on the landward side of the mill. These were constantly built up and renewed by huge phallic conveyors slowly but relentlessly bearing their sperm of logs to the very top and then dropping them onto the precious pile that activated the mill, giving life to the whole town. Work in the mill never stopped, night or day, Sunday or Monday. Always there came from that immensely sprawling paper factory a hiss of steam and belch of smoke and hum of power, plus periodic waves of the nose-tickling, throat-clutching sulphur dioxide gas which was one of the many by-products and which we up on the heights received in full blast and flavour when the wind was in the north-west.[3]

Occasionally Juju is almost able to see beauty in Milltown, as when he looks at it at night:

> Each Wednesday night when I left Hilda [his sister] I felt a pleasant calm in my mind and found myself in a mood to feel and appreciate the beauty of Milltown at night as I, standing on its rim, looked down into the gigantic bowl of mystery that was the harbour, and saw reflected in its blue serge depths the lighted windows of the paper sheds, like bars of gold strung on invisible wire. Often, as I crossed the hill, there would be a

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[3] Janes, House of Hate, p. 33.

> solitary rower making late way across the water, fire dripping from his oars, and a steady light shining from the other side of the bay to guide him safely home. For a little while peace entered my heart as I took in this magical scene whose hushed beauty was almost enough to reconcile me for the moment to the human darkness and chaos that Milltown really was.[4]

But there is a melancholy bitterness in the last sentence, a sense of even beauty being exposed in this place as a trickster, offering hope and grace when in fact they are an illusion, a conjuring act of darkness and quiet that will disappear with the daylight.

The community described in Ernest Buckler's The Mountain and the Valley does not have as oppressively claustrophobic qualities as those in the two preceding novels, although climbing the mountain and detaching himself from Entremont so that he can get it in perspective is an important part of the artistic process for David Canaan. Also, when David experiences the crisis over moving the rock he refers to Entremont as a "goddam hole", recalling Juju's reference to Milltown as a "Hell-Hole". Unlike the other artist figures, however, David does see certain aspects of his environment as being noble and beautiful, like the spirit of self-sufficiency that still exists in Entremont. It is not a place that has yet been destroyed by mechanization, although as the novel progresses David feels that the outside world is encroaching more and more and that the old ways are threatened. Also, the Annapolis Valley is a much richer area of eastern Canada than the areas described by Nowlan and Janes. In the meantime, however, there is a balance between man and nature that results in a spirit of harmony and love of place in the book, which is only broken when David observes its intellectual and artistic limitations.

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[4] Janes, House of Hate, p. 265.

There is one character, however, even in this idyllic setting who disturbs the smooth surface of peace and beauty. This is, like Miss Sarah, another sterile woman figure, Rachel Gorman, a widow, who epitomizes the narrow outlook of the frontier mentality. Rachel suspects anything that gives pleasure of being evil. She casts a shadow of gloom wherever she goes, reminding people that life is but a vale of tears. She fanatically denies life by emphasizing its negative aspects. Rachel is represented as a sinister rocking figure, the rocking chair representing stasis in its back-and-forth but stationary movement. As she rocks she grinds her negative attitudes into those around her. There is a plainness and grimness about her: "Her hair'd be drawn tight on her forehead. . . Her mouth'd be set in that look of uncompromising woe."[5] Rachel has the quality of attracting bad news and inspiring the worst in people: "It was always like that with any bad news that Rachel brought. No matter how plain her own innocence, you still felt, if it hadn't been for her, the old. . . if she hadn't attracted it."[6] "If Rachel had come at it directly, in plain anger or plain grief. . . but she always premised beforehand that you'd be unreasonable or unfair, so that's the way you were."[7] Rachel's presence acts like poison on any relationship that is based on love or faith. It gradually breaks down the love Chris, David's brother, has for Charlotte, Rachel's daughter; by making herself out to be a martyr, a poor old thing in the way, she attracts Charlotte's sympathy and divides the young couple in much the same way that Mrs. O'Brien does Mary and Judd in "The Wanton Troopers". She sows seeds of doubt about Joseph in Martha by sinisterly suggesting that he is not faithful or to be trusted, which leads to Martha's almost idyllic belief in her husband being undermined. She turns an act of kindness on the part of Martha, who sends her some pork, into one which glorifies her own poverty and martyrdom. Instead of expressing delight at the gift, she feels "beholding". When one of her neighbours cuts the period of mourning short after her husband dies, Rachel makes little insidious statements about it designed to glorify her own life of denial since her husband died.

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[5] Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley, p. 197.

[6] Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley, p. 197.

Rachel's home reflects her general character. Her kitchen is spartan-like in its bareness. There is no covering on the floor, there are no cushions on the wooden lounges and the stove's fire is kept low to save on heating costs, making the room ~~cold and~~ lifeless. Even at Christmastime this atmosphere prevails. There is no gaily decorated tree, and David observes that: "When they went into Rachel's kitchen, it was like going in out of Christmas."[8] Her rocker is described as ominously wearing away time that is held captive in her kitchen.[9] If it were only her own life she ground away, one would not be concerned, but it is also Chris's and Charlotte's lives that she is eroding. At the end of the novel David observes that Charlotte is starting to wear her hair pulled tightly back in a bun like her mother. Rachel's negative effects on David's mother have also been seen. Even when David's home life is happy he is aware that there are forces in the community that are restrictive and damaging that at times spread their tentacles into his supposedly safe family world. Rachel's influence is not as pervasive in David's world as grandmother O'Brien's and Miss Sarah's in Kevin O'Brien's but it does represent a narrow, uncompromising aspect of the community that David detests. When Rachel comes to tell Martha that Charlotte is pregnant by Chris, and describes the situation in terms of fault and sin David screams out at her to leave his home. Rachel's attitude is one that denies life and joy and is contrary to David's vision of Entremont which sees it in more ideal terms.

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[7] Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley, p. 198.

[8] Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley, p. 70.

Alive Munro presents Jubilee, the town in Lives of Girls and Women, as a rather smug, genteel little Ontario town which sits on a river and has all the amenities of civilization: a town square, a town hall, a newspaper, a post office, a small commercial district and quiet, tree-lined streets. It is a clean, tidy traditional town with a history that is unexceptional and indeed rather dull, but which is clung to proudly by its first citizens. Jubilee relegates its undesireables to the outlying districts, like the Flats Road, where Del spends her childhood. Nothing vital can be detected about the town's past and present, and nothing of consequence anticipated about its future. Rather, it clings to safe, polite forms and rituals.

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[9] Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley, p. 71.

Munro employs a whole catalogue of mad, suicidal or trapped women, many of them spinsters or widows or unhappy housewives, to symbolize the patterns of stasis and death that characterize Jubilee. There is Madeleine, "that mad girl" who lives next to Del for a few months when Del is still a young girl. Madeleine is from the city, where she had a child out of wedlock. Her family got rid of her by placing an ad in the paper for a husband and sending her to the first applicant. Madeleine's desperate unhappiness with her older husband on the Flats Road is displayed in her fits of hysterical temper and her beating of the child she brought with her. Another example of unhappy womanhood is Del's cousin, Mary Agnes, an overprotected girl with a neurotic mother. Mary Agnes, because her mother does all her thinking for her, is little better than an idiot, and seems to be Munro's comment on the ideal of womanhood in Jubilee: passivity. Aunt Moira, Mary Agnes's mother, is another woman whose life is one of unhappiness. Moira is a hypochondriac who has taken no pleasure in her marriage or womanhood, but rather experiences life as a series of female illnesses. Munro is commenting here on another aspect of Jubilee's effect on women: they are not supposed to enjoy sexual pleasure, so must sublimate it into negative forms. Del's spinster school teacher, Miss Farris, is another miserable woman. For years she has educated other people's children, all the time longing for a family and homelife of her own.

Each year her unhappiness reaches an apex at the school operetta, which she manages, as she organizes and costumes the children who perform for their proud parents. Miss Farris is continually making herself clothes so that she will be attractive to men, but there simply are no suitable males in Jubilee. Finally Miss Farris jumps off the bridge into the Jubilee River. Fern Doherty, the boarder Del's mother takes in, is a woman who wanted to be an opera singer, and who did not escape successfully from Jubilee, so works in the post office and sings at other people's weddings. She has a boyfriend whom she desperately wants to marry so she will be normal by Jubilee's standards, but he takes what he can and leaves her. Del's two spinster aunts who care for their bachelor brother at the old family home at Jenkins's Bend appear satisfied on the surface as they go about their household rituals, but underneath there is a note of hysteria as they viciously criticize Del's mother for her avant garde ideas, desperately recall old stories from the past, and ply Del with delicious cooking so that she will continue to visit. A ghostly character who haunts the background of the novel is the Sherriff girl who inexplicably walked into the Jubilee River as a teenager and drowned. Del is obsessed with this story from the past which particularly troubles her because of its loneliness and desperation. From this catalogue one receives the strong impression that Jubilee is not a happy town, particularly for its women who appear to be victimized by narrow expectations and forms. Munro employs women differently from the male authors of this section. She has more compassion for them, treating them as symptoms of a larger social situation and victims themselves rather than malevolent figures. However, their influence is not encouraging for the young female artist. A weaker person than Del

Jordan might succumb to the patterns of suicide and stasis offered by these prototypes. Fortunately Del has enough independence and objectivity that she is able to see each case as a negative example to be avoided and thus survives. Part of her strength in this regard is derived from the example of her mother, who Del early realizes is a desperately unhappy woman, years ahead of Jubilee in her conception of the woman's role in society. From observing her mother's unhappy marriage and strength and independence, and by listening to her mother's enlightened ideas, Del is able to conceive of other possibilities than those Jubilee offers. As she develops she goes beyond her mother, who she realizes still has some ideas that are carryovers from a narrow-minded society. When her mother gives Del advice about being a woman, Del thinks:

> I felt that it was not so different from all the other advice handed out to women, to girls, advice that assumed being female made you damageable, that a certain amount of carefulness and solemn fuss and self-protection were called for, whereas men were supposed to be able to go out and take on all kinds of experiences and shuck off what they didn't want and come back proud. Without even thinking about it, I had decided to do the same.[10]

Del determines that as an artist she needs the kinds of experience and independence that are denied women in Jubilee and that she must escape its narrow-minded patterns in order to grow.

There is one girl who does not have the independence of spirit and intelligence that Del has who succumbs to the traps that Jubilee sets for the female. We have the strong impression as we encounter the history of Naomi, Del's best friend through school, that there but for great good fortune goes Del. Naomi's story is one that is often repeated in the small town. She is raised to visualize her future in the limited terms of wife and mother. She leaves the academic stream in highschool and takes commercial training, then gets a job as a clerical assistant to a male employer and spends the little money she makes on make-up and clothes so that she will be attractive to men and on furniture on the lay-away plan in preparation for becoming a homemaker. This is before she has even met the man who will become her husband. She spends her evenings going to public places where she will meet men and finally becomes pregnant by and marries a man she hardly knows. Naomi's story is a tragedy in that as Del observes, the girl knows she is very unhappy and on a course that gives her no satisfaction, but she genuinely can conceive of no alternative.

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[10] Alive Munro, Lives of Girls and Women, p. 147.

Her quest for experience does almost get Del into much the same kind of trap as Naomi, but partly through luck and partly by resistance, Del manages to escape. Through high school Del was automatically paired with Jerry Storey, a fellow student, because both consistently received high grades. However, Del's relationship with Jerry left much to be desired. For one thing, Jerry asserted some very narrow and repressive theories about the intellectual capabilities of the female as opposed to the male. Jerry subscribed to the theory that men are more rational, women more emotional. Therefore he predicted that he would far outstrip Del in university, where her limitations as a female would become apparent. This did not tend to reinforce Del's confidence. Also, Jerry was incapable of an emotional and sexual relationship. In one scene in the novel he asked Del to take off her clothes, and when she did he observed her as coolly and intellectually as if she had been a frog in a biology class. Del decided that her relationship with Jerry Storey was inadequate, because it was based too much on pure intellectualism, and stopped seeing him. At the same time her curiosity takes her to a fundamentalist service where she meets someone who for her represents real life and the experience she feels she needs, Garnet French. Garnet has a reputation for being successful with women, and Del is strongly sexually attracted to him. Garnet does initiate Del into this aspect of life and for a time she is very happy, letting her academic work slide. The reader is aware of the chance Del is taking of becoming pregnant and falling into the same trap as Naomi, but Del by good luck rather than planning does not. However, there is an even greater threat offered by Garnet, and that is that he wants to possess Del not only physically, but also mentally and spiritually. This becomes apparent in the baptizing scene in the Jubilee River when Garnet tries to persuade Del to adopt his faith, and Del resists. Each time she says no, Garnet holds her under the water for a longer period. Del describes her growing awareness of what Garnet is doing to her:

> Suppose in a dream you jumped willingly into a hole and laughed while people threw soft, tickling grass on you, then understood when your mouth and eyes were covered up that it was no game at all, or if it was, it was a game that required that you be buried alive. I fought underwater exactly as you would fight in a dream with a feeling of desperation that was not quite immediate, that had to work upward through layers of incredulity.

> Yet I thought that he might drown me. I really thought that. I thought that I was fighting for my life.
>
> When he let me come up again he tried the conventional baptizing position, bending me backwards from the waist, and that was a mistake. I was able to kick him low in the belly -- not in the genitals though I would not have cared, I did not know or care where I kicked -- and these kicks were strong enough to make him lose his hold and stagger a bit and I got away. As soon as there was a yard of water between us the absurdity and horror of our fight became clear and it could not be resumed. He did not come towards me. I walked slowly safely out of the water which at this time of the year was not much more than armpit-deep, anywhere. I was shaking, gasping, drinking air.[11]

Del has the good sense to end the relationship with Garnet before it engulfs her completely. However, her relationship with Garnet has taught Del that there is more to life than what a formal education can give her, and she determines to go to the city, get a job, and have more experiences with "real life".

Like other artist figures in the small town, Del knows that there is noone in whom she can confide concerning her feelings about beauty and her desire to write. These must be kept secret; hence her manuscripts of novels and poetry are kept under her bed. In the novels already discussed, part of the stigma attached to being artistic had to do with reading and writing not being "masculine" or suitable occupations for virile men, a very pragmatic, frontier attitude. However, Del also realizes that were her artistic tendencies discovered, she would be considered "queer". Apparently the intolerance of the artist figure in this literature is not truly based on sexual stereotyping but rather on the community's mental rigidity about "normal" human behavior generally.

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[11] Alice Munro, Lives of Girls and Women, p. 198.

A much more concentrated study of the small town and its limitations for the artist figure is given in Sinclair Ross's As For Me and My House (1941).[12] Unlike the novels already discussed, Ross's does not take the form of the growing up experiences of the artist, from childhood to adulthood and beyond, but instead covers one year in the lives of a mature couple, the Bentleys. The novel consists of entries kept in Mrs. Bentley's diary during this period. However, Mrs. Bentley is an observant person, and in the pages of her diary we find vivid portraits of her husband, Philip and members of the community, a small prairie town called Horizon. The people described in Mrs. Bentley's diary can basically be divided into two opposing camps: the majority, the traditional, smug citizens of Horizon who subscribe to the smalltown "gods of piety and propriety",[13] epitomized by Mrs. Finley, ardent church-goer and do-gooder, who demands that all of Horizon conform to her definition of acceptable behavior; and the minority, a few individuals who find Horizon oppressive in its rigid moralisms and woefully limited imaginative attitudes and crave some more inspired milieu.

Before looking at the artist figures described in As For Me

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[12] Sinclair Ross, As For Me and My House (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1941).

[13] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 6.

and My House, a more thorough study of the town and its mentality will make their frustrations more understandable. The setting of the novel is the nineteen thirties, during the depression. Horizon, like most other small towns on the prairie, is experiencing not only the worldwide economic slump that made this period so difficult, but also drought that has dried the land and wind storms that create an almost lethal atmosphere. In fact, one is constantly aware in this novel of the physical elements. In the summer there is the dry, dusty air that chokes the inhabitants of Horizon, and in the winter there are the high, grotesque snowdrifts that encircle the houses like predatory serpents. This is a frontier landscape that demands the utmost of man for physical survival and leaves little energy for other pursuits.

Horizon itself is a poor, ugly little town that has sprung up to serve the needs of the surrounding rural area. The houses are plain and homogenous, betraying a lack of inspiration in their planning and design. The town is huddled along a main street which is itself part of a highway that links Horizon with other similar though distant towns. The houses are close together, suggesting their perilous situation on the vast, unpredictable prairie. Their upright structure appears to be almost a defiance of the predominantly horizontal[14] nature of the surrounding land, and from time to time avenging storms remind Horizoners of their precarious existence.

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[14] Laurence Ricou in *Vertical Man/Horizontal World* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1973) has observed and analysed the tensions to be found in much prairie fiction caused by this phenomenon.

Horizon is a spiritually as well as physically bleak town. Several factors contribute to this condition. An important one is its isolation. It exists so far from larger, more cosmopolitan centres that its inhabitants can conceive of no better or alternate patterns of existence, which means that their vision is very limited. Horizon is a small, closed, inward-looking circle. Also, as a relatively new town in what is basically still frontier territory, there is a concern about asserting man's order against an at times arbitrary nature, and the only way Horizoners know to do this is through the middle-class Victorian doctrines of their forefathers: morality and religion which they assert as strongly as they do the false fronts on Main Street. Any assertion of individualism, any alternate vision is a threat to the status quo and for this reason the creative person is not going to be accepted by this community. Rather than search for new patterns of thought and expression, then, the small town maintains the patterns of the past which results in an atmosphere of stasis and death. This is particularly culturally inhibiting because the vision that is asserted belongs to another time and place and prevents the growth of strong, indigenous ways of seeing and expressing.

Like Nowlan, Buckler and Munro, Ross also employs the motif of the sterile woman to represent the spiritual and cultural limitations of the small town. This time she appears in the form of Mrs. Finley, briefly introduced above, upstanding leader in the church and community. Although she is married and has twin twelve-year-old sons, Mrs. Finley is so bigoted and life-denying in every other way that she qualifies to be categorized with grandmother O'Brien, Miss Sarah, Rachel Gorman and Aunt Moira. Like them she is a figure who denies fun and pleasure, instead perceiving life as a serious business. Even as mother and wife she reveals herself as a hard, manipulating, uncompromising figure:

> The deportment and mien of her own family bear witness to a potter's hand that never falters. Her husband, for instance is an appropriately meek little man, but you can't help feeling what an achievement is his meekness. It's like a tight wire cage drawn over him, and words and gestures, indicative of a more expansive past, keep squeezing through it. . .And her twelve-year-old twins, George and Stanley, when they recited grace in unison their voices tolled with such sonority that Philip in his scripture reading after dinner sounded like a droney auctioneer.[15]

There is a "crusading steel in her eye to warn she brooks no halfway measure".[16] Mrs. Bentley, who is a minister's wife, feels Mrs. Finley's pervasive influence. She notes that Mrs. Finley "may mean some changes for Philip [her husband] and me too."[17] It is the kind of attitude that Mrs. Finley promulgates concerning art (that it is a shameful waste of good, valuable time that should be put to useful, practical purposes) that makes Mrs. Bentley press the soft pedal on her piano as she practices her favorite pieces in her own home and causes Philip to hide away his paintings and sketches in his study. Ross makes it plain that Mrs. Finley is not peculiar only to Horizon: "There's one at least in every town, austere, beyond reproach, a little grim with the responsibilities of self-assumed leadership -- inevitable as broken sidewalks and rickety false fronts."[18] There is an unsavory hypocrisy to Mrs. Finley that makes her all the more difficult to bear. While she is a pillar of the protestant church, she is not enough of a Christian to tolerate a Roman Catholic boy who is adopted by the protestant minister. While she pretends to be charitable, and understanding, she is the first to cast a stone at a girl from the country whom she discovers is pregnant. While she adheres to certain principles, it is not for the sake of the principles themselves, but for self-aggrandizement:

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[15] Ross, As For Me and My House, pp. 5, 6.

[16] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 5.

[17] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 5.

> she had to do the right thing by us -- that was Propriety; and as Main Street hostess she had to do it so well that no other hostess might ever invite us to her home and do it better -- that was Parity.[19]

Like many of the other negative female figures, she enjoys playing the martyr role; she is "good to a sacrificial degree,"[20] Mrs. Bentley observes. However, her martyr role is a front that disguises her true nature, that of representative of the forces that victimize and oppress the inhabitants of the town.

The narrow, insular attitude that Mrs. Finley represents in As For Me and My House, and that epitomizes Ross's conception of the small prairie town in the nineteen-thirties, results in persecution for those individuals in the town who are capable of perceiving life in different terms. Several characters in the novel desire expression of their alternate visions through art, but find expression difficult in Horizon.

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[18] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 5.

[19] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 6.

[20] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 6.

In the course of Mrs. Bentley's account of her year in Horizon, the reader becomes aware of a number of would-be artists who crave escape from Horizon's narrow perimeter, but because of a variety of circumstances are unable to leave. The first is Mrs. Bentley herself, who as a young woman studied to be a pianist. Mrs. Bentley had the potential to be a fine performer, but instead of pursuing her art with single-minded purpose, turned instead to pursuit of Philip Bentley, a theology student at the University. On the night of her greatest concert she played not for her audience generally, but for Philip. At the end of the concert Philip, elated with the magnificence of her performance, proposed marriage. From then on Mrs. Bentley devoted herself to her husband entirely. A symbol of Mrs. Bentley having denied her art and therefore herself is the fact that the reader is never given her first name in the novel. Rather, she is Mrs. Bentley, wife. She is the potential female artist of a generation earlier than Del Jordan, brought up with traditional expectations and conforming to them unquestioningly.

However, married life is not all happiness for Mrs. Bentley. There is a stillborn child, another symbol of her artistic death. Also, her marriage to Philip Bentley is not a happy one. Philip married her in that burst of joy and admiration he felt for her as an artist. Her metamorphosis to supportive housewife must be disappointing to him. Further, the Depression comes along and the Bentleys live in a succession of poor bleak prairie towns, where Philip Bentley is minister. His salary does not allow Mrs. Bentley to dress as well as she might, and she feels dowdy and ashamed compared to the other women and is not sure Philip understands why she emerges in such an inferior light.

The core of the Bentleys' problem, however, is that Philip is not happy with being a minister. He only took the training in order to acquire an education. His original dream was to be a painter. Mrs. Bentley feels guiltily that if it were not for her he could have pursued his career as an artist. She feels like an encumbrance on her husband.

At the same time, however, Mrs. Bentley has a strong survival instinct in the direction of preserving her marriage, at almost any cost. Whenever Philip becomes frustrated with the bigoted women in the church with whom he has to work, particularly Mrs. Finley, Mrs. Bentley steps in to prevent a strong altercation, afraid Philip will lose his job and thus upset their life together. At times like this Mrs. Bentley is revealed as an interfering shrew and she is aware of the negative implications of what she is doing, but she is desperately protecting her raison d'être, her marriage.

However, Mrs. Bentley does have a revelation concerning her marriage. It comes on a vacation she and Philip take on a ranch several hours from Horizon. In this detached situation she is able to see clearly what she could not see at home: that Philip is too good a painter to be wasted on small-town preaching. She realizes this as she and two others stand in Philip's tent looking at a fine painting he has done that day. Philip is asleep, exhausted by the creative act. Mrs. Bentley thinks:

> It was simple enough. No hard thinking to do, nothing tangled to get straight. He's an artist, that's all, and he's going to waste. It wasn't just temper or a good fit of pique today. . . . It's always been my way to confort myself thinking that water finds its own level, that if there's anything great or good in a man it will eventually find its way out. But I've never taken hold of the thought and analysed it before, never seen how false it really is. Water gets dammed sometimes; and sometimes, seeking its level, it seeps away in dry barren earth. Just as he's seeping away among the false fronts of these little towns . . . . Comfort and routine were the last things he needed. Instead he ought to have been out mingling with his own kind. He ought to have whetted himself against them, then gone off to fight it out alone. He ought to have had the opportunity to live, to be reckless, spendthrift, bawdy, anything but what he is, what I've made him.[21]

Tragically, Mrs. Bentley has the revelation that she has been the sterile woman to her husband, inhibiting his ability to grow as an artist, acting as part of the dam that has confined him in a claustrophobic environment. This is not an insight that could have come in Horizon, where Mrs. Bentley feels the stultifying pressures of the town's expectations of the minister and his wife. Rather, it comes when the Bentleys are able to temporarily escape the town's rigid role expectations and, in the wilder landscape of the foothills, see themselves in terms of other possibilities.

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[21] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 102. It is interesting to observe here that another prairie artist, Frederick Philip Grove, in his autobiography, In Search of Myself (1946) expresses similar reservations about the stultifying effects of marriage on the artist.

However, her experience does not go so far as to make Mrs. Bentley release Philip from the marriage. It is all she has, so she compromises. She starts saving money toward the day when Philip can buy a used book store and escape the hypocritical role of minister and the little town he detests. Perhaps the independence of owning a small business in the city will provide Philip with the freedom he needs to create more confidently. Mrs. Bentley does do her utmost within her limited terms to help Philip become a more satisfied artist.

That Mrs. Bentley's life in Horizon is not an easy one, that she finds the tensions between herself and her husband and between her husband and Horizon exceeding trying at times and that she regrets the loss of her own artistic integrity are testified to by her frequent solitary walks by day and night on the railroad tracks that lead out of Horizon onto the prairie. Time and again Mrs. Bentley seeks solace from the prying eyes of the community (mirroring her disappointment in herself) and the claustrophobic house she occupies with her husband. The house itself is symbolic of the Bentleys' condition. To begin with it belongs to the church, representing Philip's unwilling spiritual incarceration in Horizon; in fact, the church itself looms over it, casting a dark shadow that keeps the little house gloomy and oppressive. Physically, the house is not attractive or in good repair; it is painted grey and the rooms are covered with discoloured old wallpaper. The roof leaks and Mrs. Bentley can't get rid of an oppressive musty odour that emanates from the floor boards and walls. Mrs. Bentley's personal alienation results in her apprehending the ugliness around her in exaggerated, even paranoid images. In her diary she records that the bedroom wallpaper has a design of "insistent little pink roses that stare at you like eyes".[22] She describes the silence that pervades her home as being "screwed down like a vise".[23] She feels that something that does not approve of her lurks in the shadows, and observes that the ceilings are low, the windows crafty-looking. There are also images of victimization. Several times Mrs. Bentley refers to moths flying into fire and flies getting caught in ice. At one point she very tellingly describes life in Horizon as that of living in a tiny world at the bottom of a deep moaning lake.[24] Here again is the image of the demonic "Hell Hole" used by Buckler and Janes.

Although the other artist figures in the novel are seen through Mrs. Bentley's eyes, her portrayal is enough to allow the reader to make some evaluation of them. Philip Bentley is the artist Mrs. Bentley describes in most depth. As well as tell about Philip's frustrations in Horizon, she sketches a little of his past. Philip grew up in a small prairie town much like Horizon. He was born out of wedlock, and consequently not accepted in the best of the town's society. This stigma resulted in extreme bitterness on Philip's part. He developed early a cold, detached attitude toward the town as a defense mechanism against its moral superiority. Simultaneously he discovered a trunk belonging to the man who had fathered him but died before the marriage could take place. This man had studied to be a minister, but become disillusioned and decided instead to be an artist. The trunk is filled with books on art that inspire Philip imaginatively. They also give him a picture of his father that makes him proud. Philip is convinced that he was mentally and spiritually above the little people of this insignificant town. From this time on Philip is inspired with the notion of the artist as hero. He particularly clings to this notion to counter the fact that his mother is only a waitress in the town. The books in a way are a mixed blessing, however, for they not only quicken the imagination but also inspire defeat because they make Philip realize how insignificant he is in comparison to the great masters.[25] The small town boy has the desire but not the means to achieve the brilliance he sees displayed in the pages of books.

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[22] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 11.

[23] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 15.

[24] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 74.

Philip discovers that the way to escape the little town he so detests is to acquire an education and thus become mobile. When the church offers to pay his way and train him to be a minister, he accepts as a means to his end. University is a disappointment to Philip. He had thought it would liberate and inspire him in his art, but he finds instead that the people there are almost as genteel and amateurish as in his home town. Also, years of isolation and bitterness have made it impossible for him to participate successfully in the intellectual and social life of the university, and he is a lonely, silent figure there. This pattern of ideal expectations and then disappointment with reality is one that recurs constantly with Philip.[26] He lives in a world that is different from the one occupied by those around him. Mrs. Bentley describes it this way:

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[25] This pattern was also observed in the study of David Canaan who was both inspired and intimidated by the novels of Forster.

> It's been one of Philip's hard days, when the artist in him gets the upper hand. Reality as the rest of us know it, disappears from him. It isn't that he sits daydreaming or lost in the clouds -- at such times there's actually a vitality about him that you're relieved to get away from -- but actually as if he pierces this workaday reality of ours, half scales it off, sees hidden behind it another, more important, more significant than ours, but that he understands only vaguely. He tries to solve it, give it expression, but doesn't quite succeed. His nerves wear thin, let fly if you happen to intrude. He slips off limp to bed at last, and sleeps as if drugged till the next day, sometimes as late as noon.[27]

Unfortunately for her, Mrs. Bentley becomes one of Philip Bentley's subjects of disillusion. When first he meets her at university he envisions her in ideal terms as an artist, but after the marriage the more conventional housewife emerges, mostly because of practical necessity, but that does not soften the bitterness for Philip.

With marriage and the Depression, Philip finds that he must practice as a minister and that he cannot, after all, lead the life of the artist as he had expected to. This situation increases his bitterness and four small towns and twelve years later we meet him in Horizon where most of the action of the novel takes place. At this point, Philip has almost reconciled himself to a life as small-town minister. He half-heartedly performs his duties as minister, selecting hymns, attending teas and travelling to his rural charge. But his life is almost intolerable to him. At times his temper flares at the bigotry and narrowness of his parishioners, especially Mrs. Finley. His married life consists of sitting alone in his study by day, the door closed, sketching the lonely little scenes of life around him, emerging regularly for strained meals with his wife and finally retiring at night, usually to lie stiffly in bed, feigning sleep, to avoid any physical contact with Mrs. Bentley. The reason for Philip's coldness toward his wife lies partly in his disappointment at the inaccuracy of his early, idealized conception of her, but is more vitally a result of his own sense of failure as an artist and hypocrisy as a minister. His self-hatred pervades the house in which he and Mrs. Bentley live, amplifying and magnifying its ugliness.

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[26] This is also a characteristic of David Canaan's temperament. Both artist figures carry with them ideal notions about what life should be and are constantly disillusioned with reality. The only way their patterns can reach fulfillment is through their art.

[27] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 101.

Philip jealously protects and hides the sketches and paintings he does do, apparently feeling that there is noone in Horizon who will appreciate them and possibly feeling too that they are inferior pieces of art, not in keeping with his ideal created by the pages of the art books in his father's trunk. In subject matter and technique Philip may feel colonial and amateurish. He also feels guilty that he has been spending so much time in such "frivolous" activity when he should be ministering to his flock.

However, it is clear from Mrs. Bentley's and Paul Kirby's (the local teacher) reactions to Philip's work that some of it is quite good. From Mrs. Bentley's description of the paintings, the reader has the impression that they successfully capture the isolation, loneliness, deprivation, futility and overall pathos of the small towns he has lived in all his life. In the course of the novel Mrs. Bentley describes half a dozen or so of Philip's sketches and paintings in some detail and tells the reader she has saved three or four hundred of the best pieces of work over the past twelve years. Most frequently, Philip sketches the Main Streets of the little towns in which he lives. One such drawing of Horizon shows a wornout horse and buggy in the foreground with the town behind. The horse, Mrs. Bentley tells us, is in marked contrast to the town. One feels that it belongs on the prairie and is part of the rhythm of the land, whereas the town has an "upstart, mean complacency".[28] She notes that the false fronts on the buildings on Main Street do not look at the prairie, but at each other. They are smug, imposed, not truly there, but rather absorbed in their own reflections. She says the town should not be there; you want to smudge it out, it is so insolent and prevents the underlying rhythms of the land from completing themselves. The horse emerges as a symbol in As For Me and My House of release and escape. Philip sketches this creature often, one example being on the ranch the Bentleys visit on their vacation.

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[28] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 69.

In another Main Street drawing, Philip portrays a close up of the false fronts once again, this time showing them buckled low against the wind, resisting nature. In this sketch the fronts are "tilted forward, grim and snarling" and the "doors and windows are crooked and pinched."[29] But at other times Philip can be more detached from Horizon and see it within a larger perspective. There is one sketch of the town from a distance where it appears as a "lost little cluster on the vast sweep of prairie" where wind is the master.[30]

There is a very revealing sketch Philip does of his congregation as seen from the pulpit. The faces are "ugly, big-mouthed and mean eyed" according to Mrs. Bentley and the sketch generally has no feeling of warmth or humanity. Rather, it is distorted, intensified, alive with "cold, bitter life".[31] Most often Philip does express alienation from the small town in his work, although there is a paradox here as there has been in the work of other isolated and frustrated artists of this stage in the development of the artist figure. While Philip may not be pleased with the world he inhabits, he does express and crystalize its qualities through design and form. In fact, Philip is constantly telling his wife that it is really design he is interested in, not content.

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[29] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 74.

[30] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 74.

[31] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 17.

What can be concluded from Philip's work is that his vision contains a certain amount of complexity. On the one hand he often reveals the pettiness of the small town, yet he is capable too of becoming detached from it and seeing it in perspective as the small, vulnerable world it really is. Also, while he may despise some aspects of the culture of the prairie town, his prairie school house standing in the strange, uncivilized prairie landscape becomes a symbol of truth, ideals and reason, a microcosm of humanity, triumphing in difficult circumstances.[32] His frequent sketches of horses also take on a larger meaning. On the one hand they capture the beauty and rhythm of life, but also the difficulty of sustaining these qualities in the face of an environment that is implacable. A painting of two horses frozen against a fence by a treacherous blizzard epitomizes his vision.[33]

A revealing aspect of Philip's character is his desire to have a son. The Bentleys, as observed above, had a child who died in childbirth. In Horizon, Philip becomes interested in a young boy, Steve, whose parents have died. Although Steve is a Roman Catholic and Philip knows that the Protestant minister in this narrow-minded town should have no dealings with Papists, he takes Steve into his home anyway, defying the powers that be, and particularly Mrs. Finley.

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[32] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 80.

[33] It is worthwhile noting the similarity of imagery employed by prairie writers to reflect the strength of nature in this setting. Frozen figures have been remarked in Ostenso's Wild Geese and Grove's In Search of Myself.

As Mrs. Bentley notes, Steve is a rather hard-nosed boy with little sensitivity or emotion who takes Philip's concern about him for granted. Like most young boys, Steve is interested in horses and dogs and cutting a good figure in the town. However, this is not how Philip sees him. Just as he saw Mrs. Bentley in absolute terms as "the artist" when they first met, so he also sees Steve as an idealized version of himself as a boy, suffering the arrows of outrageous fortune and craving cultural nourishment. When the priests come to take Steve away to a Roman Catholic orphanage and Steve leaves the Bentleys without regret Philip still refuses to see the boy as he really is. Rather, he laments his going as another example of small-town persecution, because "someone" (probably Mrs. Finley) has troubled to tell the priests that one of their flock is being raised in a Protestant home.

The baby the Bentleys adopt at the end of the novel offers some hope that here at last Philip has the son he needs. It is a son by an affair with a sensitive, beautiful girl in the choir who has captured Philip's imagination and possibly the adoption of the child symbolically portends a brighter future for Philip. The adoption coincides with the Bentleys' decision to leave Horizon and start an independent life in the city, another hopeful sign. Even this son is almost lost to Philip, however, because the forces of small-town morality are so strong that he never dares admit his paternity. However, the affair with Judith helps jolt Mrs. Bentley into the realization that Philip must have more than Horizon can give them, and ultimately helps precipitate their move.

By the end of the novel Philip has lost Steve and Judith (both as a result of pressures within the town) but he will leave Horizon and has a son and a wife who has become convinced of his artistic ability. Whether or not Philip has the confidence in himself to become a great artist is not clear, although he is motivated enough to go to the city and close the deal for the book shop he will operate. However, there is reason to believe within the novel itself that Philip is a very promising artist. It is true that Horizon has not shown any appreciation of his work (to be fair, it hasn't had an opportunity to do so) and that Philip has tended to lack confidence in it himself. Yet if Mrs. Bentley's eye is at all accurate, the many paintings he has done over the years are powerful and impressive. Paul Kirby also appears to believe in Philip. Philip's lack of confidence probably has to do too with the models of art he has experienced in expensive, glossily reproduced books not having much relevance to his time and place. He is alone in his portrayal of the Canadian prairie and without an awareness of a tradition that has dealt with this landscape must have strong doubts about the value of his work and its subject matter. However, the reader does sense the strength of Philip's work and at the end of As For Me and My House there is some reason to hope that it will someday receive the attention it merits.

Before leaving Philip Bentley, the images which express his frustration in the small town environment must be noted. His name, Bentley, suggests a character who has been besieged by strong external forces. Physically, Philip is described as pale, tight-lipped and clench-fisted with tension and repressed emotion. His lack of verbal or physical relations with his wife and his constant retreats into his study also mirror the difficulties of plying a lonely craft in an unresponsive environment.

Another character in the novel who has artistic aspirations is Judith, the girl who sings in the choir and with whom Philip has an affair. Judith's background is similar to that of Judith Gare in Wild Geese in that she also comes from a farm family that does all it can to impede a joyful and creative spirit. As a child Judith walked miles every week so that she could practice on the piano in the local church. She did man's work on the farm in order to make enough money to escape from the farm. Her parents considered her musical interests and desire to go to the city where she could receive further training to be signs of superiority. They wanted her to marry the farm boy next door. Judith tells Mrs. Bentley:

> "They say at home I'm too big for my shoes, but it isn't that. I was always sure that there was something more than cows and pigs and people like Dan -- even before I really knew. It just wouldn't have been right if there hadn't been."
>
> "You mean, not dramatically right," I suggested. She peered at me a moment, then repeated, "Not dramatically right. I stooked and drove a binder and a grain team, then walked the streets trying to find a job, till everything I'd saved was gone and there was nothing left but to come back and start working for the Wenderbys. You see, though -- even that much is better than staying home like the others. At least a little more dramatically right. . . .
>
> "I'm not a coward for the things I want. . . , I worked far harder trying to get away from the farm than I ever would just living on it. Dan [the neighbor boy] 's a nice boy. . . . It would be easier than working for the Wenderbys, but it would leave me just where I started. I'd always feel guilty,

> I think, that I'd given in too soon. There'd be nothing more that really counted.[34]

Through guts and determination Judith does get to the city with money she has earned and acquires training as a secretary in order to survive financially. However, the Depression results in her not being able to find a position, and rather than return home she goes to Horizon and works as a maid. In Horizon Judith is looked at with suspicion by the town matrons who suspect no good of a young girl on her own. Judith's life there is one of loneliness and unhappiness. The only time she comes into her own is in the choir, where her voice excels all others. Mrs. Bentley observes that there is a strange whiteness and intensity to Judith's face as she sings, and that her voice is capable of scaling the wind. Like the prairie horses, Judith seems in tune with her environment, not imposed and rigid.

It is not surprising that Judith and Philip, both frustrated by the sterility of the town and their roles there, are attracted to each other. Mrs. Bentley observes that Judith looks at Philip in a special way, revealing her interest in him, and that she catches Philip several times trying to capture the strange beauty of Judith's face in a sketch. However, the affair is short lived. When Judith is discovered to be pregnant she is sent home in disgrace by an indignant and smug Horizon where she dies in childbirth, a victim of oppressive insularity. Philip, also sensitive to the feeling of the town, does not acknowledge his paternity of the child, thus denying the free spirit that Judith has offered him.

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[34] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 56.

There is one final brief, poignant sketch of a potential artist figure in As For Me and My House, that of a young boy, Peter Lawson, whom the Bentleys meet in Philip's rural territory outside Horizon. Peter's father is a farmer and his parents are reasonably encouraging of his musical talent. They have saved their money and bought a piano for the boy. However, because of poor crop yields, the Lawsons will have to sell the piano in the fall. Further, Peter has an accident with a runaway and his health is declining. The Lawsons have heard that there is a doctor in the city who might be able to help the boy, but cannot afford to take him there for treatment. Peter's health deteriorates gradually and that winter he dies. His father observes, perhaps accurately, that he is better dead than in this hard world. Philip Bentley, in his capacity as minister, can offer little consolation, possibly concurring with Lawson. Once again the artist succumbs in a milieu that makes his survival almost impossible.

Ross's novel repeats patterns that are now familiar. Basically it portrays four artists or potential artists, all of whom are victimized by strongly negative physical, cultural or economic forces. Although there is some hope that one of these artists, Philip Bentley, will continue with his work, the overall situation of the artist in Horizon is one of alienation and frustration. The artist figures strive for meaning and fulfillment but are constantly thwarted by the environment's oppressive characteristics. However, while for several of the artist figures Horizon brings death, there is strength and power in the work of the one artist who is able to give form and expression to its characteristics. Philip Bentley fights against odds that threaten to engulf him and survives.[35]

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[35] Another novel which presents the imaginative and creative limitations of the small town is Shelia Watson's The Double Hook (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1959). While the novel does not deal in depth with a character who can be described as a full-fledged artist figure, there is one sensitive individual, Ara, who at times feels the need to tell her experience to others and to "fit the pieces of life into a pattern" (p. 76). Like the other writers of this section, Watson employs the spiritually sterile woman to epitomize the forces of the isolated rural society that impede a natural, free, joyous celebration of life. Mrs. Potter, who dies as the novel opens, has held the town psychologically in her bigoted, narrow-minded spell for as long as people can remember. She is described as a figure of death, prying into people's affairs, sowing seeds of doubt and suspicion, suspecting the worst always, and enforcing a rigid code of laws, particularly moral. The extent of her influence can be seen when one observes that even after her death her presence is still felt in the town. Mrs. Potter's insular, limited world is symbolized by the strangling pattern of vines on her dress, not unlike the weeds and ivy that lock the Lethens into their world of death in White Narcissus. The physical terrain of the novel, which is dry and cracked with drought, also represents the sterility of her pervasive attitude. Ara imagines she sees Mrs. Potter by the river, and she feels "death leaking through from the centre of the earth. Death rising to the knee. Death rising to the loin" (p. 21). The image of prying eyes which occurs so often in the literature of this section is also used to describe Mrs. Potter's influence in the community: "Now Greta'd set in the old lady's chair. Eyes everywhere. In the cottonwoods the eyes of foolhens. Rat's eyes in the bare rafters. Steers herded together. Eyes multiplied. Eyes. . . Nothing had changed" (p. 43). Like Mrs. Finley, Mrs. Potter is a representative character. When she dies her daughter Greta assumes her dark mantle. Mrs. Potter is an unnatural woman who defies the very sun by lighting her lamp at noon, blotting out any attitude more enlightened than her own. She is feared even by her children for whom she feels no love. When one of the young women of the town, Lenchen, becomes pregnant by Mrs. Potter's son James, he is afraid like Philip Bentley to acknowledge paternity of the child because he sees his act in the limited terms of his mother as one of sin. In a fit of frustration James kills his mother and rides out of the town.

Ross has not presented a pleasant picture of the prairie town as an environment for the artist figure. A precarious economy, an unpredictable and harsh nature, religious bigotry, moral severity and isolation all reinforce or mirror an overall vision that is negative and inward-looking. The artist lacks an audience who will be sympathetic to his goals and the training that would help him carry them out. In this environment he can feel persecuted and victimized, conditions reflected in the imagery with which he is described. He is also a self-conscious character who lacks confidence about his art because he feels he is in the backwaters of civilization. He is not aware of a native tradition that would reinforce his need to pattern his environment. Often he seeks escape from the town, but escape is not easy. More frequently he stays and struggles with the forces around him. As he does so, his experiences take form and he expresses them through his art. It is a creative process that is grueling because it is done in complete isolation from others and is a product of

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[35] But Watson subscribes to the notion that it is not necessary that the Mrs. Potters of this world should reign forever. She has James ride to a different town where he encounters some prostitutes who take all his money and laugh at him. The experience is a revelation to James, because he sees Lenchen in a new light. Whereas the prostitutes take all they can get from him, Lenchen has given him all she could. James becomes aware of the power of love and from this time on the world of The Double Hook is a different one, presided over by life in the form of Lenchen's child whom James returns to, acknowledges and embraces. Symbolically the rain comes and Ara has a vision of the future which obliterates the backward orientation this world took under Mrs. Potter. Watson reveals to the reader in her highly symbolic allegory that it is time for Canadians to triumph over the limitations of their world and choose a more positive direction.

frustration and alienation. Sometimes the negative environment is so oppressive that the artist figure succumbs, but if he is successful in articulating his experience the result can be magnificent. As with The Mountain and the Valley, one must look beyond the action of As For Me and My House to its author and his success in giving meaning and form to the social, economic and cultural world that shaped him. When one does so, the novel is a tribute to the philosophy that out of conflict comes progress. Ross has delved deeply and painfully into the world that he at times must have hated and brought it to life in a way that rings strong and true. Both As For Me and House and The Mountain and the Valley are tributes to the excellence the Canadian writer can achieve by a penetrating study of the rural landscape and its influence on the artist. These novels illustrate a progress beyond the novel of the artist of the late nineteenth century, discussed in Chapter Two. That fiction was often shallow by comparison because it refused to grapple with the truth of the Canadian artistic experience, but rather, because of its colonial orientation, chose to present a less convincing, fairy-tale-come-true version: the Canadian artist taking the European capitals by storm. While the nineteenth-century novels reflect the optimism Canadian writers felt after Confederation for the future of the Canadian artist, they do little to come to terms with the true condition of that figure, and with the possible exceptions of Duncan and Wood must be viewed as interesting period pieces.

Other patterns of imagery than the ancestral home presided over by the stern father figure and the small town controlled by the sterile woman can be found in the rural novel of the artist. Some have been noted already. The images fall into two general categories: those which express the trapped, claustrophobic and victimized feelings of the artist figure caught in a setting that is not sympathetic toward his goals and those which express his desire to escape. Of the first, the most frequently occurring are circles, watching eyes, caged and slaughtered animals and crucified figures. Of the second the most pervasive is the train, although the mountain, water and the city also occur.

Knister's White Narcissus, as already observed, employs a dark home, overgrown with vines and weeds to present a world that subscribes to what is past and dead. The sickly sweet narcissi that spread their perfume throughout the home are like a paralysing opium and are cultivated by a woman who refuses to look to the future but rather dwells on a stale incident from the past. She holds her daughter and her husband in her ominous spell. Knister also employs mythology to enhance the spirit of death in the home. The family name, Lethem, immediately conjures up visions of the dark, murky underworld, one of the rivers of which is Lethe, the river of forgetfulness. The narcissi, pale and ghostlike, are not unlike the meadows of asphodel which are reputed to grow in Hades, and their suffocating perfume is appropriate to the world of Sleep and his brother, Death. It is the artist figure, Richard Milne, who attempts to convince Ada Lethem, caught in the spell of this place of death, to leave it for the city where together they will build a new world based on love. The accidental upset of a pot of narcissi by Ada's father breaks the spell of the past and Ada and Richard are free to escape the backward world of Ada's home. The patterns of escape and love at the end of the novel portend a positive world of life and creativity for the pair.

Nowlan's "The Wanton Troopers" implies by its title the world of victimization and cruelty inhabited by Kevin O'Brien. The novel consists of a series of negative experiences in which Kevin either observes the brutal treatment of animals (the incidents of the cat, deer and cow have been described in Chapter Three) or is strapped himself in the shed. These examples of physical brutality mirror a world of spiritual and cultural severity which results in extreme feelings of mental persecution in Kevin. Images of claustrophobia also appear in "The Wanton Troopers". As Kevin watches some horses running in circles within a fenced field he feels an impulse to set them free. Within his own home Kevin sometimes feels eyes watching him through the windows and walls. Images of death also pervade the novel, both in the form of Kevin's grandmother, dying from cancer, who presides over the family home and old Miss Sarah Minard who represents the individual who did not escape from Lockhartville, but remained trapped within it for life. Also, as Kevin walks down the woods road to school in winter he tries to avoid the shadows of the tall, dark evergreens that loom up on both sides of him, for they remind him of midnight and death.

There are some images in "The Wanton Troopers" that feebly suggest the possibility of escape. When Kevin is a young boy and miserable at home, he sometimes goes to see his Uncle Kaye who disdains work and lives by his wits, that is, by stealing. Uncle Kaye has been outside of Lockhartville and has seen something of the world. He sings songs to Kevin about hoboes, vast prairie skies and fright trains. The songs fill Kevin with a "dark, sweet sadness." As the depression is on, Uncle Kaye is not the only man for whom the trains have meant escape. There is a history in Lockhartville of men going off on the trains to help with the harvests in the west. Those who come back regret it. In the end, Kevin does not get on a train, he remains in Lockhartville. But there is one way Kevin has of transcending Lockhartville, even when he is in it. When he is on or in water Kevin finds a strange, mysterious potential for escape and joy that is difficult to describe. As a child he can swim "without self-consciousness and with ease and grace. . . like a trout or a silver salmon."[36] This is one of the very few times Kevin is described as being free and unoppressed by his landscape. When he is older, he goes skating and is so entranced by the moon and the ice on the pond that he becomes metamorphosed. Those other Kevin O'Briens, who were so unhappy or so afraid become detached: "tonight, at this moment, he could look at all of them in wonder and pity."[37] He feels elation and joy and a tremendous potential to do anything. Nowlan employs water as an image of the imagination:

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[36] Nowlan, "The Wanton Troopers", p. 30.

[37] Nowlan, "The Wanton Troopers", p. 177.

> Tiring, he slowed and looked up at the moon. He skated on the moon. Yet the moon still floated in the sky. In the worlds of Scampi, Kev, Namesake, Young Feller, Mister Big Breeches, Laddie and Kev-von, this would have been impossible. In the world of this luminous, moonstruck Kevin O'Brien nothing was impossible. In this world the earth was liquid and the water was solid. Solid like the water that was ice. And here, he was Kevin-David, King of Israel.
>
> Peter had walked on the water. Now he -- Kevin-David -- was running on the water! This was a miracle! Oh, he knew everything now. But most of what he knew could never be told, because there were no words: even in his own mind he could not think of it in words: it had to be felt.[38]

The ice for a miraculous moment suggests the possibility of reflecting life that excites Kevin as a potential artist. He briefly glimpses a way of metamorphosing the hard world around him into something over which he will have control. However, his vision is as fleeting as the moonlight. He feels inadequacy at his ability to carry through the process successfully. As a child he loved the stories of miracles in the Bible, but now when he feels the possibility of being the miracle-maker himself, he cannot carry the process through. Unlike David Canaan, Kevin never has a complete vision of how he can express the world around him, only infrequent glimpses of the possibility like shafts of light in a dark world. In fact, early in the novel Kevin describes the words in the Bible, the only book at home, as units in a charm against the dark powers of night. If only Kevin could find his own words he would conquer the darkness of Lockhartville, but Nowlan did not conceive of that possibility at the time of writing "The Wanton

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[38] Nowlan, "The Wanton Troopers", p. 177.

Troopers".

For Juju Stone, Milltown is a deep, dark "Hell-Hole", from which escape is possible on the physical but not the mental level. Although Juju does get on the train whose tracks lead in a straight line away from the circle that is Milltown, and attend university first in St. Johns, then in Toronto, and marry and work in Toronto, memories of Milltown make it impossible for him to put down new roots. His marriage is a failure because the sex act conjures up fears of repeating the cycle of the ugly home and unhappy family. Once again images of sterility rather than life emanate from the artist's past. Juju finds himself periodically returning to Milltown, trying to come to terms with it and set it behind him once and for all. But each return visit only confirms the horror of the past, and at the end of House of Hate Juju is a lonely wanderer, searching for proof that all the world is not like Milltown. Within Milltown, as a boy, Juju found methods of escaping the negative environment briefly. He craved a more exciting and luxurious world which he found partly in books borrowed from the school library and partly through pure fantasy. Hours of his youth were spent fabricating visions of rich, spicy foods, luxurious clothing and exotic people. These orgiastic fantasies alleviated the yearning for the beautiful and the sensuous that Juju felt so strongly in his fish and potatoes world.

The imagery used by Buckler in The Mountain and the Valley to express the condition of David Canaan at times resembles that of Nowlan in "The Wanton Troopers". Like Nowlan, Buckler employs animal victims for whom the artist has a deep sympathy. Once again, the animals reflect the persecuted feelings of the artist in an environment that has no sympathy for him. As a boy, David springs the rabbit snares his brother Chris has laid on Christmas Eve because he cannot bear to think of animals strangling on that night particularly. At the annual fall pig-killing, when David is a young man, Chris sees David's aversion to the ritual and remarks to the other men: "Dave don't like to see anything killed."[39] David is furious at the remark, which Chris did not intend him to overhear, and in a rash moment of anger determines to prove that he is not more sensitive than the rest of Entremont. He volunteers to climb the rafter to secure the rope from which the pig will be suspended. However, as soon as he finds himself far above the others his true character reasserts itself and David realizes he is afraid of the height and not like the others. His fall from the rafter, long period of recuperation and the resultant jagged scar on his face set him off like Cain even further from the community. David himself dies a young man in his early thirties, on a mountain top, similar to Christ. The death of David's girlfriend Effie from leukemia increases the patterns of sterility and victimization in the novel. It negates the possibility of a happy, normal life in Entremont as husband and father for David. The tragedy is increased because David, who thinks Effie died from pneumonia, feels responsible for her death which resulted not long after he made love to her in a damp field. It is worth noting how few authors of the novel of the artist in the rural environment present the artist figure as happily married with children. These optimistic patterns do not complement the statement being made about the rural condition.

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[39] Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley, p. 189.

Buckler also employs the circle image in his novel, but he uses it in a more complex manner than the other authors at this stage. Sometimes the circle represents entrapment, but it is also an image of completion, reflecting the fact that David does at the end of the novel have the artistic revelation that is denied most of the other artist figures. For example, Entremont itself is a tiny little town with mountains on both sides and a road running through. David at one time tries to escape from Entremont, but finds he cannot. On the one hand it has limitations of vision that he finds almost intolerable, but on the other hand it is the place that has molded him and he feels strong ties there. Similarly, the rock that David and Joseph attempt to move to the edge of the field for a moment represents the impediments David finds in Entremont to the development of a strong artistic vision, but on the other hand it also represents all the culture and tradition of the area in that it has stood in the field as a touchstone for generations of David's family. On the whole the circle is employed as a more positive than negative symbol by Buckler, if one considers the overall pattern of the novel. One is particularly aware of this at the end, when David's grandmother finishes the circular rug she has been hooking, incorporating into it all of the family's past through the bits of fabric she has saved over the years. This in turn is a symbol of the vision David has on the mountain of how he can encompass Entremont in a lasting form, the novel. Also, the novel begins with David as a young boy attempting a climb up the mountain but not achieving that goal, and ends with David reaching the mountain's summit. The patterns of balance and completion that give form to The Mountain and the Valley reflect Buckler's optimism in the possibility of his artist figure finding the means to expression.

Within this larger pattern there are negative images in addition to those of victimization that suggest David's feelings of frustration in an environment that appears limited compared to those he reads about in English novels. The road not taken has been referred to. A similar image is that of the train. As Toby, who has lived in Halifax and seen the world as a sailor in the Canadian Navy, leaves Entremont for the last time, David works in the field by his house, deliberately hoping to be able to see Toby and wave good-bye. David feels a little uncomfortable at the thought of the train because for him it represents the world he has not seen and his parochial life. When the train finally goes by, Toby is talking with another sailor and has forgotten all about David and Entremont. For David this incident epitomizes his isolation and limited experience. The train represents a whole world he will never see and makes him almost sick with inadequacy:

> A hollowness sucked suddenly against his breath. . . .
> But the panic wasn't only that the one friend he'd ever had had gone away. It was always someone else that things happened to, that was the panic of it. . .
> He looked at the apple trees he had pruned to such perfect shape, and so proudly, in the spring that was gone. A baring and frightening light shone suddenly on his own life. It was like a strip of daybreak striking down a long naked coridor.

> This was the toppling moment of clarity which comes once to everyone, when he sees the face of his whole life in every detail. He saw then that the unquestioned premise all his calculations had been built on was false. He realized for the first time that his feet must go on in their present path, because all the crossroad junctions had been left irretrievably behind. Anything your own hands had built, he had always thought, your own hands could destroy. You could build a wall about yourself, for safety's sake, but whenever you chose you could level it. That wasn't true, he saw now. After a while you could beat against the wall all you liked, but it was indestructible. The cast of loneliness became pitted in your flesh. It was as plain for others to see and shy away from as the slouch of a convict.[40]

However, the negative image of the train is overcome at the end of the novel when David realizes that the world he has inhabited all his life is the only valid one for him and that it merits artistic treatment just as much as those hitherto more important centres he will never see. As David dies, a train whistles beyond the valley, suggesting David's triumph.

The mountain is the major symbol in the novel of escape from stagnation through creation. The mountain has a profound effect on David throughout his lifetime. It beckons him from the time he is a young boy, but his efforts to climb it are continually frustrated. It is not until David is capable of a mature vision which puts the valley and his life in perspective and crystalizes its patterns that he climbs the mountain. As he distances himself from his little community the past rushes forward in a vision that demands expression.

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[40] Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley, pp. 274-275.

David realizes that he does not live outside of his community as an anomoly but rather that he is capable of becoming it through setting it down in a lasting form. David's death is a symbolic one, representing his metamorphosis to a new level of understanding, and the partridge that flies over the mountain signifies his final triumph over the negative forces that oppressed him in the valley.

For Del Jordan in Alice Munro's Lives of Girls and Women the images that serve most to exemplify the limitations of Jubilee have already been noted: the catalogue of unhappy women, the deathly old house at Jenkin's Bend and the baptism. Munro like Nowlan also employs the image of being watched to suggest the inward-looking nature of the town and its oppressive influence on the artist. As Del walks down a street there is a feeling that overcomes her of eyes looking out from behind the polite lace curtains of the homes. The solution Munro proposes to Del's problem is simply to get out of Jubilee to the city and have the varied experience that Del knows she needs. Jubilee will always be an important part of Del's experience, and as the novel closes there is a brief account of her looking back at it and trying to present it in writing with complete accuracy. The city acts like the mountain in Buckler's novel in that it gives the artist the detachment and perspective she needs to be able to come to terms with her experience.

As For Me and My House presents the densest patterns of negative imagery of any of the novels of this stage. Images of writhing serpents, burning moths, trapped flies, frozen horses, moaning lakes, dark deserts, hungry wolves and witches' Sabbaths spring up and flourish on the pages of Mrs. Bentley's diary. Like David Canaan she is described as a crucified figure as one night a strong wind pins her against the grain elevator: " stood against the south side of the elevator, letting the wind nail me there. It was a dark, deep wind; like a great blind tide it poured to the north again. The earth where I stood was like a solitary rock in it. I cowered there with a sense of being unheeded, abandoned."[41] Because Mrs. Bentley has to walk carefully the thin line between her husband and Horizon, keeping peace in both camps, she has little time in her day to day life to worry about her own lost career as an artist. However, her unhappiness and tensions spill out in those solitary moments when she takes up her pen and opens her diary. Ross's device of having Mrs. Bentley write only in her diary, a private document, is in keeping with the other artist figures of this stage who when they do find expression so often keep their work to themselves. However, there is the paradox that it is Mrs. Bentley's diary that the reader reads, and from this perspective Mrs. Bentley emerges as the true artist figure in the novel. If we see Horizon with painful depth and clarity, it is through Mrs. Bentley's highly sensitive eyes.

The railroad tracks leading out of Horizon are an important symbol in As For Me and My House of the artist figure's need to escape the tiny, insular town. Time and again Mrs. Bentley feels the need to flee Horizon's oppressive circle and walk along the straight line leading out of the town. She walks in all kinds of weather, in attempts to free herself temporarily from the pressures of home and community. As she walks through the town on her way to the tracks she feels the windows watching her, disapproving: "slant-eyed through a thin raw fog that began to gather on my coat in woolly little knots of rime. . . . Still the windows watched me, made me tread uneasily, conscious of myself."[42] It is not only Horizon that Mrs. Bentley is trying to get away from on these walks, but also herself, or what the series of small towns she has lived in as the minister's wife has turned her into. She says that Horizon is "too much like a mirror";[43] on the prairie she is able to escape the role of minister's wife and at least temporarily reaffirm a sense of her true self. Judith also likes to escape Horizon by walking along the tracks or just going down to the station and watching the trains coming and going, pretending that she is a passenger out of Horizon herself. Judith describes the train's fascination:

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[41] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 159.

> When I was sixteen I came in and worked a few months for Mrs. Finley. It wasn't long till I started making excuses down to the station at night when the train came in. Mrs. Finley forbade it, but I would slip out anyway. It always excited me, the glare of the headlight, the way the engine swept in steaming and important, the smoky, oily smell. On the farm, you know, we don't see trains very often. When it was gone I'd stand by myself on the platform watching the green tail light disappear past the elevators, listening to the whistle, two long, two short at every crossing. Finally Mrs. Finley sent me home, with

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[42] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 145.

[43] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 23.

> a letter to my father that she was afraid I'd come to no good end. He took my wages as punishment, and bought a mower.[44]

The train has the most significance for Philip Bentley. As a young boy the train embodied for him all his dreams of escape from the little town he detested. It represented "somewhere, potential, unknown. . . another world, his world."[45] His home, a restaurant, faced the station. Each day it was his job to beckon the passengers from the train to the restaurant for dinner. Each day the train took the passengers away after dinner, leaving him behind. Finally, when Philip does get on the train and go to the city for his education, he is disappointed. The world that the train embodies in his dreams is not the world the train takes him to. After his marriage, Philip finds himself in a series of small towns, all with stations and trains. In the final one, Horizon, Mrs. Bentley notes that the sound of the train still makes him wince sometimes: "At night, when the whistle's loneliest, he'll toss a minute, then lie still and tense. And in the daytime I've seen his eyes take on a quick, half eager look, just for a second or two, and then sink flat and cold again."[46] The train represents for Philip a world he once believed in, and that, at times when he is off-guard, he would still like to believe in; but it is a world that does not exist in his reality. The sound of the train has become a mockery of his once-possible dreams of escape and fulfillment. It reminds him of "the outside world he hasn't reached."[47] It is Mrs. Bentley who describes the lure and mystery of the train:

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[44] Ross, As For Me and My House, pp. 56-57.

[45] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 29.

[46] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 29.

> Then all assembled, the train pulled slowly past us. There seemed something mysterious and important in the gradual, steady quickening of the wheels. It was like a setting forth, and with a queer kind of clutch in my throat, as if I were about to enter it, I felt the wilderness ahead of night and rain. There were two long whistle blasts that instantly the wet put out. The engine left a smell of smoke and distance.[48]

The final image of escape in As For Me and My House is the city, which offers the hope of a new start for the Bentleys. At the end of the novel they are about to leave Horizon and take up residence in a larger centre. The reader's feelings are mixed concerning the possibility of them finding success in their new milieu. One has the strong impression that the series of small towns in which the Bentleys have lived may have scarred them psychologically for life, as Milltown scarred Juju Stone. Also, one feels that Philip Bentley is such an idealist that no reality will ever come close to giving him satisfaction. He will likely remain in his own private imaginary world even in the city. The baby the Bentleys have adopted is an ironic symbol in that it was truly Judith who had the courage to bear it and it is a testimony to Philip's denial of the girl who had the strength to defy Horizon's laws. On the other hand, Philip will no longer have to maintain the hypocritical role of minister in the city and he has already produced a sizeable and apparently strong collection of paintings. Perhaps the new locale will leave him free to continue his work more openly and honestly. The future of the Bentleys is really a question mark. What is important in As For Me and My House is the strong portrait it presents of the artist in the rural community. Its ending also points toward the city, like Munro's Lives of Girls and Women, anticipating the novel of the urban artist which is the next stage of the development of the artist figure in Canadian fiction.

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[47] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 33.

[48] Ross, As For Me and My House, p. 131.

It is likely that the pervasive patterns of negative imagery employed by the writers of the novels of the rural stage of the development of the artist figure have to do not only with the negative aspects of the environment and the tension between the artist figure's ideal conception of the world he would like to inhabit and the less than ideal reality, but also with the hesitancy of the authors of the novels themselves who are products of the worlds they describe, are not strongly aware of a strong native tradition of literature, and are no doubt hesitant and self-conscious about the merit of their work and subject matter. If one pictures the Canadian fiction scene before The Mountain and the Valley and As For Me and My House particularly, one has some conception of the vacuum in which Ross and Buckler must have felt themselves working. Certainly there were Canadian novels, but they were often romantic and superficial or at least did not have the same aims as writers like Ross and Buckler. The better writers of the period, like Callaghan, were writing fiction with an urban setting which would not help the rural writer much in coming to terms with his environment, and even Callaghan had difficulty finding an audience in Canada, which would not be encouraging to a writer isolated in the country. The tensions and struggles that pervade the rural literature of the artist must in strong measure reflect those of the authors of the novels themselves.

It is interesting to observe the attitude toward nature presented in the rural novel of the artist. In a heavily industrialized society artists often turn to nature for relief from the pressures of society. However, in the rural fiction the direction is toward the city. The artist in the rural environment craves friendship with others of his kind and an audience for his work. For him, nature often represents an adversary in that it must be conquered in order to produce a living. The artist resents the time that must be devoted to this battle, for it takes him away from his creative work. This attitude goes back to Moodie and Grove. Not only that, but in a country like Canada, and particularly in western Canada, where nature has so recently been tamed, nature can appear threatening and even fearsome. This was also a pattern in Moodie's Roughing It In the Bush particularly, but in Grove's In Search of Myself at times as well. The best example of nature as monster in the fiction of this stage occurs in Ross's As For Me and My House. It has been observed that Mrs. Bentley seeks relief from the "civilized" aspects of Horizon by walking out onto the prairie along the railroad tracks. But she only goes so far each time, and often is scared back to the town by the vast, reeling night and by the cries of wolves. Prairie can even be predatory. The wolves lure El Greco, the Bentleys' dog, out of

Horizon's circle with their cries and devour him. On the visit to the ranch Mrs. Bentley leaves the house and walks alone one night along a river bank. When she rounds a corner and loses sight of the ranch she has a sense of panic:

> The close, black hills, the stealthy slipping sound the river made -- it was as it I were entering dead, forbidden country, approaching the lair of the terror that destroyed the hills, that was lurking there still among the skulls. . . . I stood rooted a moment, imagining shapes in the darkness closing in on me, and then with a whole witches' Sabbath at my heels turned and made a bolt for the house.[49]

The Canadian landscape even in the fiction of the 1940s can still embody the primordial qualities that at times overwhelmed the explorers and settlers.

The kind of world inhabited by the artist figures in the literature of this stage in his development might metaphorically be described as Old Testament[50] in quality in the sense that there is a pervasive feeling of the limited or reduced nature of man and his potential. It is a world of hard work, poverty, fundamentalist religion and rigid social and moral laws dominated by stern Jehovah and Hecate figures. There is a sense of wandering lost in the desert in arid isolation cut off from a more sympathetic environment. Even nature sometimes contains qualities that confirmed for early man a belief in a hard, demanding God.

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[49] Ross, As For Me and My House, pp. 95-96.

[50] Douglas Jones in his Butterfly on Rock (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970) has noted Old Testament qualities in Canadian Literature generally.

The novels of the rural stage of the development of the artist figure are novels of paradox. On the one hand they often describe potential or failed or frustrated artists, yet out of this description emerge novels by Buckler and Ross particularly that are first-class examples of art. While the writers of this stage portray artist figures who walk in lonely, silent spaces, often unable to find the words to give shape to their experience, the novels themselves articulate the condition of the artist figure through inspired use of form, symbol and psychological depth. While the artist figures in the novels often lament the limitations of the culture which has formed them, the novels themselves bring to life dialects and rituals that have as much validity and interest as those of Faulkner's South or Joyce's Dublin.

In style and technique the writing of this stage shows development from that of the nineteenth century which was usually autobiography moving toward fiction or romantic fiction. The tradition of the artist novel started by Laurence and Joyce early in the twentieth century influenced the Canadian writer to give expression in this form to the growing up experiences of the sensitive individual in his particular area of Canada. Like Laurence and Joyce the Canadian writer takes the raw material of his experience and his social and cultural world and refines it into a work of art that epitomizes that world and the condition of the artist in it. As one analyses the literature of this stage one finds that while each novel is a complete statement in itself, there are overall patterns in the novels collectively that suggest a tradition of the artist in Canadian fiction.

One final observation can be made about the fiction of the artist in the rural setting. As the present study suggests, there is much more space devoted by the authors of these novels to description of external influences on the artist figure than to the actual creative process. With the exception of Buckler, few of the writers attempt to express in a detailed way exactly what the goals and methods of the artist figures in the fiction are. There are several reasons for this phenomenon. One is that the tradition of the artist in Canada is still young and uncertain at this stage and in any culture the external world is usually given form before the more confident personal and indiv^id^ual one emerges. By giving expression to the world around ourselves we develop a stronger sense of who we are in relation to it and then emerge more strongly ourselves. However, the process is a slow one. Another is one already cited; the authors of the novels themselves are hesitant about a tradition and therefore often present potential or failed artists, which does not augur well for a description of the artistic process. Finally, the artistic process is not one that is easy to define, and many writers even today when asked to describe it say they cannot.

CHAPTER V

VOYAGE AND DISCOVERY

In the third and final stage of the development of the artist figure in Canadian fiction the artist is found in an urban environment. As with the earlier stages this one is not chronologically consistent because of the uneven demographical changes in Canada, however the thrust of the literature of the artist in the last fifteen years or so has been toward portraying artist figures who are either raised in the city or have lived there long enough to have adopted it as home. The urban artist differs from his country cousin in that many of the problems that were inherent in the country no longer occur in the city, although the city has its own sources of tension for the artist. For the artist in the city there is seldom the problem of finding an audience for his work or like-minded people with whom to discuss it. Thus he feels less a pariah than he did in the rural environment and is more articulate and confident concerning his work. Also, in the city he usually finds the training and expertise necessary for the development of his talents and this also leads to greater confidence. Often the urban artist is a success at his work, producing it, displaying it for others to see and receiving praise, remuneration and even some fame. It was noted in the earlier stage that for the rural artist figure this complete kinetic process was seldom if ever carried through, leaving the artist with feelings of stasis and failure.

An important difference between the rural and urban artist figures is that the urban artist is often very mobile, having no qualms about moving from one city to another in Canada or even travelling and living abroad. For the rural artist, born and raised in one place, the prospect of "going down the road" was often traumatic. Indeed, the pattern of movement or journey is probably the most informing one in the fiction of the artist in the city. The urban artist figure almost never suffers the claustrophobic feelings of physical entrapment in a narrow, isolated community that the rural artist experienced, although occasionally he does feel the pressures of twentieth-century urban society. If he does, however, he has the satisfaction of knowing that the alienation he experiences is international in scope and not his own particular problem, whereas the rural artist tended to see his situation in much more individual and subjective terms. Most characteristically, however, the fiction of the urban artist takes the form of journey leading to personal discovery or revelation and the images associated with the artist are much more positive, including love and birth, than they had been in the second stage.

The kind of fiction in which the urban artist appears is more varied than that of the rural artist. Whereas the rural artist usually appeared in novels that can be described as autobiographical fiction, or "portrait of the artist as a young man" novels in which the authors presented imaginative recreations of their own experiences in different parts of rural Canada, the urban fiction is less frequently autobiographical and more detached, experimental and consciously symbolic. This is not to say that the authors of the final stage do not draw from their own experience, but rather because of their more varied experience and stronger consciousness of a Canadian literary tradition, they go further afield in presenting new types of artist figures (magician, political activist, film director), new forms of fiction (journal, quest, psychological narrative) and theories about the artist in Canada. Often this fiction, because it is less autobiographical and because the artist is usually successful with his craft, is less painful and selfconscious than that of the earlier stage. Also, one has the strong feeling as one reads much of the recent fiction of the urban artist that the artist figure is a more representative character than he had been earlier, often employed by his creator as a vehicle to pronounce his theories about the state of art and the artist in Canada today and even to didactically advise what directions he should take in the future. This is supported by the strong patterns of archetypal Canadian images and situations that so often accompany the artist in this fiction.

Two informal schools of novelists of the fiction of the artist in the third stage can be discovered. One is the nationalist school which proposes that historically non-indigenous Canadians and their progeny have never adopted Canada as their country, but rather have looked to centres outside this country for example in cultural and other matters, and therefore have been colonial in their outlook. This school proposes that all Canadians should now truly occupy this country in every way: physically, psychologically, emotionally and culturally. The implication for the artist is that before he can be successful at his craft he must develop a deep and complete sense of place, roots and tradition; otherwise his work will be superficial. The members of this school consistently employ patterns in their fiction of discovering and becoming part of the land or a historical and cultural tradition to portray what they consider to be the right direction for ~~the~~ Canadian artist. In a sense this fiction is a reversal of the fiction of the second stage in that it often portrays the artist leaving the city and questing for the essence of the Canadian experience in our rural past, whereas the artist in the fiction of the second stage looked to the city for direction and felt his environment to be inferior to others about which he had read.

The other, the international school, proposes that it is a mistake for the Canadian artist to think of himself exclusively in terms of his own country. The danger is that he will become parochial. Members of this school maintain that the Canadian artist must always seize the opportunity to go where the pursuit of technical excellence and inspiration takes him, whether this means Montreal or London or New York or Rome. He should always be looking for improvement as a craftsman and often the audience at home is not critical enough to demand the best of him. He does not mature or reach first-class rating as an artist until he proves himself in the international arena.

There are many reasons for the development from the rural to the urban artist figure in the fiction of the last few years. It has already been suggested that demographic changes in Canada after the Second World War resulted in more and more Canadians moving to and being raised in the cities, which has led to the expression of their experiences there in fiction. Indeed, it might be argued that until quite recently Canada has not really had dynamic urban centres. It is just within the last two decades that even Montreal and Toronto have gained the reputation of international centres. The growth of the cities has been important in providing the kind of milieu in terms of training, audience and inspiration in which the arts can be encouraged and developed. Contemporaneous with the growth of the cities and not unrelated has been a period of relative affluence since World War II which has made it possible for the arts to find financial support from government, foundations, institutions and private individuals. The Canada Council, through its financial assistance, has been particularly instrumental in making it possible for artists to work fulltime at their craft, whereas before its inception in 1957 even so important an artist as the writer Morley Collaghan had to have other means of support than his creative work. The simultaneous growth of the universities during this period has also been important for the development of the arts in Canada. Besides training an intelligent audience, the universities have in the last few years encouraged the pursuit of Canadian Studies which has gradually enlightened more and more Canadians concerning their own history and traditions and has encouraged an interest in, among other things, Canadian culture. At their best, universities also encourage the arts through artist-in-residence positions, poetry readings, dramatic presentations, lectures, art exhibitions and musical recitals, creating the kind of environment in which creativity is encouraged. It is rare indeed for the Canadian artist today not to have either a university education or be affiliated in some way with a university. The study of Canadian Literature in the university is particularly important for the Canadian writer partly because it provides him with a market and audience for his work but also because it increases his own consciousness of belonging to a literary tradition. The historical and thematic studies of Canadian Literature written in the last few years have engendered discussion on the subject among writers as well as among the general readership which in turn has released the isolated and frozen artists of the past to walk among contemporary Canadians through our knowledge of them.

A study of the presentation of the artist figure in what has been called the nationalist fiction will reveal the concerns for the artist of writers of that group. James Bacque's Big Lonely (first published as The Lonely Ones in 1969)[1] belongs to the nationalist fiction in that Bacque asserts the importance to the Canadian artist of commitment to the concerns, particularly political, of his own country. Bacque maintains that before the contemporary Canadian artist can express his creative vision with real depth he must come to terms with certain aspects of his history, culture and society, particularly the French-English question and the monopolization of the art world by philistines and entrepreneurs. He must also ally himself with the positive aspects of his cultural heritage symbolized in the novel by the strong, cold, unspoiled northland.

At the beginning of Big Lonely we are introduced to Harry Summers, a young Canadian artist raised in Ontario but now living in

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[1] James Bacque, Big Lonely (Toronto: New Press, 1971).

London, England. Harry has had several successful exhibitions and has sold a painting to the Tate Gallery. He is engaged to a beautiful and wealthy English girl, Shirley. However, it quickly becomes apparent through Harry's stream of consciousness narrative that he is not content with his apparent success. As he walks through Hyde Park he wonders what he is doing in this crowded, tiny country with "short, tree-walled distances", whose past is not his. He longs for the vast green vistas of Canada. Also, he feels that he is not in control of his life. Gradually, during the period of the engagement to Shirley, her family has forced Harry into commitments and a life style that are not in character: a conventional job, a conventional flat, conventional clothes. His future father-in-law has even given Harry an engagement ring to present to Shirley in order to keep up proper appearances. Harry finds the forms and expectations of traditional English society at odds with his freer upbringing (one can hardly help comparing Harry to Sara Jeanette Duncan's character, Graham Trent, in Cousin Cinderella, discussed in Chapter II). At a crowded, smoky London party, symbolizing the stifling quality of his situation, Harry tells Shirley he cannot go through with the marriage. He first tries to make love to her in an upstairs bedroom, but she is afraid someone will come in and find them. All the images and experiences of Harry's London experience represent the claustrophobic aspects of European culture for the more young and free-spirited Canadian. Harry tells Shirley that he must return to Canada and asks her, because he truly loves her, to return with him. However, Shirley is hesitant, not only because of the shock of the broken engagement, but also because she sees that Harry is going through a personal identity crisis and that he must work that out himself before he can be certain that he wants her. She tells him she will follow him to Canada when he sends for her.

Back in Canada, Harry tries to find his old artist friend André, a French Canadian raised in Montreal. He is directed to a cabin north of Montreal where André and Harry often went in their early days together. As Harry makes the journey north he renews his ties with the country he loves. He is impressed as before with its magnificent solitude, and beautiful loneliness. The journey he makes is an archetypal one for the Canadian in that it takes him over the kind of route traveled by our explorers and settlers, and on the symbolic level represents Harry claiming his cultural heritage. The cabin sits on an island in an isolated lake and is accessible only be canoe. As Harry approaches the cabin he decides not to avoid the rapids by portaging around them as he has always done in the past, but to paddle down their treacherous descent. Symbolically this stands for Harry's maturity as a Canadian and his conscious choice of this country with its epic tradition. However, Canada is not a country that can be chosen in a facile way, as Harry soon finds out. To choose its qualities is also to choose its problems, and Harry comes face to face with a central Canadian problem in the cabin in the person of André: the French-English problem that is as old as exploration and settlement. At the cabin Harry finds that his old friend has, since he last saw him, become involved in the Quebec Separatist movement and views Harry as a representative of English Canada, the enemy. Once

Harry and André were simply artist friends, brought together by their mutual interest in creativity and technique, unaware of the larger political forces that formed them. Now the two must test their relationship at a deeper level.

Harry is convinced he must prove to André that their respective cultural backgrounds within Canada are not detrimental to their friendship, but he also feels he must respect André's feelings that French Canadians have been in turn ignored and not respected by the English. In order to prove his loyalty to his old friend Harry agrees to go to Montreal and live in André's studio where he will provide a front to disguise his friend's political activities. He also agrees to assist in a Separatist raid on a Montreal radio station, when a propagandistic message will be broadcasted.

Back in Montreal, André asks Harry to accompany him to the Westmount home of a wealthy English-Canadian businessman who invests part of his surplus capital in Canadian art. André wants Harry to help him convince Mr. Moore to return to him a painting he sold him a few years ago. André regrets having sold the painting, because of its strong emotional value for him. Within his luxurious home, full of art treasures from around the world, Mr. Moore greets André and Harry. He is the epitome of the successful businessman, cool, conservatively dressed and correct. When he hears Andre's request he regrets that the painting André wants has been sold as part of a group of paintings of the Montreal school to a collector friend. When asked how much the painting was sold for or where it is now, Mr. Moore says that he cannot remember, although both Harry and André know that this cannot be true.

Mr. Moore feels that once out of the artist's hands a painting is part of the world of finance and properly must remain there. He would not dream of disrupting his orderly transactions for an emotional whim. Both André and Harry define Mr. Moore as the enemy, a man who exploits art for his own financial ends.

A police raid on the studio just after Harry has left it sends him to the apartment of André's wife, Janine. Janine has been living alone since returning from the cabin because she does not approve of André's political activities. Harry is confused by his new and difficult friendship with André and has not sent for Shirley because he is not yet thoroughly clear about his own direction in Canada. Janine and Harry, brought together by their confusion and loneliness, have a brief affair which confirms for each who they truly are and where they belong. Janine realizes she really loves André, and must go back to him, and Harry telephones Shirley to come to Canada. Janine affirms her French heritage and its concerns and Harry acknowledges his English ties. However, Harry and Janine also have a friendship which has increased their understanding of and commitment to each other. Bacque believes in the importance of the French-English connection for the survival of Canadian culture. When Shirley arrives in Montreal, Harry takes her to the cabin in the north and there introduces her to his country. Both feel they belong here more than they did in England. In addition to joyful love-making, swimming is an important symbol employed by Bacque for immersion into the land and all it represents. Shirley and Harry swim in the cold, clear lake and the act is like a baptism and consecration not only of their love for each other but also of their commitment to this place. It also represents getting closer to his roots and heritage for Harry, who earlier dreampt of his father sitting at the bottom of the ocean and trying to tell him things:

> I am running. Down this slippery corridor unable to stop. Each head from the porthole beside me as I run along beside the ship keeping ahead of the waves trying to hear what they say over the roar of the waves into the Gulf of St. Lawrence grabbing onto the edge of Newfoundland turning into a cookie tilting me into the sea alone where I have always belonged with father sinking and swimming down to him where he sits at a coral table weaving long strands of beautiful hair into these words that swim by me slowly unable to talk. Only to read what he says unable to talk to him but he knows me. He knows me. And we cannot speak. Take hold of them and rise lightly to the surface again. Words with meaning bearing me up. Oh the release from death by this beautiful strand of meaning. How right he is. How good, how full of love to give me this rescuing strand. How I love him. My only father in heaven helping me with these comfortable words that do me good to breathe again and standing on the earth blessedly alive. Waking to remember them. Must remember them.[2]

Bacque maintains that ancestors and tradition are important for the artist, giving him confidence and a sense of identity. The frequent swims Harry takes in the lake provide links not only with his father but also with his national heritage.

Harry and Shirley return to Montreal where Harry has promised to help André with the raid on the radio station. They go to a Liberal rally where they are supposed to meet him. However, things go wrong. Several bombs go off at the rally and it is all Harry, Shirley,

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[2] James Bacque, Big Lonely, p. 59.

André and Janine can do to get out of the auditorium alive. André has been wounded by one of the explosions. Harry decides that the only thing to do is to drive the group to Toronto, where he has a friend who can provide them with refuge, and where they can wait until things cool down in Montreal. His friend Michael, who produces a news program for the CBC, agrees to share his flat, and André receives medical attention. The next night Michael has a party with a great deal of food and drink and invites his CBC friends. All goes well until Harry notices that the party is being filmed; the microphones and the cameras which stand around Michael's apartment are on. He confronts Michael who says this is just footage he needs for a party scene. Harry sees the lie and knocks Michael down. His erstwhile friend has opportunistically put a news coup ahead of friendship. Once again Harry, Shirley, André and Janine are on the run. However, they have learned to define their enemies, those who selfishly exploit the artist or encourage rifts in this country, and their unity is strong. Their fight is lonely but strong like the north that gives them refuge. As they run from the Toronto flat they exchange encouragement:

> "OK. I'll make it."
> "Yeah, come on, we'll make it."[3]

More than many English-Canadian novelists, Bacque has attempted to come to terms in his fiction with some of the central political problems of Canada. He subscribes to the theory that politics, economics and culture are related and that at this explosive time in Canadian history the artist cannot and must not cloister himself in an ivory tower, but must do what he can to work in the best interests of his country. Both Harry and André come away from the bombing knowing that it was a terrible mistake, but committed to fight opportunism and exploitation and to defend both the French and English cultural traditions that together form Canadian culture. Bacque's notion of the relationship between the artist and this country is not a facile one. He realizes that if Canada is to be truly chosen one must choose its problems as well as its positive qualities.

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[3] James Bacque, Big Lonely, p. 189.

Bacque's novel is typical of many of the nationalist novels of the last decade or so. He presents the artist as having a deep relationship with his country. Symbolically the journey to the north, the immersion in the cold, pure water and the archetypal images of cabin and canoe represent the importance to the artist of his historical and cultural heritage. The novel also reflects a high degree of politicization, an aspect of the nationalist literature. Bacque is conscious of the forces that threaten to undermine the existence of Canada as a cultural entity. It is interesting to observe that Bacque, like the much earlier Canadian novelist, Sara Jeanette Duncan, in Cousin Cinderella, discussed in Chapter II, sees the importance for the Canadian artist of his ties with Britain, but also asserts that the direction of the Canadian artist in the future must be toward a strong relationship with his own country.

In Place d'Armes (1967)[4] Scott Symons presents a deeply personal account of his concerns about the directions Canada is taking as it celebrates its centennial. He employs a central character, Hugh Anderson, who is basically a self-portrait, to deliver his message. Hugh Anderson belongs to the English-Canadian establishment. Born in Rosedale into a family which for four generations has been prominent in Canadian politics, business and culture and which has proud Loyalist origins, educated at Upper Canada College, Trinity College, University of Toronto and Oxford University, holding top positions with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Canada's best publishing company, belonging to the best clubs and knowing all the right people, Hugh should be a strong proponent of this venerable and select body. However, as the novel opens, Hugh is experiencing a crisis. He strongly feels that his ancestors and his fellow English Canadians have never truly embraced the country they occupy. Rather, their protestant and more particularly Methodist background has gelded them to the possibility of ever truly loving and celebrating anything. For Hugh, who believes in his country and its people in spite of their limitations, they are smug, dull and dead. He refers to them as cubes, an extension of squares. They lack originality, vigour and life. The failure of protestantism, he feels, is the failure to see life as literal miracle. The protestant religion, particularly in its interpretation of the transubstantiation, employs a symbolic framework which views the miraculous in detached terms, once removed from the fact. Hugh feels that this is the source of the lack of vitality and the inability to truly embrace anything that characterizes English Canadians. However, he feels that there is still hope, for there are those in this country who are capable of full and joyous conjugation without guilt or self-consciousness: the French Canadians. What Hugh proposes to do is journey to the spiritual heart of French Canada, Place d'Armes, in Old Montreal, where he will attempt to overcome his protestant inhibitions and embrace the soul of Canada. He is offering himself as a sacrificial lamb. The journey will be difficult, for he will have to fall before he can rise, but it must be done. As he makes his journey he will keep a diary which will serve as the notes for a novel that will document the path to redemption and that he will present to his people in order to awaken them to the possibility of life. Very literally Symons presents Hugh Anderson, and ultimately himself, as the Canadian saviour.

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[4] Scott Symons, Place d'Armes (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967).

As the novel opens, Hugh Anderson has just been fired from his position as first-in-line to the presidency of Canada's best publishing company. He has been fired for telling the president that he has "no balls". The basis of his assertion is that he feels the company has not been pushing strongly enough for Canadian culture, and he feels the growing tendency there, as elsewhere in Canada, toward Americanization. Hugh determines that he can no longer help to perpetuate this trend, but rather must fight it. He leaves his wife and children and comfortable home and sets off on a quest that is personal but also public in that through its transcription into a novel he wants it to act as an expiation for English Canada's sterile past and to point out the possibility of new directions for Canadians generally.

Hugh travels from Toronto, where he has lived and worked, to Montreal by the Rapido. It is the first time he has been on the ultra-modern line, and he is appalled at its clean, slick, mechanical efficiency. For Hugh it epitomizes the infiltration of the American lifestyle that is seeping up from south of the border. The interior of the train is decorated in an imitative red, white and blue and the attendants in their sleek uniforms look like they have stepped from space machines. In his analysis of the significance of the Rapido, Hugh maintains that the source of its sinister quality is that it demands that people comform to it, rather than serving and reflecting them. It is a foreign agent designed to undermine the indigenous lifestyle of Canadians, a product of contemporary Liberalism and its encouragement of American business, industry and culture. For Hugh, the trend represented by the Rapido is literally defined as the enemy, and from this point on he looks at his journey to the heart of Canada as a Holy War. He refers to his journal, kept along the way, as a "Combat Journal".

In Montreal Hugh establishes himself in a hotel in the old part of the city, and then begins his quest which is to totally immerse himself in every aspect of Place d'Armes until it literally courses through his system. For him Place d'Armes, with its old cathedral, Notre Dame, is the historical and spiritual centre of French Canada. If he can make a conjugation with it he will overcome his protestant limitations and lead the way toward a larger Canadian awareness and unity. Hugh does not achieve his goal easily or quickly. It takes twenty-two days before the miracle occurs, symbolically, at Christmas. At first Hugh approaches Place d'Armes reverentially and at a distance. He knows that he is only seeing it in a detached way, as a tourist would, cataloguing its features but not really feeling them as one does when one is part of an environment. Then Hugh skirts the outside perimeter of the area of Place d'Armes, going to restaurants and antique shops where he experiences first-hand the culture and lifestyle of the people who live there. He gradually finds that the spirit of the area is penetrating his consciousness. This process is particularly clear when he notices after a period of a few days that he is starting to see other English Canadians visiting the Place as foreigners. Initially he hates them, sensing their coldness, superficiality and lack of what he calls body or true life. He feels the English are not capable of real emotion, love or commitment; they cannot "feel the other man". But this passes too and finally he comes to have sympathy for them, realizing that they have come to Montreal, like him, because they sense its power, and they too are questing "Body and Blood", or a more vital relationship to life. They yearn for the miracle as much as he. He feels that if only he can experience it himself, he will lead the way for them. Hugh also attends services in Notre Dame and here too his perceptions develop over the three-week period he is there. At first he sees the flickering, waxy candles, gold gilt and many statues as a lot of spiritual hocus pocus and plain bad art. But gradually, as he watches the faces of the people and sees their natural, accepting belief and as he listens to the chanting and generally becomes caught up in the spirit of the cathedral he has the revelation that it has a vertical, upward life and movement of its own that captures the mind and spirit and sends them soaring. He sees that Bartlett's nineteenth-century engraving of Notre Dame, which presents the interior in dark, heavy lines, does not capture the spirit of the cathedral at all. Bartlett was, after all, a tourist.

There is another, more physical, aspect to Hugh's quest for transubstantiation in Place d'Armes. He feels he must overcome his protestant guilt and fear concerning the body and physical relations with other people. In order to do this, he must seek out and experience all that frightens him most in this area in order to confront and overcome the negative and castrating qualities within him and his people. To this end, Hugh frequents shoddy homosexual dance halls and makes love to male prostitutes. As he puts it, he has to "disaster" in order to come out the other side.[5] His experiences with Yvon, Pierrot and André, all of whom surprise him in their ability to love unselfconsciously, naturally and even compassionately, take Hugh closer to his goal. In his treatment of homosexual love Symons is breaking down the old puritan barriers that Brown in 1943[6] claimed impeded the creative spirit in Canada. He is also offering himself for burning, something authors have been increasingly willing to do in the last few decades in Canada. One thinks of writers like Layton and Cohen who have been willing to deal openly in their work with subjects that have traditionally been tabu in Canadian Literature. Symons makes no bones about his novel being an "insanely indiscreet autobiography" -- he describes it that way on the back of the cover. Apparently his concern for Canada and its survival is one that obliterates the sanctity of his personal life. He seems determined to shock his countrymen into life. Symons is careful to make it clear that Hugh's relations with the homosexuals are literal rather than symbolic. He is militantly countering what he considers to be the protestant tendency to see life from a detached and therefore, for him, impotent perspective.

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[5] Symons, Place d'Armes, p. 86.

[6] E.K. Brown, On Canadian Poetry (Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1973), p. 23.

The next stage in Hugh's journey takes him to the Chateau de Ramezay where he finds all Canadian history preserved: Eskimo, Indian, French and English. As he wanders from room to room he becomes aware of the development of his country as a total entity rather than seeing it in terms of disparate cultures. This recognition of the validity of Canada as a multi-cultural country was also important to Harry Summers in Big Lonely, and his struggle involved countering any attempt to undermine it. Hugh is now ready to return to Place d'Armes for his apotheosis, which occurs in Notre Dame Cathedral at the height of the Christmas celebrations. As he achieves the insight he has quested all along, and he and the Place become one, so too Symons has Hugh and the character in the novel he is writing merge. Symons proposes that the path to creative expression in this country is intrinsically related to a profound relationship with every aspect of this country. From this perspective one can name one's enemies and counter subversive influences. Within the cathedral Hugh becomes caught up in the service as never before. The candles, chanting, and ritual merge into one great celebratory dance. As the priest holds up the Host Hugh truly believes for the first time in the literal miracle of bread and wine becoming Body and Blood. As he does so, he has himself achieved the miracle of redemption for his people. He rushes from the cathedral holding out his own hand which has become the salvation of his country:

> he was confounded in utter conjugation with the body of the Church -- it was militant in him. He turned -- and staggered out . . . the Place d'Armes was outrageously alive in him . . . detonating everywhere, everything, in a profusion of knowledge . . . suddenly every detail was searingly evident -- each outline blared in him . . . he saw the beaver again . . . and as he did heard the thunder of the candles . . . his throat swole, his eyes blazed . . . ça crève les yeux, Pierre had said -- he was right -- it stabbed your eyes out . . . no in . . . stabbed his eyes back in . . . He was haemorrhaging now . . . could feel the stream of blood blurting from him . . . hideously alive . . . . La Place . . . The Place . . . he could see the Place . . . he started to shout . . . "La Place . . . it's there . . . don't you see . . . La Place . . . Look . . . ." And he started to run toward the statue of Maisonneuve . . . and his run became a dance, his whole body vibrant, like the dancers in the nightclub . . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> He held the Host in La Place d'Armes, and the rest was irrelevance . . . into the very centre, and stood absolutely mobile and saw that the whole Place was in dance . . . the people had stopped dead so that he started again to shout "Look . . . La Place d'Armes it is come alive for us, all of us" -- but still no-one moved as he held his Host high up over La Place, so that he knew that now there was only one possible solution, and taking the Host ate it alive till he embraced the Place and then turning to the first person he could see ran with his right hand outstretched, his forefinger out, to touch, to give his blood that spurted fresh out the open act as he ran to embrace them in this new life he

held out at fingertip to touch they[7]

Scott Symons is a deeply spiritual writer. He believes strongly in his country and seeks to overcome the negative forces that impede creative expression here. In an interview with Graeme Gibson in 1973 Symons returned to the theme of the Methodist, protestant tradition in Canada and its role in limiting the Canadian imagination:

> The WASP Canadian is the lower middle-class Methodist Presbyterian, and this is the bad little bee in our bonnet. This is the definitive Canadian disease . . . . I mean how in the name of Christ did we end up with the Moderator of the United Church as our national intellectual barometer? . . . . We must have a heinous spiritual blind spot somewhere. The brute fact is that the Methodist-Presbyterian Canadian culture is against us being civilizedly articulate and sentient and sensual, if you wish, and palpable. I touch on such things as this: that in Methodism and the United Church, there is no concept of the Real Presence in Holy Communion, the body and blood of Christ is not there, and now you say: What in God's name has this got to do with the discussion of literature? Just this, and it's very important, that a culture which has as its central religious metaphor, not the real presence of its God in this case, Christ in Holy Communion, but has only the memory, it's too busy explaining there's only the memory of the presence of Christ. Such a culture has the same limitation in its writing and in its touch. If Christ's presence isn't really there in Holy Communion, then I can assure you that correlatively and anthropologically this can be proven, the writer's touch isn't there in his writing . . . . I use these metaphors here because we need to step outside the tiny tight little categories of Canadian writing. Our writers are so small, they're so constipated, they're so busy climbing up the Canadian vertical mosaic, they're so busy getting the next little job at the CBC . . . . they're so busy making a career out of Canada.[8]

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[7] Scott Symons, Place d'Armes, pp. 278, 279.

[8] Interview with Scott Symons in Graeme Gibson, Eleven Canadian Novelists (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), pp. 316-317.

While Symons sees the problems which have historically impeded expression in Canada, he also provides an antidote. Symons literally offers a Christ figure and saviour to lead the way to a national redemption. The novel is characteristic of many of the ones of the nationalist school in that it does show the artist figure having strong concerns for his country, and the path to creativity is intrinsically tied to the artist's knowledge of and love for Canada. Like other novels of this group the journey becomes an important image of the quest for identity. Symons varies this motif by having his central character go not to the land for his revelation, but to the historical heart of one of Canada's oldest cities. Also, Symons, like Bacque, shows a high degree of politicization, defining "enemies" and prescribing new tactics for combatting them. Finally, there is a vigourous, affirmative, confident quality to Place d'Armes. It describes a battle fought and won, in no uncertain terms. The artist hero undertakes a perilous venture and the way is often difficult, but in the end there is revelation. This confident, even didactic tone and the conscious awareness of a cultural tradition are two important aspects of the nationalist fiction.

More than any other author in this study, Symons has taken pains with the visual presentation of his novel. The smart black and red cover is a reproduction of that of a nineteenth-century journal, like the one Hugh buys in the antique shop in Toronto to record his notes as he makes his journey. The technique of giving his novel the journal form is a brilliant one on Symons' part, making a direct connection between the first attempts at writing in Canada, the journals of the explorers, and the contemporary trend by authors like himself to search out their roots and traditions in their fiction. The inside of the cover is done in marbleized paper and the title page is enclosed in ornate, stylized embellishments, maintaining the nineteenth-century journal motif. Inside the front cover Symons also includes a pocket containing post cards of Notre Dame Cathedral, reproductions of Bartlett prints, old Montreal scenes and maps, the Royal Bank of Canada Building Place Ville Marie brochure and a newspaper clipping of an article in *La Patrie* on Symons' own visit to Montreal. The pages of the novel are set up like a journal with a horizontal line along the top and a vertical line down the left-hand side. The book is bound with thread and the pages are edged in red on the outside. The care Symons has taken with the presentation of his novel to his audience is another tribute to the importance he ascribes to his overall purpose in writing the book.

Margaret Atwood in *Surfacing* (1972)[9] presents a deeply symbolic study of the state of the artist in Canada, factors that impede his development and prescriptions for improving his situation. Like Symons, she employs the journey motif to symbolize the quest for a heritage and artistic expression and like Bacque she employs the myth of the northland to epitomize the unspoiled, unclaimed, elusive qualities of this country. Like both Bacque and Symons she shows a high degree of politicization, analysing historical, economic and cultural realities and advocating the necessity for change.

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[9] Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972).

It is Atwood's thesis[10] that Canada has been a difficult place for the artist historically, essentially because of its colonial origins and the resultant tendency of its people to subscribe to colonial thinking even well into the twentieth century. This spirit has made Canadians hesitant and emulative, afraid to claim and celebrate what is their own, which has had detrimental effects on Canadian culture generally. Canadian writers express their frustration with a public that ignores them and the feeling that they live in a cultural backwater by presenting the artist figures in their fiction as maimed, frustrated or failed. In Surfacing Atwood points the way out of the dilemma. She asserts that the Canadian artist must discover who he is by claiming the land on which he lives and he must resist pressures and influences from without which undermine his own culture and his ability to create. In this way the hitherto submerged culture of this country will surface. Atwood maintains that although Canadians have not been quick to celebrate their own country and although undermining influences from outside are at present pervasive and strong, there is still hope through Canadians acquiring a sense of identity and pride that the historical trend can be reversed. She also maintains through her use of Canadian archetypal imagery that a Canadian historical and cultural tradition exists, despite the average Canadian's unawareness of it.

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[10] Expressed at greatest length in her Survival (Toronto: Anansi, 1972).

Surfacing tells the story of a young woman painter and illustrator whose name is never given, suggesting that she is a representative figure of the Canadian artist who lacks identity. The action takes the form of a journey she and three friends make from Toronto, where she has been living for the last few years, to northern Quebec, where she grew up. In a sense the heroine's life epitomizes Canada's history in microcosm, for she was raised in a rugged, backwoods, pioneer-like situation in a cabin accessible only by boat on an isolated island, then came to the city where she has spent her adult years. The purpose of the trip is to solve the mystery of the disappearance of her father, a botanist, who has lived alone in the cabin for the last few years. Thus Atwood employs a thinly-disguised quest for identity theme, which works on the individual level of the heroine's search for her father, but also on the larger level of the artist's quest for tradition and expression.

The central character is a commercial artist who illustrates children's books. However, she is alienated by her work because she feels the books she is assigned, most of which contain standard European fairy tales, have nothing to do with her experience as a Canadian and therefore she cannot illustrate them in a deep and meaningful way, but must conform to foreign traditions. She finds the princesses and castles her publisher demands insipid and vacuous. Rather, she wishes she could be asked to represent stories told around wood stoves during the cold Canadian winters of her childhood, stories of bewitched dogs and malevolent trees perhaps, and the magic powers of rival political candidates, whose effigies in straw they burn during elections."[11] The city as well as her job is a source of alienation for her, primarily because of her confusion about who she is and where she is going there. She wanders aimlessly from the death of her mother to an affair to an abortion, never putting down roots or making lasting friendships. She feels emotionally paralysed and anesthetized, not unlike the artist figures discovered in the second stage. She describes the city in sterile images of white tile bathrooms and antiseptic hospital rooms. She feels victimized by her relationships with men. Even the urban "friends" with whom she is travelling north, Joe, her boy friend, and David and Anna, a couple she has known for a short time, are virtual strangers.

The journey the narrator makes from Toronto along the new highways to the Quebec border, into the little village and across the lake by motorboat to the isolated cabin where the canoe is the only means of transportation is a metaphorical journey into Canada's past. The village is a French-Canadian one, allowing Atwood to introduce the French-English theme, an important one in Canada, and one also dealt with by Bacque and Symons. Two incidents mirror this theme, which is often one of conflict: the scene in the grocery store, in which the narrator's attempts at speaking French are mocked by the locals, who consider her condescending, and the scene at Paul's house, in which she uncomfortably tries to carry on a conversation, but is aware as she sits and rocks of the leagues of cultural difference between her and her hosts. In the village too the four travellers meet in a bar, the decor of which epitomizes the quality of colonial imitation found so often in the small Canadian town. The local people wear their hair in the fashions of a decade ago, and have a tendehcy to stare at strangers. This is the same backward environment in which David Canaan, Kevin O'Brien, Juju Stone, Philip Bentley and Del Jordan suffered their frustrations. The cabin on the island also epitomizes certain aspects of Canadian history and culture. There the herione finds diaries kept by her mother that record only empirical observations about weather and crops without any personal observations whatever, not unlike the writing of the explorers and settlers. The library in the cabin consists of dated English classical literature and practical survival manuals and lacks any Canadian literature: "The King James Bible, a complete Robert Burns, Boswell's Life, Thomson's Seasons, selections from Goldsmith and Cowper", and, Edible Plants and Shoots, Tying the Dry Fly, The Common Mushrooms, Log Cabin Construction, A Field Guide to the Birds and Exploring Your Camera.[12] The library's contents and the reverence the heroine recalls her father had for them reflect the Canadian colonial mentality. She observes that it came as a shock to her in later years to realize that "Burns was an alcoholic, Cowper a madman, Dr. Johnson a manic depressive and Goldsmith a pauper."[13] She also recalls being raised with the frontier notions of thrift and prudence and her family's tendency to employ maxims in day-to-day life. Through her descriptions of the city, the village and the log cabin Atwood reviews the historical and cultural development of Canada, taking the reader back to the world Moodie described in Roughing It in the Bush. Atwood does this deliberately to awaken the reader to his own historical and cultural heritage. As with Symons' Place d'Armes, one is aware as one reads Atwood's Surfacing that one is reading a manifesto.

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[11] Atwood, Surfacing, p. 54.

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[12] Atwood, Surfacing, p. 38.

[13] Atwood, Surfacing, p. 38.

On the island the heroine and her friends find that her father is still missing. They decide to stay a few days in the hope of discovering some clue to his disappearance.. Her return to the island signals a change in the heroine. As she reviews her past with her family on the island and as she searches for her father she sets out on a deep personal quest for roots and identity. She discovers among her father's things some strange drawings of unrealistic creatures. At first she fears he may have suffered insanity, or become "bushed" (another archetypal Canadian occurrence) because of his isolation on the island after her mother died. However, she is relieved to find that these are probably copies he has made of prehistoric Indian paintings found on rocks at several locations in the area. She decides to set out alone in the canoe to prove her theory that this is in fact what the drawings represent. She canoes into an adjoining lake and goes to the spot where her father's map showed an X, but does not find a painting on the cliff. Then it occurs to her that perhaps, since the lake has been dammed and flooded; the paintings are submerged. She dives repeatedly from the canoe, searching the rock face of the cliff for signs of the Indian art. The heroine has gone beyond her ancestors in her quest for a past to the culture of the indigenous peoples of Canada. It is Atwood's theory that non-indigenous Canadians never made true, total psychological and emotional contact with the country they came to, but rather imposed their apriori way of thinking on the land, and that this is reflected in their culture. She is recommending the Canadians have some understanding of their country as it really is, as the indigenous people, whose culture reflected their experience here, did. Otherwise, we will always be imitative and our art will lack strength.

Concurrent with her quest for her past and that of the indigenous people is the heroine's increasing alienation from her companions. She comes to equate them with all the negative aspects of the modern, urban "American" lifestyle, that is, not American in the sense of nationality, but as an egotistical and power-hungry psyche, often implying the victimization of others. David particularly troubles her by the way he intimidates and controls Anna and because of his facile, superficial bigotries and stupidity. He hates the "Yanks" for invading Canada economically, yet he does not respect his wife's sovereignty. He spends his time in the woods filming "Random Samples", a "kinky" and shallow potpourri of all that seems "neat" about the country, rather than getting out and experiencing the true nature of the place. As the heroine becomes more involved with her father's disappearance, and her personal quest she begins to think of the people who have accompanied her as "intruders". This period of alienation from her companions is crucial to the heroine's making the strong contact with the land her ancestors have only felt a distant relationship to. As this alienation increases, the heroine finds she develops a correspondingly stronger affinity for the natural inhabitants of the land: animals, amphibians, plants. She finds she can no longer bait her hook with frogs to catch fish for her companions because they are interested in fishing not for survival or out of necessity, but rather to inflate their egos with a good catch. Her awareness of the rock paintings has given her a different attitude to the land and its bounty, one the Indians subscribed to. It is there to provide support but must not be abused. Take from it only what you need and there will be more tomorrow. She grows to detest what she considers to be the rapacious, exploitive attitudes of her friends, and in her frustration turns to what she describes as the "spirits of the land" for comfort.

When word comes that her father has been found drowned at the bottom of a lake, a camera around his neck (presumably he too has been diving to find rock paintings) the heroine cunningly pretends to accept the story, but by now her alienation from the others and her affinities with the land are so complete that she has left the conventional world and believes that these "intruders" are trying to trick her and take away her ancestors. She is convinced that her father is really living somewhere nearby. She covertly decides to stay in the wilderness and make it her home. She makes love to Joe that night, because it is her time to conceive and she wants a child. The next day she unravels the film, "Random Samples", into the lake in order to free the "spirits" imprisoned there, jumps into the only canoe (the others are ~~to~~ be picked up by a motor boat from the mainland) and heads for an island where she hides. After the others have left, no doubt greatly bewildered by her actions, she returns to the cabin. She finds she cannot use or remain confined within anything that is man-made, which excludes the garden and the cabin. Rather, she must eat only what nature provides and make her own paths through the woods. She does keep the clothes she has on after she has washed them for purification, but hopes to grow fur. This period of what some critics have called insanity (it is doubtful that Atwood, who distrusts the standard definitions of reality, would use this term) is most important to the heroine's development as an artist, for by allowing the sensibility of the land to totally invade her consciousness she finally bridges the gap that existed between it and her ancestors. Her experience in the woods is not unlike that undergone by the native male Indian at puberty when he was left by the tribe with only a blanket to fend for himself in the wilds. Hunger led to hallucination, when the spirits of the land talked to him. He then returned to the tribe, taking for his identity the name, wisdom and power of the most dominant spirit, for example, the bear. After several days alone in the forest the heroine has her vision, in which she finally develops a profound sense of place:

> I lean against a tree, I am a tree leaning
>
> I break out again into the bright sun and crumple, head against the ground
>
> I am not an animal or a tree, I am the thing in which the trees and animals move and grow, I am a place[14]

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[14] Atwood, Surfacing, p. 181.

Atwood employs a poetic style with which to describe the heroine's revelation, underlining the importance of place in her theories about the artist in Canada.

After she makes contact with the land and directly as a result of it, the heroine has one last revelation before she is ready to go back to the city. She returns to the cabin to look at it from a distance and sees a figure standing outside the garden, looking in. She runs toward it, thinking it is her father, but it turns its head and she sees it is a wolf. She understands that it represents what one becomes after one has been isolated in the forest from one's fellow man too long; she is in danger of becoming "bushed" herself. When she walks up to where the creature stood, her feet fit into its tracks, confirming her realization. As she is shocked back into the conventional world, she realizes how she can give lasting form to her vision: through art. Because it will deal profoundly with this place, it will not be imitative or second-hand:

> From the lake a fish jumps
> An idea of a fish jumps
> A fish jumps, carved wooden fish with
> dots painted on the sides, no, antlered
> fish thing drawn in red on cliffstone, protecting
> spirit. It hangs in the air suspended, flesh
> turned to icon, he has changed again, returned
> to the water. How many shapes can he take?

Apparently the potential for creativity is now limitless, whereas before this vision the artist felt dead in creative terms.

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[15] Atwood, Surfacing, p. 187.

From this point on the heroine is released from the stasis that had oppressed her throughout the novel. Her revelation has given her a sense of identity and purpose that hitherto had been lacking. She is able to see herself and her relationships with others in more realistic and less paranoid terms. Atwood suggests that once the Canadian artist realizes an identity and a strong feeling for place the period of colonial self-consciousness and all the negative implications thereof will be over. The artist surfaces to face the concerns that before she has tried to ignore or avoid, employing the strength that the discovery of her identity has given her. She now sees David and Anna as fellow countrymen with fears of their own and feels compassion for them. She also realizes that she cannot return to the past for protection, for that route is facile and escapist, leading to death. Her parents, in whose memory she had hoped to find her answers, are also put into perspective as ordinary people who did their best, but made mistakes: "Our father, Our mother, I pray, Reach down for me, but it won't work: they dwindle, grow, become what they were, human".[16] She particularly sees that her father chose an escapist route, isolating himself from his country's concerns, avoiding even the Second World War, and that this is not the path that must be taken in the future.

Although the successful completion of her quest for identity has helped her solve the problem of her artistic paralysis, it is a beginning, not an end. As the novel comes to a close the heroine is about to step out of the woods and go to Joe who has returned to the island to find her. She sees that Joe (who is also an artist, a potter) is only half-formed, and also has the potential to become involved in the struggle for maturity and expression. She observes that they now know their enemies (those who would impede the development of a strong indigenous culture) and can fight together. An optimistic sign is that she carries within her their child, the "time traveller, the primaeval one", the "first true human" who "must be born, allowed".[17] Atwood deliberately reverses the pattern she has observed in Survival of sterile women in the literature of the artist by introducing the child motif. Like Symons' artist figure, who gushes the blood of salvation and Bacque's artists who are running toward a new order, Atwood's anticipates new directions and a vital future for the artist in Canada.

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[16] Atwood, _Surfacing_, p. 189.

It can be seen that there are several points of similarity between Atwood's Surfacing and the two novels previously discussed in this chapter. Like Bacque, she employs the image of the northland to represent the pure, unspoiled ideal of the possibility of a vital native expression. Like Bacque too she sees that there are forces (opportunism, economic exploitation) which threaten to undermine the artist's quest for the embrace of this ideal, but implies that by becoming aware of these forces and by uniting with other like-minded artists to counter them, the Canadian artist should triumph. Like Symons, and Bacque to a lesser extent, she employs the journey motif and quest structure to represent the need for the Canadian artist to have a sense of roots and tradition, although Symons employs the city, Montreal, as the source of his artist figure's revelation, whereas Atwood and Bacque employ the land as a symbol of inspiration. They all affirm, however, the importance of a strong and vital embrace of the essence of Canada. All three writers reveal awareness and celebration of a Canadian historical and cultural tradition by their deliberate use of archetypal Canadian imagery. They also forecast a vital future, in that they offer their artist figures as figures of salvation, leading Canadians out of the wilderness of colonialism into the Promised Land of a full occupation of their country. Unlike the literature of the middle stage of the development of the artist, the artist figure in the nationalist literature is successful in his craft, has supportive friends and is presented with patterns of imagery (love and fertility, particularly) that suggest hope for the future.

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[17] Atwood, Surfacing, p. 191.

Margaret Laurence's The Diviners (1974)[18] is another novel which points out the importance of a sense of place and tradition for the artist. The artist figure, Morag Gunn, is forty-seven years old and a successful writer living on a riverside farm in southern Ontario. The narrative structure of the novel consists of the rhythmic movement from present event to past memory as, over the period of a summer, Morag reviews and evaluates her life. Certain crises bring on her need to make a personal assessment: the maturation of her daughter, who is setting out to find her way in the world, the sickness of her daughter's father and, perhaps most importantly, her own concern that she is losing her powers as a writer. The concentration of the narrative, which covers all of Morag's life, but which is unfolded in the short space of a summer, and the bringing together of past and present result in a novel that is densely packed and powerful. Added to this are layers of symbolism and allegory that further intensify the novel. A description of Morag Gunn's life will reveal Laurence's concern for the Canadian artist.

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[18] Laurence, The Diviners (Toronto: Bantam, 1975).

Morag Gunn is born on a farm outside of Manawaka, Manitoba, the setting of other Laurence novels. When she is five, her parents die of polio and she is sent to live with a couple in Manawaka, Christie and Prin (Princess) Logan, the town scavenger and his wife, who offer to raise her. The move from the farm to the town is a traumatic one for Morag, for, in addition to the normal adjustment, Christie and Prin occupy a much lower position on the economic and social ladder than did her parents. When she enters the Logan home Morag is aware of unpleasant contrasts with the environment she has left. Not only are there few signs of luxury, but the house is dirty and smells. Prin is a large, slow woman and Christie resembles a scarecrow. She soon finds that the children next door are beaten by a drunken father. At school Morag is laughed at for her unfashionable, homemade clothes and for being the scavenger's daughter. In social terms, Morag's childhood is one of ostracization from almost all segments of the town, which relegate her to a very low status. However, Morag does not allow the taunts of the local children and the superior attitudes of their parents to overcome her. She is from the beginning a fighter and survivor. Although her childhood is lonely, she remains proud and confident, looking to the future when through her own hard work she will leave Manawaka and its prejudices and injustices far behind. Laurence presents the artist figure in the small town, like those of the literature of the middle stage of his development in Canadian Literature, as a lonely and isolated figure, but adds a quality of determination and strength seldom found earlier, mirroring her own success and confidence as a writer and the changing climate of the artist in Canada generally.

A very important influence on Morag Gunn is Christie Logan, her adopted father. In spite of his lowly status as garbage collector, Christie gives Morag certain gifts that are important to her development as an artist. It is years after she has left Manawaka that Morag really appreciates Christie and what he has done for her. As a child Morag is often deeply embarrassed by Christie because she sees that he is not respected by polite Manawaka society, which maintains a superior attitude toward him. She is especially upset with Christie when he returns the taunts of the local boys or plays the clown, exaggeratedly conforming to what he knows are Manawaka's expectations of him. But by observing and listening to Christie Morag is given insights and perceptions much deeper than those of the average Manawakan. Christie helps her to see beneath the polite surfaces of society into its true nature. He tells her of seemingly genteel, upstanding homes whose weekly garbage contains articles like liquor bottles and even aborted babies that belie their appearance. Another gift Christie gives Morag is that of a mythology that inspires her imagination and helps give her confidence. He makes up stories about a man he calls Piper Gunn, one of her ancestors, who led his people from Scotland to Canada long ago. Morag cannot get enough of these tales from Christie, and even after he finishes telling them, she sits with a scribbler and pencil developing the characters and situations into expanded stories of her own. Laurence suggests that important sources of inspiration for the writer are ancestry and a sense of the past. Christie has an almost divine sense ("Christ"ie) of Morag's need for roots and tradition. He also tells stories about the First World War, when he fought with Morag's father, who was hardly more than a boy. He tells her about the time her father saved his life at the front. Years later Morag learns that the story had been fabricated for her benefit. In reality, her father had been so young and afraid during the war that Christie had to cradle him in his arms to calm him. Christie adopted Morag as a further gesture of kindness to her father when he died. Christie is a character who in his care and protection of others affirms Laurence's vision of the possibility of love and compassion in a world that may at times seem to lack these qualities.

Morag's only friends in Manawaka are social outcasts like herself: Eva Winkler, the daughter of the drunkard next door, and Jules Tonnerre, a Metis who lives with his family in a shack outside of the town. Although Morag gradually manages to improve her economic status and prospects by doing well in school and working part-time, she is never accepted by Manawaka society, which has rigid standards that judge people according to who they are by birth or social position rather than what they make of themselves. Like other artist figures in the literature of the small town she is never really a part of the upper strata of the society in which she lives, but rather sees it from a detached and even alienated perspective. Her outcast status is apparent in her first sexual encounter, which is not with one of the successful young men of Manawaka, but with Jules Tonnerre. Morag's relationship with Jules is almost spiritual. As social outcasts they have much in common, and each feels a deep sympathy for and understanding of the other that is not articulated in words, but is strongly felt. Also, just as Morag has been reared on myths of her Scottish forefathers, Jules has been brought up to feel pride in his Métis ancestry. His ancestor, Rider Tonnerre, stories about whom have been passed down in his family for generations, was a great horseman and defender of his people. When Morag and Jules come together they compare and share mythologies. They are both alive to traditions that make them proud, and isolate them further from the majority of Manawaka society who live in terms of polite social forms and conventions. Like Atwood, Laurence suggests that awareness of and respect for the native tradition is important for the artist. Through Jules and Christie Morag is made aware of the epic myths of the place she occupies: the strength, pride and self-sufficiency of the Indian who roamed and occupied all of this vast land and the courage and daring of the immigrant who crossed the great ocean and struggled to survive in a world that at first was foreign and dangerous.

However, it is some time before Morag truly claims the world represented by Christie and Jules. Indeed, for a time she denies it, trying to prove to herself and to Manawaka that she is capable of being successful in its terms. This is the wrong direction for Morag, because it denies her very essence; but she has to experience it before she can really know who she is. After working in Manawaka for a year as a journalist with the local newspaper and saving the necessary money, Morag leaves the town and attends university in Winnipeg. She is only briefly ashamed that she does not miss Christie and Prin, in fact is relieved to get away from them. At university Morag meets her first literary friend, Ella, who writes poetry. Together she and Ella spend many hours discussing literature and writing. Ella encourages Morag to go on with her short stories and submit them to the student paper. Morag is delighted to find that there is someone else in the world with interests similar to hers. Morag has removed herself further from the tight circle of isolation and frustration that impeded the development of the artist in the literature of the small town. Ella's family is also a source of inspiration and development for Morag. They are Jewish immigrants and much more open in the expression of emotions than Morag has ever been with her Scots-Presbyterian background. One day Ella's mother hears Morag crying alone in the bathroom and insists on Morag coming out and crying on her shoulder, sharing her grief and fear. Morag is amazed at the comfort this gives her. Another demon that has possessed the Canadian artist, the puritanical shame concerning the emotions, is exorcized by Laurence.

There is another attachment Morag makes at university that is not so healthy for her as an artist. She "falls in love" with her English professor, Brooke Skelton, and they are married. There is a deliberate quality of unreality to Laurence's portrayal of the Morag-Brooke relationship, and it contrasts strongly with that of Morag and Jules. Even the surnames of the two men, "Tonnerre" sounding explosive and virile and "Skelton" connoting skeleton or wrathe-like images, offer sharp contrast. Morag sees Brooke as the knight on the white charger who will take her to a wonderful world of security, nice things and a respectable social position, the world she was determined to achieve when she left Manawaka. However, by choosing to marry Brooke Morag is deliberately choosing to deny her past and her art, which are inseparable. She realizes intuitively that with Brooke she cannot be the woman she is with Jules. She sees that Brooke, whose background is Anglo-Indian, and who is a seventeenth-century English Literature scholar, would not understand Christie's qualities, or the thrill she feels for her cultural heritage. Indeed, one quality Brooke says he likes in Morag is her sense of mystery, since she never discusses her past. He likes her to sublimate her own identity and conform to his. He also likes her to play the role of the worshipful student-wife, inflating his ego. At first Morag is overjoyed at her good fortune in so easily achieving the goal she had set herself of attaining a respectable social position, and she is amazed that Brooke would actually think her worthy of being his wife. However, over a period of time the thrill of her new status diminishes.

She and Brooke move to Toronto, where he has been offered a position in a university English Department. They decide that since he is on faculty it might be awkward for her to take courses in English, her special interest, so Brooke will tutor her at home. This of course only reinforces Morag's dependence on her husband, not a healthy situation for a woman with her independent background. Even more stifling for Morag is Brooke's attitude to her writing, which she attempts to carry on. He encourages her, but in a way that is condescending and patronizing, because he does not really understand what she is trying to do. His background and sensibility are so different from hers that her work does not conform to his expectations, and he is not impressed with it. Over a period of eight years Morag attempts, with varying degrees of success, to play the role of dutiful wife. However, it is a downhill struggle. The urge to write is strong within her and she becomes more and more forgetful of her household duties, her appearance and her social obligations. Her frustrations at not being able to write as the mood takes her over, but instead having to conform to a domestic routine, erupt from time to time in temper tantrums that she realizes seem childish, but are symptomatic of deeper problems. A symbol of the emptiness of Morag's marriage to Brooke is his refusal to agree to their having a child. Morag wants one very much, but Brooke is happy to have all her attention himself.

A major crisis point comes in the marriage when Morag has her first novel published. Brooke has been subtly discouraging in his evaluation of her work in the past, so Morag has sent the manuscript off to the publisher without telling him. When she finds that her book is actually going to be published, she is overjoyed, but Brooke is hurt. He tells her that he feels she has been secretive in not informing him about sending the manuscript off. The reader is tempted to feel that Brooke is feeling threatened by Morag's independence and obvious potential for success. Not long after this incident Morag, who has been walking aimlessly through downtown Toronto, accidentally meets Jules Tonnerre, who she has not seen since they lived in Manawaka. Morag is ecstatic at finding her old friend. The gradual build up of alienation from the life she has led with Brooke makes her value Jules' proud strength and authenticity as never before. She also feels their old spiritual bonds. She learns that Jules has also become an artist; he composes songs about his people and his experiences and sings them in downtown bars and night clubs. Without even considering the possibility of any conflict, Morag takes Jules back to her place where they have drinks and reminisce. When Brooke comes home he is livid to see his wife carousing with a half-breed. He calls Morag aside and reminds her that a colleague is expected for dinner. Jules overhears Brooke's objections to his presence and tells Morag he will leave quietly. Morag is finally faced head-on with a dilemma that has been building throughout her married life: whether to remain in a safe, secure, protected but sterile state, or to take the more vital and difficult route of independence and creativity. One is tempted to see Morag's choice at this point as a symbolic representation of the choice facing the Canadian artist today, and one would probably not be wrong in doing so. Laurence, like the other writers discussed in this chapter, is concerned that the Canadian artist find a true, vital expression, and is without doubt recommending that he embrace what is his and celebrate it, untying the apron strings of dependence on other cultures, particularly the English. This position is reinforced by her very deliberate contrast of the dark, passionate Jules who represents a native tradition and the more ephemeral, weak Brooke, who has made no true contact with Canada. Morag chooses Jules. By having her artist heroine do so, Laurence is advocating much the same direction for the artist in Canada as did Margaret Atwood. Both writers maintain the importance of an indigenous culture, which they consider to be more vital than one which is transposed.[19]

Morag leaves Brooke and lives with Jules in his apartment. The appropriateness of the choice she has made is represented by the child she conceives by Jules during this period. At last Morag has learned to be more honest with herself and is on the track toward affirming her true identity. However, she and Jules do not stay together indefinitely. Morag decides that she has to go west to Vancouver to grow and develop, something she has always wanted to do. Jules is an artist and an individual in his own right and has his own concerns. They will see each other only a few times in the years ahead, but will always share a spiritual bond that is not weakened by distance or time. The proof of the strength of their relationship is the daughter Morag

[19] The theme of the importance for the artist of articulating a native culture and resisting the false lure of another culture is not relegated only to contemporary Canadian literature, as was pointed out in Chapter II. It is found earlier in Duncan's Cousin Cinderella (1908) and Ogilvy's Marie Gourdon (1890).

bears in Vancouver and names Pique, after Jules' sister who died in a fire at the Tonnerre shack near Manawaka. Piquette had been exploited by a white society that treated her as an inferior and ruined herself with alcohol. Morag's naming her daughter Pique and bringing her up with the Tonnerre as well as the Gunn tales are in part acts of atonement for the injustices done Jules' people in the past, and attempts to bridge the gap between the native and the European traditions in Canada. Again Laurence shows concerns similar to those of Atwood.

After a few years in Vancouver where Morag rents an apartment from an aging exotic dancer (finally accepting her position on the fringes of society) and continues to write and publish, she decides to move with Pique to London, England. Unlike the artist figures in the middle stage of that figure's development in Canadian fiction, Morag feels no fear whatsoever of movement and travel. In fact, she requires and seeks the stimulation of varied experiences and new terrains. She has at this point lived in Manawaka, Winnipeg, Toronto, Vancouver and now London. She picks up where Del Jordan in Munro's Lives of Girls and Women left off, and makes the transition from the small town to the city with relative ease, although in the end she will return to the country, where her heart lies. Her main reason for going to Britain is that she feels it is important to her in terms of ancestry. She hopes eventually to visit Sutherland, in Scotland, the home of the Gunns before their immigration to Canada. Dan McRaith, a painter, offers to take her north, but as they journey toward what Morag thinks will be home she has a revelation. She realizes that this is not the place that is important to her. Her real home is across the ocean, in the country brought to life by Christie's tales. The revelation comes amidst the sprinting and whirling of children, suggesting its importance to Morag:

> "It's a deep land here, alright . . . But it's not mine, except a long long way back. I always thought it was the land of my ancestors, but it is not."
> "What is, then?"
> "Christie's real country. Where I was born."
> McRaith holds her hand inside his greatcoat pocket. Around them the children sprint and whirl.[20]

This is the revelation Britain gives Morag; her place is in Canada. Almost immediately after the experience in Sutherland Morag receives word that Christie is ill. She tells Pique they are going "home" now.

Morag returns to Manawaka, where she finally claims Christie who she realizes now was a prophet and a source of much of her strength and inspiration. Although he has had a stroke and can no longer tell the tales and divine the garbage as he used to, his eyes are still bright blue, and full of "knowing". In his hospital room, as Christie lies dying, Morag searches for a way to tell him how much he has meant to her and to atone for her having ignored him since leaving Manawaka. She tells him that she used to fight with him a lot, but that he has been a father to her. Christie in turn tells her, although his words are barely discernible, that he is blessed. At last Morag has faced and accepted and even learned to love and respect Christie and all he represents in terms of his vision, his honesty and his inspired sense of history and tradition. As a final tribute to Christie, Morag has a piper play at his burial in the Manawaka cemetery. Consistent to the end, Manawaka, for whom Christie existed only to be mocked or avoided, and whose lowly status reinforced its smug, platonic conception of itself, ignores his funeral, which is attended only by Morag, the minister, the funeral director and the piper. But Morag has finally learned to overcome the bitterness she has always felt toward Manawaka. On this last visit she sees what a small, insignificant town it really is and feels compassion toward it and its people. Even the superior matrons who filled her with such a sense of injustice as a child have died or are old and vulnerable. She hears that Mrs. Cameron, who once criticized her slovenly appearance in the general store, now proudly proclaims that she once knew the novelist, Morag Gunn. By getting out of Manawaka and seeing something of the larger world and by becoming a successful novelist Morag now has a more detached and objective perspective on the world that at one time seemed so oppressive. Again, the artist figure shows development beyond the middle stage. The old demons of self-consciousness and paranoia are at last eradicated.

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[20] Laurence, The Diviners, p. 319.

After Christie's burial Morag is at a loss as to where to live, although she knows it will be in Canada. This dilemma is resolved almost miraculously when her eye falls on an advertisement in a Toronto newspaper for a farm for sale at a place called McConnell's Landing, a few hours from the city. Without even having seen the farm, Morag knows this will be her and Pique's permanent home. The move to the farm brings Morag's life full circle, as she was born on a farm. Here Morag continues to write and also makes spiritual contact with another Canadian ancestor, Catharine Parr Traill, the sister of Susanna Moodie, who like her sister came to Canada in the 1830s and settled in the area Morag now calls home. Her relationship with Catharine is an amusing one, for Morag realizes that she is very much a twentieth-century woman with a life style that Traill would not likely approve of: she smokes and does not care about digging in the garden or hard, physical work generally. However, Morag is aware that Catharine Parr Traill and others blazed the trails and gave names to the plants and general terrain that she now takes for granted. Also, there is an affinity between Traill and Gunn in that both are strong women and writers.

After Morag's move to the farm patterns of completion assert themselves strongly in her life. The farm itself is the first home Morag has owned and it is clear that she has put down roots and plans to remain there. Also, there is a final visit from Jules who is still living in Toronto, but who is showing signs of wear after the hard life he has led, trying to make a living as a singer in the city. Pique has just been taunted at school for being part Indian, and is feeling depressed before her father's visit. When he comes Pique is at first shy, but then joyful at seeing him. He sings songs for her about his ancestors and about life in the city, captivating her and raising her spirits, giving her strength and pride. Then he does something that fills Morag with amazement. He presents Morag with a plaid pin that had been traded by John Shipley in an earlier Laurence novel, The Stone Angel (1964), for a knife with his father, Lazarus Tonnerre. Morag cannot believe her ears when she hears the story of the trade, because suddenly a knife with a strange symbol cut into it given to her by Christie makes sense. She realizes it is the same knife Lazarus traded for the plaid pin, and that the symbol is a "T" for Tonnerre. Morag gives Jules the knife. The exchange of the knife and the plaid pin is an almost sacred act, affirming for Jules and Morag the importance of their respective traditions and their respect for each other. When Jules dies a few months later, he leaves the knife to Pique, and Morag will bequeath her daughter the plaid pin. Laurence affirms a faith in the continuation of a historical and cultural tradition in Canada that had not appeared in The Stone Angel, where Hagar Shipley, the mother of John, was dismayed to see her son treat the sacred pin so lightly and died assuming that it was lost forever.

This affirmation is reinforced by Morag's final vision in the novel. Throughout the summer, the time-span of the novel, Morag has been concerned that she is losing her powers; the novel she is writing is her last, she has no more to say. She is dreading its completion, because she feels that life will be empty and meaningless afterward. However, she has a neighbour, Royland, an old man who lives close to the river and has been a water diviner all his life. She senses all the time that she knows Royland that he has something to tell her, and she is not disappointed. Toward the end of the summer, as the leaves start falling from the trees, Royland tells her that he has lost his own powers. Morag expresses her concern, but Royland does not want her sympathy. He has always known that someday they would go, but what has given him strength is the knowledge that there would always be others to carry on the tradition, the inheritors:

> "It's something I don't understand, the divining," Royland said slowly, "and it's not something that everyone can do, but the thing I don't usually let on about is that quite a few people can learn to do it. You don't have to have the mark of God between your eyebrows. Or if you do, quite a few people have it. You didn't know that, did you?"

> The inheritors. Was this, finally and at last, what Morag had always sensed she had to learn from the old man? She had known it all along, but not really known. The gift, or portion of grace, or whatever it was, was finally withdrawn, to be given to someone else.[21]

The novel reinforces this hope. For several years now Pique has been composing songs and tunes, combining the gifts of her parents: Morag's love of words and Jules' lyrical abilities. This is Morag's final realization. There are not only ancestors, but also inheritors. Life is a continuum.

The Diviners is a novel that operates strongly on the personal level as the story of an individual artist, Morag Gunn, and her struggles to create. But it is also a novel that expresses Laurence's belief in a strong Canadian cultural tradition emerging with the myths of our ancestors, and carried on today by contemporary artists. Like the other writers discussed in this chapter Laurence asserts the importance of an awareness of the past and a tradition for the artist. As a child Morag rewrites the tales Christie tells her of her ancestors, and even as a mature writer she tells Ella in a letter describing her latest novel that it deals with the same period as Christie's stories: the arrival of Piper Gunn and the Sutherlanders in Hudson Bay, their winter at Churchill, and their spring journey to York Factory. She tells Ella: "I like the thought of history and fiction interweaving."[22] Like the other novelists of this section also, Laurence very consciously takes us full circle back to our ancestors, myths and archetypes, affirming a belief in the existence of a native cultural tradition. There are strong patterns of faith and celebration in these novels, reinforced by images of love, progeny, travel and even miracle, very different images from those that characterized the artist in the middle stage of the fiction. In The Diviners Morag Gunn transcends many of the impediments that so limited the artist in the rural fiction. She overcomes her bitterness toward the small town, seeing it in its true perspective. She also overcomes her fear of showing her emotions or expressing her doubts to others, realizing that all people, even those who appear to be strong, have weaknesses. She lives and travels in many parts of Canada and Britain. She becomes a successful and even famous artist. She has good artist friends who encourage her when she is depressed and help her when she is in trouble. She is aware of a whole tradition of Canadian culture from the indigenous people to her immigrant ancestors to the rituals in the small town where she grows up to life in the cities. Although she does not have a conventional marriage she shares a profound physical, emotional and spiritual love with a man who gives her a child who in turn they both love, and she sees that child grow and develop to the point where she is questing her past and giving expression to her own experience. Obviously Laurence does not see the artist in facile terms. There are periods of intense loneliness and struggle for Morag, even after she has achieved success. However, she does indicate changing patterns for the artist in Canada. In a sense Christie is the earlier, persecuted form of the Canadian artist, with the vision but lacking the audience to be appreciated. Laurence seems to say in her presentation of the next generation of the artist, represented by Morag, that there is a different terrain and climate now in which the artist can find a responsive public and supportive friends. Laurence's vision of the artist in Canada today is one that is positive and strong. Morag Gunn's story is one of growth and development, revelation and even miracle. The patterns of unity, completion and faith which conclude the novel leave one with the optimistic sense that there is a strong, vital and continuing cultural tradition in this country.

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[21] Laurence, The Diviners, p. 369.

[22] Laurence, The Diviners, p. 418.

CHAPTER VI

JAIL-BREAK AND RE-CREATION[1]

Those who subscribe to what is here described as the international school of literature of the artist propose that in order for the Canadian artist to realize his full potential he must not concern himself with secondary matters like nationalist questions but rather must give priority to developing his creative talents to the ultimate level of excellence. These authors assert that in matters of art Canada is generally a backward and provincial country and that the Canadian artist should seek the best training and the most sophisticated milieu, wherever these are to be found. If he is, for example, a musician he should go to London or Rome and if he is a painter Paris or New York should be his goal. Since the artist figures in the international literature do travel in search of creative excellence, images of journey are characteristic in this literature as they are in the nationalist literature. However, the artist in the international literature seldom returns to Canada to live, but remains in the place of the most sophisticated audience and training. The passage from provincial to international artist is not an easy one; in fact, the development may be traumatic, much of the action of the novel devoted to the artist overcoming the oppressive and stifling aspects of his place of origin. This process is sometimes described with images of exorcism by the writers. The contemporary international literature of the artist may be distinguished from that of the late nineteenth century by the greater struggle the artist must go through in order to achieve his goal of success and recognition at his craft. It is usually more intense and convincing than that of the nineteenth century, which tended with few exceptions to be less realistic, the artist achieving this goal too easily and without persuading the reader that he really merited success. Although the authors of the novels of this group present their artist figures as overcoming the inhibiting qualities of the small town or even the city, which can be considered provincial in this literature, much time and space are often devoted to defining these inhibiting qualities. There is, however, a different perspective on the provincial centre from the one revealed in the literature of the middle stage. It is one of greater detachment, in which it is described in more symbolic, representative terms than it had been earlier. Indeed, some writers even see the humour in its limitations and present it with touches of burlesque, irony or satire. Often the artist after he has come to terms with his place of origin never looks back, but directs his attention instead to the future and doing what is best for the continued development of his art. However, there are also examples in the literature of the artist, once he has become a success abroad, reevaluating his relationship to his place of origin and accepting the fact that it will always be a part of him to some extent. Although he never returns home permanently, he does achieve an inner peace through this acknowledgement and acceptance of his roots. Occasionally too the artist abroad achieves a more mature perspective on Canada as an artistic milieu, and discovers that many of the problems he encountered there and attributed to Canada at the time were really those of his own making, mirroring his own lack of experience and confidence. Once again he achieves a truce concerning a place that earlier gave him unhappiness. There is one novel, the last discussed in this chapter, that has been placed among the others in this group but that in some ways stands alone as a novel about the artist. Like the others it presents the artist triumphing over a backward environment, but it does not propose the necessity of a physical journey in order to achieve this. Rather, it suggests that the truly creative individual can achieve liberation through his own mental and spiritual processes.

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[1] Images employed by Margeret Avison in her poem "Snow" (In Robert Weaver and William Toye, eds., The Oxford Anthology of Canadian Literature [Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1973], p. 15). Margaret Atwood uses this title for the last chapter of Survival [Toronto: Anansi, 1972].

In A Mixture of Frailties[2] (1950) Robertson Davies presents the story of Monica Gall, a small-town girl with some musical talent who triumphs over the limitations of her environment and becomes a successful opera singer. The first quarter of the novel is devoted to Monica's home town and her family, both of which manifest precisely the same qualities of the small town and family described in the literature of the artist of the middle stage of his development in the literature. The difference is that Davies's perspective on these forces is much more detached than that of the authors of the middle stage. He parodies and satirizes Salterton and the Galls, making the reader laugh at their limitations, an effect seldom achieved in the literature of the middle stage. However, Monica Gall, growing up within this environment and lacking an objective point of view, is just as oppressed by her environment as were the earlier artist figures. But again there is a difference, because she does have the good fortune to leave Salterton and live in London, England, where she studies music and eventually overcomes the negative aspects of her background. However, although Monica leaves Salterton a quarter of the way through the novel, it is not until the end of it that she truly determines what direction to take in life; the more demanding one of an international career or the simpler route of returning to Salterton, where she can be a big toad in a small puddle.

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[2] Robertson Davies, A Mixture of Frailties (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1958).

Salterton, in which Monica Gall grows up, is a socially and culturally pretentious Ontario town. Like the small town of the middle stage, it is tyrannized by a narrow-minded female, Mrs. Bridgetower, whose name Davies satirically employs to epitomize her High Anglican, Tory, Loyalist and generally upper-class character. Mrs. Bridgetower, in turn, represents the qualities of small-town Ontario as Davies sees it. Although she has just died as the novel opens, Mrs. Bridgetower is a woman whose strong will, like that of Mrs. Potter in Watson's The Double Hook[3], is pervasive even after her death. By leaving an exacting will that not only contains directions for her funeral but also a somewhat unusual condition of inheritance that requires her son to become the father of a male child before he or any of the others succeed to the estate, she manages to oppress her son, daughter-in-law, lawyer, minister and best friend even from the grave. The condition of inheritance she saddles her son Solly and his wife Veronica with is one that has the potential of making the couple's married life miserable, another characteristic of the sterile woman in the middle stage, who did her best to undermine anything that suggested life. The will, of course, becomes public knowledge, further disconcerting Solly and Veronica.

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[3] Referred to in footnote 35, Chapter IV.

Until her son fulfills the requirements of her will, Mrs. Bridgetower has decreed that the interest from her estate is to go toward the maintaining and training in England of some talented Salterton female in one of the arts. Mrs. Bridgetower's and the views of Salterton generally toward the arts are particularly satirized by Davies in A Mixture of Frailties. She employs her philanthropy in this area to forward her general social position in Salterton. The truth is that she knows almost nothing about the arts, although she pretends to. This is made obvious by her choice of one of the songs to be sung at her funeral, "a sickening musical bonbon" according to Humphrey Cobbler, the organist at the Anglican cathedral, who knows music. The fact that she stipulates that her protegée must go to England for her training reflects the colonial spirit of Salterton which views England as the cultural centre of the world.

True to her character, the trustees Mrs. Bridgetower appoints to administer her estate, and more particularly to choose and oversee the training of the female artist who will benefit from her munificence, are singularly lacking in any notion of art. Once again, the names of the characters denote their qualities. There are the pinched lawyer, Mr. Snelgrove, the doddering minister, Dean Knapp, and the old maid, Puss Pottinger. Cruelly, Mrs. Bridgetower also has her son, Solly, helping to administer to someone else the funds that should rightfully be coming to him. The criteria established by the trustees for the selection of the female artist also reflect the small town's ignorance in these matters. In fact, the Trust shortens the list of applicants more on the basis of what the artists persuade them they know about their respective areas of artistic endeavour than on the basis of any criteria of their own. However, there are certain conditions that have nothing to do with art that must be met in no uncertain terms by the applicants. These exist in the area of morality, a field in which the small town is expert, as was seen in the literature of the middle stage. When a young Salterton woman, apparently talented at painting, applies to the Trust her prospects look excellent until Miss Pottinger, through some underhanded sleuthing, discovers that the girl is not a virgin. The girl's name is removed from the list with a speed that makes the head spin. Miss Pottinger will not have a "hussy" profit from her revered friend's lofty intentions; she observes: "Let us never forget that the Louisa Hansen Bridgetower Trust is the creation and memorial of a woman who stood for everything that is finest in Canadian life."[4] Once again, as so often has happened in the literature of the small town, a narrow-minded society censors the potential artist.

Humourously, the woman to become the recipient of the Trust is chosen almost accidentally, after the trustees have eliminated all the more promising applicants for flimsy reasons that have little to do with their artistic merits. There is one person in Salterton, referred to already, who does have some sense of music. In fact, Humphrey Cobbler and his young family live and breathe it. Ironically, it does not occur to the Trustees to ask for his opinion in this matter. They consider Humphrey to be a rather queer man because he does not conform to their narrow notions of social deportment and they have no idea of his artistic merit. Indeed, Humphrey enjoys a salary below the poverty level and gets into trouble with the Dean for being erratic in his habits. However, when Humphrey casually remarks to Solly that the girl who sang at his mother's funeral has a good voice with a lot of potential, Solly brings Monica's name before the trustees and they gratefully accept her to get the business over with.

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[4] Davies, A Mixture of Frailties, p. 35.

When we first meet Monica Gall, she is a backward and timid girl whose upbringing has been one of poverty and deprivation. However, rather than present her from her own limited point of view, Davies parodies the conditions that gave such grief to earlier artist figures with her kind of background. He refers to her parents, whom Monica dutifully loves, as Mr. and Mrs. Jack Sprat, an appropriate nomenclature given their physical appearance. He not only satirizes their appearance but also their diction, vocabulary, attitudes and mannerisms, presenting them as absurd caricatures. He presents her father as a whining, simpering man who continually complains about the fact that he had to leave school at an early age in order to go to work in the factory to support his family (untrue) and her mother as a grossly fat, mawkish, illiterate woman. To top off the absurdity of her family background, Davies has its members belong to an obscure fundamentalist church, the "Thirteenth Apostle Tabernacle". Monica's musical talents have been appropriated by the minister of the church; she provides the soprano in its Heart and Gospel Quartet which sings every morning on the local radio station. As Davies ironically observes, the kind of singing performed by this group "primes and pangs of sweet self-pity, mingled with tremulous self-reproach and a strong sense of never having had a square deal from life, which passes for religion with a lot of people."[5] He gives the reader a farcical list of the songs sung by the Quartet: "Eden Must Have Been Like Granny's Garden", "Ten Baby Fingers and Ten Baby Toes" and "That Was My Mother's Rosary". However, although Monica's background has not given her much taste and training, Humphrey Cobbler has detected a sweet purity and potential in her voice. There is one last important influence on Monica before she becomes involved with the Bridgetower Trust, one that will also have to be overcome before she can hope to progress in the world of international music. This is an aunt who has more social pretension than Monica's immediate family and employs her supposed appreciation of good music as a status symbol. She has encouraged a sentimental, idealized attitude to art in the girl. Monica has gained the impression from her that the artist is above life, residing in a shimmering tower of moral and spiritual purity. Unfortunately the aunt has not been educated in music beyond the rudiments of technique and her style and taste are dated. She holds in reverence certain pieces that have not been performed in serious musical circles for years. The aunt's stifled, deathly attitude to art is one of the strongest hindrances to the development of her art that Monica must overthrow in England.

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[5] Davies, A Mixture of Frailties, p. 38.

Monica is a very naive and timid girl at the time of her selection by the trustees. It has never even occurred to her to apply for the Bridgetower money. She is a humble, sincere and simple girl, qualities that do not necessarily ensure success for the artist. She lacks taste, technique and ideas. As Sir Benedict Domdaniel, the famous English conductor who is passing near Salterton and brought in by the trustees to evaluate her singing potential puts it, "a real natural talent has been overlaid by a stultifying home atmosphere and cultural malnutritian."[6] After her selection Monica does not know whether to be elated or apprehensive. On the one hand she seems to know that a great honour has been bestowed upon her, but on the other hand she has misgivings about leaving the only world she has ever known and launching out on her own in a strange new direction. As she sails for England seasickness and homesickness combine to make her miserable, and her first few weeks in London are spent in a lonely flat nursing a cold. Obviously Monica's progress from naive colonial to accomplished international opera singer will not be easy. The remaining three quarters of the novel will be devoted to her overthrowing the inhibiting qualities of her background. Not until she has done so will the way be clear for her to achieve success as an artist.

Monica is fortunate in the man who supervises her training in England, Sir Benedict Domdaniel. He is able to define her weaknesses and strengths as an artist and to prescribe the right kind of coaching for her.. He first has to correct some of the erroneous ideas about art that have been acquired by Monica, particularly from her aunt. When he asks her at their first interview in London why she wants to be an artist, she replies that it is because an artist is a fine person who enriches people's lives and inspires the best in them. Her notions about art are basically moral. Another problem Sir Benedict detects is that Monica lacks confidence and self-assertiveness, qualities that are crucial in the highly competitive world of music. Her humility and passivity are characteristics she has acquired in Salterton where she was taught that a lady does not "blow her own horn" but is rather, as Del Jordan's aunts tell her in Lives of Girls and Women, sweet and passive. There is even a shame attached in Monica's mind to admitting her secret dreams of success as a singer. Again, a colonial society has taught her to be reserved at least in her outward demeanour. Also, she apprehends her career as a serious business requiring due decorum rather than as a medium of joyous expression. She is afraid of unleashing her imagination and emotions. Sir Benedict helps her discover these inhibiting aspects of her character:

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[6] Davies, A Mixture of Frailties, p. 54.

> You're too full of a desire to please -- not to please me, but to please your family, or your school teachers, or those people -- the What's It's Name Trust -- Those people never want you to have ambitions or strong, consuming passions. They want you to be refined -- which means predictable, stable, controlled, always choosing the smallest cake on the plate, never breaking wind audibly, being a good loser -- in a word, dead.[7]

Sir Benedict first sends Monica to Murtagh Molloy, an Irish voice coach, for vocal training. The quality Murtagh develops in Monica is that of putting emotion or "mood" into her singing. Hitherto

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[7] Davies, A Mixture of Frailties, p. 107.

Monica has sung in the accepted manner of Salterton, enunciating carefully and hitting the right notes, but there has never been sensitivity or feeling in her treatment of the lyrics. Molloy starts her thinking about what the writers of the lyrics want to say and what emotions they are seeking to express. This helps Monica to develop interpretations of work rather than simply sing them in a technically correct manner. Molloy also develops Monica's range and teaches her voice capacities she had not been aware she possessed.

Sir Benedict realizes that Monica is unsophisticated in the ways of the world and limited in matters of personal taste and fashion so sends her to Paris with a sophisticated female friend of his in order to initiate her into the possibilities of travel, society and dress. He further observes that intellectually Monica is very lacking and that she needs something to nourish her talent and imagination. He sends her therefore to Giles Revelstoke, the brilliant composer, who teaches her the literature of music , introducing her to the classics. Revelstoke also brings her into his circle of intellectual and critical friends who edit an avant garde periodical of music. Perhaps as importantly, he initiates Monica sexually. Davies employs her sexual awakening to represent her breaking away from certain of ~~the~~ repressions and inhibitions of Salterton. After her discovery of herself as a woman, Monica's voice loses its strained, tight, serious-business quality and acquires a quality of joy and affirmation. Monica's relationship with Giles is a fruitful and creative one for both, resulting in Giles writing an opera for her, and Monica maturing as a professional performer. The use of sexual imagery to accompany successful artistic expression is prevalent in the literature of the third stage, as already observed in the novels of Bacque, Symons, Atwood and Laurence.

However, Sir Benedict also helps Monica see the limitations of her affair with Giles and teaches her not to lean exclusively on anyone else in terms of her career. When Giles attempts suicide, and an inadvertent action on the part of Monica leads to the suicide becoming a success, she is filled with feelings of guilt and remorse. Sir Benedict reasons with her that Giles was not necessarily the absolute genius she is so quick to believe him to have been, that he had his faults and was human and that in any case Monica and her talents are alive and Giles is dead. She is not to give up her career because of an emotional crisis.

Monica makes two return visits to Salterton during the period of her training in England. These visits reveal her progress beyond the attitudes of her native town. Her first visit is on the occasion of her mother's serious illness and subsequent death. On this visit Monica comes to terms with the guilt she has been harbouring concerning her affluence and opportunity through the generosity of the Bridgetower Trust and her family's poverty and limitations. She had been quick to sympathize with her father's myths about the school of hard knocks and had felt concerned about appearing to be "snotty" in her mother's overly sensitive eyes. However, her experiences in England allow her to see her family in a fresher, more detached way on this first return visit, and she overcomes a lot of her overly emotional feelings concerning them. After her mother's death she thinks:

> You are free. You did your best for her and now you are free. You will never have to worry about what you can tell her, or what would

hurt her, again.[8]

The release from her narrow, limited family is like a gift of wings for Monica. When she leaves Salterton this time it is with relief rather than homesickness. She looks forward to returning to people who inspire rather than bore her.

The second time Monica returns to Salterton her spirits are down. Giles has died and she has only just heard from Sir Benedict the details of the Bridgetower Trust. She feels guilty that her good fortune has been Solly's severe trial and is determined to take no more of the money that morally belongs to someone else. This last visit is a crucial one for Monica, because she is seriously contemplating giving up all she has achieved in England and returning to Salterton permanently. This time it is once again her old teacher, Sir Benedict, who helps her to find her way, although the actual decision is hers. After she has been in Salterton a short period of time she receives a letter from Sir Benedict telling her how much he admires her as an artist and as a woman and asking her to marry him. Monica is presented with a choice: Salterton or Sir Benedict, with all that each represents of two very different worlds. Her decision is made on the last page of the novel as she sings in the Anglican Cathedral in Salterton on the occasion of the fourth Bridgetower Memorial Sermon. It is four years since her "discovery" in this same church. As her voice and spirit respond to the music she realizes where her true place lies and after the performance she immediately goes to a telephone to telegraph her reply to Sir Benedict. It has taken time and experience, but finally Monica has chosen to follow her art. Unlike many of the writers of the middle stage, Davies presents Monica as escaping the tiny circle of the small town and moving on to the world outside.

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[8] Davies, A Mixture of Frailties, p. 289.

Just before Monica's final choice there is an incident that suggests the possibility of triumphing over backwardness even within the town. Davies has the negative and repressive spirit of Mrs. Bridgetower exorcized. Solly and Veronica have lived in the old Bridgetower home since his mother's death and of course her presence has been strongly felt over the past four years, especially because of the venomous condition of inheritance. Veronica has had one child, a boy, but he died at birth. It is as if a curse remains within the house for the young couple. Just before the fourth Bridgetower Memorial Sermon Veronica is close to a second confinement. One night she hears a noise from the room formerly occupied by her mother-in-law. She goes to investigate and a short time later Solly hears a scream. He rushes into the room to find Veronica on the floor, exhausted and in labour. She bears her second son, this time a healthy boy, in the bedroom of the malicious old woman. Humphrey Cobbler says that there is no doubt in his mind that Veronica wrestled with the ghost of Mrs. Bridgetower that night and won. The image of the sterile woman is replaced with that of the mother. Veronica lies in the old woman's bed, a baby in her arms. Once again, a pattern of the artist in the middle stage is vanquished.

Davies in A Mixture of Frailties defines the sources of frustration and inhibition for the artist in the small town and recommends that the artist find a more sophisticated milieu in which to pursue his career. He also suggests through the exorcism of the negative spirit of Mrs. Bridgetower the possibility of patterns of enlightenment emerging in the hitherto backward community. It is a positive novel in which the artist successfully makes the passage from colonial to international stature. Images of freedom and life prevail at the end, suggesting new possibilities for the future. Davies's defiance of the negative aspects of the colonial tradition marks a turning point in the literature of the artist, as did the nationalist literature, in which a more aggressive and assertive and even humourous tone emerges. However, Davies proposes a different direction for the artist than those writers discussed in Chapter V. He proposes that art has little to do with place of origin and must be pursued for itself.

Another writer who feels, like Davies, that the small town can be a backward and harmful milieu for the artist and that he should seek more sophisticated cultural centres is Hugh Hood. His novel, *white figure/white ground*[9] (1964), employs patterns that are similar to those of Davies in *A Mixture of Frailties*. Like Davies he uses the sterile woman figure to epitomize the qualities of the small town and a dramatic exorcism and images of love and fertility to illustrate the artist overcoming the limitations of the backward environment. He also portrays his artist figure ultimately leaving the small town and pursuing his craft in the city. Like Davies he feels the artist should go where the competition is strongest and the instruction is finest in order to excel. Hood uses the journey motif more obviously than Davies.

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[9] Hugh Hood, *white figure/white ground* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1964).

Monica travelled from Salterton to London, made several visits to Paris and Rome and returned twice to Salterton, finally settling in London. Her travels covered a four-year period. Hugh Hood employs one emphatic journey made by his artist figure from Montreal to Barringford, a small town in Nova Scotia, and back in the course of the summer. The journey is more concentrated and symbolic than those of Davies's heroine, and it gives form to the novel. Hood's character's journey is also more psychological, the artist figure seeking to understand and come to terms with his past before he can continue as an artist.

The central character in white figure/white ground is a painter, Alex MacDonald, who is married to a beautiful French-Canadian woman, Madeleine. As the novel opens Alex is already a successful artist, living on Pine Avenue in Montreal, but his father has died recently and he is troubled with certain questions about his father's life and ultimately his own roots and origins. His father had been raised in Barringford, Nova Scotia. Then, for a reason never revealed to Alex, he was forced as a young man to leave home and join the bank, although he would have preferred to stay in his home town and pursue the legal profession, like his father. Alex knows his father to have been a good, kind man and is troubled concerning his forced exile. Also, the house in Barringford occupied by Alex's grandfather should have been passed down to Alex's father and in turn to Alex, the only males directly in the grandfather's line. However, the grandfather left the house to his two spinster sisters, who in turn will leave it to a niece. Alex determines to visit Barringford to discover the reason for his father's banishment and disinheritance.

That summer Alex and Madeleine drive from Montreal to

Barringford to solve the MacDonald family mystery. As they near Barringford and when they get there certain occurrences are described by Hood in such a way that the reader becomes aware of the larger symbolic and psychological significance of Alex's journey. Barringford is presented in images of death, representing the cultural limitations that have historically plagued the isolated rural community. It is a recreation by Hood of the small-town environment of the middle stage of the development of the artist in Canada and is a step backward for Alex as an artist. Hood presents it, like many of the writers of the middle stage, as an ingrown, incestuous place with more sense of past than future. Just before Madeleine and Alex get to Barringford they stop by the ocean and walk on the beach. However, a fog ominously separates them. Then, when they get to Barringford and walk one evening down the street on which the MacDonald family home is located, ominous images emerge. It is like a walk in the underworld, the images of rank vegetation and darkness almost the same as those employed by Knister to describe the home of Ada Lethem in White Narcissus.[10] The MacDonald home is at the end of a series of narrow, dark streets in the old part of town. Grass grows through fissures in the pavement and yellow lights glow eerily from distant verandahs. Shadowy figures flit to and fro. When the couple stand across the street from the old family home a voice uncannily calls to them to come in, they are expected. However, they had not told the aunts they were in town. Then the porch light is switched on and the spell is broken for the moment. The ominous, oppressive nature of the imagery is indicative not only of the qualities of Barringford, but also of the state of mind of Alex who is entering an unfamiliar and potentially dangerous world of the past and whose struggles to come to terms with it will be profound.

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[10] Discussed in Chapters III and IV.

Alex's spinster great-aunts, like the sterile women of the middle stage, are presented as figures of death. Their orientation is entirely toward the past, the most petty and negative qualities of which they preserve and nurture. They hold the key to the mysteries Alex wants to unlock concerning his father's early life. At first they are coy and elusive when Alex asks why his father was removed from his family home against his wishes. They consider Alex to be a threat to their smug little world, a foreigner and an intruder. However, finally the story unfolds, at Alex's insistence. Alex's grandfather married the beautiful Kate MacDonald, the most popular and admired woman in the area. After the marriage he learned, to his horror, that Kate was his first cousin. Not only did he then consider his marriage incestuous, but he also suspected Kate of knowing the truth all along and plotting to marry him for his money and social position. When a son, Alex's father, was born, he saw him as the product of an incestuous relationship. From then until her early death of a broken heart he treated Kate with a cold formality and as soon as possible sent his son away for training with a bank. The unfairness and rigidity of Alex's grandfather were supported by his two sisters who had always been secretly jealous of Kate and felt her an unworthy intruder into their peaceful, domestic world. For all the subsequent years the sisters, who devoted their lives to caring for their brother after Kate's death, have maintained their superior and unjust attitude toward Alex's father. Even their treatment of Alex shows that they think of him as the infamous Kate's grandson, a product of the degenerate side of the family, rather than as himself, the recognized and successful artist. Their bigotry also extends to Alex's wife, whom they discuss with smug giggles because she is French and Roman Catholic, maintaining antiquated prejudices from an earlier era. They could never be convinced that Madeleine's family is more well-to-do, sophisticated and cultured than their own, which is the case.

When Alex thinks of his aunts, he is troubled by an allusion, suggesting the depths to which they have penetrated his psyche. He asks himself: "They sit on the porch all day with their knitting. . . . Why only two?"[11] Subconsciously he equates them with some mythical trio, probably the three Fates who spin the thread of life, dispose the lots of destiny and cut the thread of death. Apparently Alex senses that these women have power over him. In a very real way the sisters do control his life at this moment, because he is letting the past and its injustices to his father and to himself ~~over~~whelm him, a situation that could bog him down in self-pity, depleting his creative energy. Alex's agent knows the possible danger to Alex of becoming immersed in the past and retreating from the stimulation and competition of Montreal. He tells Alex's wife: "Madeleine, my dear child, there is nothing in the world so bad for a man like Alex as hate and fear. Together they'll destroy or enslave him. If he isn't free, he's nothing."[12] Madeleine also fears the perilous course Alex has set this summer. She is a contrast in the novel to the old aunts, in that she is described as an earth mother figure, full, round and sensuous. She also sees the ominous aspect of the old women:

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[11] Hood, white figure/white ground, p. 97.

> They're infinitely worse than my family, who are partially civilized. These people are murderous; they have no civility and no suspicion that it exists. When once they come to hate you, it's for life and the whole extent of the hereafter as well. The older aunt hates me; but I can laugh at her, you see, she has no hold on me; I would not want her to have any power over me, of any kind. In the end she will murder the girl.[13]

The girl Madeleine refers to is Ellen, the aunts's great-niece and Alex's cousin, who has been chosen to inherit the MacDonald's ancestral home. Ellen is a young and attractive girl with her life ahead of her. However, she is being trapped by her aunts into a life of servitude to them and to all they represent. Like so many characters in the middle stage of the fiction she feels a strong sense of duty to family. Her aunts are old and doddering and she feels compelled to live with them and care for them. They manipulate her through their age and their selection of her as beneficiary to their estate. It is clear that life in Barringford is dead for Ellen. There are no suitable males for her to marry, so she will remain a spinster like her aunts. She cannot even take short vacations because of the subtle pressures put on her by the old women. She thinks to herself: "I'm an old lady, ... in a dry old house."[14]

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[12] Hood, white figure/white ground, p. 92.

[13] Hood, white figure/white ground, p. 90.

Part way through the summer Madeleine goes to Maine to stay with some vacationing relatives. She cannot stand the dullness and death of Barringford, and knows that whatever forces are holding Alex there, he must come to terms with himself. Alex moves into the MacDonald home during her absence, and he and Ellen start seeing each other every day. She accompanies him to the beach and watches him paint. In a sense Alex and Ellen are male and female versions of the same person. They are descendents of MacDonalds and nearly the same age. For both this summer is crucial in determining what road to follow in life. However, Ellen's choice is more strongly influenced by the past and her having been chosen to inherit the old house. Also, she has never really been away from Barringford, so lacks the experience that would make a break from her home town easier. Ellen has long serious talks with Alex about the future and he encourages her to travel; he particularly urges her to come and visit him and Madeleine in Montreal. But Ellen cannot make a break with Barringford. Her sense of duty is too strong.

Ellen, however unwittingly, also acts as a lure in the novel to persude Alex to stay in Barringford. Over the period of time that Madeleine is away Alex becomes mildly attracted to Ellen and one day kisses her on the beach. However, he goes no further, subconsciously seeing the limitations of their relationship. He does not repeat the mistake of that first "incestuous" relationship two generations ago.

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[14] Hood, white/figure/white ground, p. 67.

Also, the thin, pale, timid, wrathe-like Ellen contrasts with the more experienced, dark, voluptuous, substantial Madeleine, the one representing the backward environment of Barringford, the other the more virile world outside.

While staying in the MacDonald home Alex has certain experiences that confirm the limitations of the old family. He is given the room that had once been his father's. The first night there he has a nightmare in which he relives the expulsion of his father. He dreams that he is in a black, hearse-like stagecoach. It is dark inside the vehicle and a storm ranges without. There is an accident and a man, his grandfather, tells him to get out of the coach, in spite of the pleading of his wife to let him stay. Alex does so reluctantly and the coach moves on, leaving him alone in the ditch. Alex wakes from the dream in a sweat. Through the dream he has come even closer to experiencing the injustice done his father, and he is in even greater danger of allowing the petty, narrow world of the MacDonald past to possess him.

This is the state Madeleine finds Alex in when she returns to Barringford at the end of the summer. However, just the presence of Madeleine and the contrast she makes to the dead, lifeless inhabitants of Barringford are enough to bring Alex out of his spell. On the same spot where he had momentarily kissed Ellen, Alex now makes love to Madeleine, who is sure a child has been conceived by this act. Back in the hotel room Madeleine senses the forces that have been taking Alex over this summer:

> There is some kind of being in the room
> DEATH AND THE DEVIL starting him in this
> immediate instance on the road to some
> bad end.

> Somebody bad in the room.
> I'm alive and a child is alive inside me.
> NOTHING IS GOING TO POSSESS MY HUSBAND.[15]

The motif of the fertile woman overcoming the sterile woman and establishing a new order is one also employed by Davies, although Hood employs it more centrally to the artist theme, for Madeleine is definitely struggling to protect Alex, whereas Veronica Bridgetower's exorcism of Mrs. Bridgetower less directly involved Monica Gall but rather represented a general need to change the small-town spirit.

Through the help of Madeleine Alex awakens to the limitations of Barringford for him as an artist and chooses to leave behind this world of malice, jealousy, pettiness and incest. He is now free to continue his experimentation with new artistic mediums and techniques in Montreal. He has rid himself of his sense of the unfairness of the past by realizing that the past is just that and that it is death to pursue it exclusively. He realizes that in a sense his father was fortunate to have left Barringford, and his doing so has opened the way for his own artistic growth and development.

There is an irony to Alex's summer in Barringford, as there was in much of the literature of the artist in the middle stage, although it occurred more in terms of the authors of the literature than of the artist figures themselves. Although his experience there was often unpleasant and even perilous, it did inspire two magnificent canvases. Alex succeeded in externalizing the forces he felt in the east that summer. The canvases contrast markedly with each other. One captures the quality of light that so impressed Alex on the eastern seacoast: white sky, white sand, white ocean. The other epitomizes the spiritual and cultural qualities of Barringford. It is a dark, tempestuous, discordant, jangled, riotous painting. When Alex's agent sees the two paintings he is impressed with them as being his most powerful work to date. Hood sees the possibility of transforming the backwardness of the small-town environment into something lasting and powerful through art, but he has no illusions about the artist making this milieu his home. It would very quickly absorb him into its limitations, castrating him artistically. From Montreal Alex sends Ellen the dark painting, apparently seeing the appropriateness of it remaining in the old MacDonald home beside a dark, cumbersome hall tree that Grandfather MacDonald greedily claimed from the family, who he knew wanted it, of one of his clients. Alex half-cruelly tells Ellen in an accompanying letter that she should hang onto it for a time because it will appreciate and pay for a few years in Montreal or New York. He knows Ellen will never leave Barringford. Hood's last presentation of Ellen is of her walking into the drawing room, picking up her knitting and sitting with her aunts. He ruefully remarks that the allusion is complete, now there are three (fates).

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[15] Hood, white figure/white ground, p. 177.

In Montreal Alex attends a party made up of guests most of whom are artists. Many have international reputations and come to Canada only occasionally, although they are Canadians. The party, in its sophistication and urbanity, contrasts with the dark little world Alex has recently left behind in Nova Scotia. As he talks to a friend Alex suddenly realizes the significance of his summer experience:

> "Let me finish. There's a recurrent ratio to this small-town, big-town relationship. Barringford is to Halifax as Halifax is to Montreal as Montreal is to New York as New York

> is to Paris as Paris is to . . . is there a next step? What's the most sophisticated place on earth?"
>
> "I think you pretty well have a stop at Paris."
>
> "All right. But to somebody from Planet X in Galaxy 00000900002, way out there somewhere, Parisians are going to seem pretty small-town.
>
> "Who do they look down on in Barringford?"
>
> "People who live up back out of town on the river. And they look down on the savages in the Congo, who look down on the pygmies and . . . its a version of the great chain of being, a basic, a fundamental relationship. Once we learn how to get to the more advanced communities, we'll think of earth as my father thought of Barringford! A nice place to be from! Vigorous and ambitious small-planet boys will want to move to the big planets. And when they're big successes on Planet X, they'll all sit around reminiscing about the good old days on Earth, and writing books called 'You Can't Zoom Home Again,' and 'Look Earthward, Angel!'"
>
> "Now you've spoiled Wolfe for me, and he was one of my favorites."
>
> "Why spoiled? He wrote about a basic thing. Don't you see? When I went down there this summer, I was trying to reverse a fundamental human relationship. I was trying to have an anti-success, and paint anti-paintings. As Madeleine says, you can't paint what isn't there. That's not the painter's affair; he paints what can be seen to be there. And he doesn't light out from the big city to the small town; it's inconceivable. If he's born in a big city, he yearns for a bigger. It isn't that you can't go home again; it's that home is where you start from. It's by definition a leaving-point, a starting place, and you can't stay home all your life. And when you've left, you can't go home once, much less again. I thought my father made a mistake when he left, but I see now that he couldn't have stayed. You have to keep moving up the escalator.[16]

One feels that Hood, like Davies, is committed in his fiction on the artist to leading that figure out of the wilderness of isolation and frustration that has been his lot in Canada in the past and placing him among the best the world has to offer. As the novel closes, Alex and his agent are preparing for a one-man show of Alex's work in New York, a show that has already captured the interest of the critics in that city. Both Davies and Hood present patterns of jail-break and re-creation, the artist figure breaking out of the barriers of the small town and moving on to larger and more sophisticated national and international centres where he becomes a success. The old images of the closed circle, darkness, decay, the ancestral home, the insular family and the sterile woman are reiterated in their fiction, but also transcended. The dramatic image of exorcism is employed to describe the artist escaping the limitations of a world that is feudal and nightmarish in its mental and spiritual backwardness and limitations for him. The old images are triumphantly replaced by those of journey, success, love, fertility and completion. Like the nationalist writers, Davies and Hood propose optimistic patterns for the future of the Canadian artist, although the direction they see him taking is a purist one, pursuing art for art's sake rather than strongly in relation to a native tradition.

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[16] Hood, *white figure/white ground*, pp. 220-222.

Mordecai Richler in St. Urbain's Horseman (1966)[17] presents an artist figure, Jacob Hersh, who, like Monica Gall, travels to England in search of artistic success and fulfillment. Like Davies, Richler presents Canada initially as a backward and limited country that does not encourage and reward its talented and creative people, but rather subscribes to an imitative mediocrity in the arts. However, as the novel progresses the artist figure develops a more mature perspective on

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[17] Mordecai Richler, St. Urbain's Horseman (New York: Bantam Books, 1972).

Canada, realizing that it was not entirely to blame for his alienation there and that if he expected another country to provide a utopic setting that answered all his needs, he was wrong. No country or individual can give the artist his answers. He must find them deep within himself.

Like Laurence's The Diviners, St. Urbain's Horseman is a structurally sophisticated novel which describes the mature artist going through a crisis which causes him to review and reassess his life. There is a back and forth movement throughout the novel from present time which covers only a few days to past memory which reviews the artist's life culminating in his revelation. Jacob Hersh as the novel begins is a successful Canadian film director living in a fashionable section of London with a beautiful wife and three healthy children. However, the external trappings of success belie Jake's true condition. In fact, he is going through a crisis which is causing him to question his abilities as an artist and the direction he is taking in life. The immediate cause of the crisis is a lurid sex scandal in which Jake has unwittingly become implicated, but the ultimate cause lies further back in Jake's roots and origins. Like Alex MacDonald, Jake must come to terms with certain aspects of his past before he can continue to develop as a mature artist.

Jake grows up in the immigrant section of Montreal, near St. Urbain Street. His family is the old extended type found so often in the fiction of the middle stage, and manifesting many of the same ingrown, incestuous qualities. Basically Jake's family consists of three branches stemming from the three Hersh brothers who emigrated to Canada: Abraham, who through hard work and the sacrifice of certain principles has "made good", becoming economically and socially respectable and successful, Isaac, Jake's father, who has little ambition or pretension and Baruch, the rebel brother who, for the more respectable Hershs, particularly Abe, is a family disgrace. Baruch dies before Jake has a chance to know him, but the enmity that existed between him and Abraham continues in the relationship between Abraham and Baruch's wife and children. Abraham pretends to be generous toward Baruch's line by supporting them after his brother's death, but in fact his efforts are minimal. He provides Hanna, Baruch's wife, and the two children, Joey and Jenny, with a cold water flat in one of his less lucrative apartment buildings, at the same time congratulating himself publicly at every opportunity on his generosity and self-sacrifice. Abraham is a self-satisfied, smug man who has achieved the immigrant's dream of material success in the New World. In the meantime, Hanna sells newspapers and Jenny works to provide Joey with an education. Jenny has no illusions about Uncle Abe's "generosity", and detests the man and his pretentious, superior attitude to her family. Indeed, her resentment of Abe's treatment virtually poisons Jenny with hatred. She devotes her life to showing her uncle that she is just as good as any of his pampered offspring. She employs the pursuit of culture as a method of achieving upward mobility and takes no pleasure from her life, except as it defies Abe. She marries a non-Jew with a good position in the CBC. The fact that he is impotent does not deter her from scoring her point, in fact it adds to it, because it allows her to have affairs, further flaunting Abe's upright ideals. The tragedy is not only that she is throwing away her life in the pursuit of her negative goal, but that Abe has long since forgotten about her. Jenny exemplifies the stultifying influence that family may have on the individual who allows its backwardness to consume her. Joey, who is independent like his father, does not allow Abe to oppress him. As a young man he simply leaves the cold water flat and goes off to make his fortune. How he does so is never learned with certainty. Abe says he works for gangsters, Jake has other theories. Hanna also refuses to be impressed with Abe's pomposity. To his dismay, she sells newspapers on the street, undermining Abe's attempts at gentility. Worse, Hanna is not ashamed of her difficult years with Baruch, but celebrates them, creating personal fables of daring and survival. Her favorite story is of bearing Joey under impossible conditions in Yellowknife. When Joey leaves home Hanna embarrasses Abe by showing her son's picture to Abe's friends, asking them if they have seen the boy. Hanna is an honest, strong woman who refuses to be intimidated into comfortable mediocrity.

As a young man, Jake is basically alienated by his family's tangled web of malice and jealousy. He recognizes his own mother's social pretentiousness and resents his father's tendency to sit around in his undershirt and be a boor. He recognizes Uncle Abe as a pompous hypocrite and sees what Jenny's hatred of Uncle Abe is doing to her. The two members of his family, however, who capture his imagination are Joey and Hanna. He admires Hanna's honesty and authenticity and her abilities as a myth-maker. Joey is a more elusive influence whose significance Jake does not determine until later in life. The first time Jake sees Joey is at the Hersh family summer vacation in the Laurentians. Joey and his family are different from the respectable Hershes. They are pale and Joey wears the clothing of the Boys' Farm, the detention home to which he has been sent, and stands apart from the others, smiling scornfully. He is a romantic vision of nonconformity, a person capable of seeing beneath the family facade, to the younger Jake. When Joey returns to St. Urbain after running away, he again captures Jake's imagination, this time as an image of ostentatious success, very impressive to a young boy in the immigrant area of Montreal. There is an aura of mystery and wonder attached to Joey. He drives a red MG, is tanned a deep bronze, dresses stylishly and is pursued by women. However, the vision of Jake's idol is fleeting because Joey is run out of town for inciting the Jewish boys in the area to resist the racist attacks of their French-Canadian neighbours. There are rumours that Uncle Abe was behind the removal of Joey, fearing the outbreak of trouble and prefering meek submission. This is consistent with Uncle Abe's actions in the past which have been characterized by unprincipled self-promotion among the non-Jewish establishment in Montreal. He refuses to stand up for his people's rights but rather overlooks racism, fearing the loss of prestige and favour. The opposition between Abraham and Joey is an extension of that between Abraham and Baruch. There are two strong and antithetical tendencies in Jake's family, one toward unprincipled cowardice and the other (or so Jake believes, because it is never learned definitely that Joey embodies all the qualities Jake attributes to him) toward militant justice.

However, as a young man still living at home, Jake is not interested in the ramifications of the family factions. It is not until after he leaves Canada and suffers a crisis of identity and purpose that he comes to terms with family. In the meantime, Jake attends university for three years, then decides that he is bored and wasting his time. He considers Montreal to be an environment in which he is stranded. He wants to be a film director, but feels that suitable training and opportunity for this occupation do not exist in this city. The television programming in Montreal epitomizes that city's limitations:

> 2:30 p.m. (12) Medicine and the Bible. Modern Endocrinology used to interpret the scriptural events. Could Esau have been suffering from low blood sugar and that's why he sold his birthright? Could Goliath have had a pituitary gland imbalance? Dr. Robert Greenblott, author of Search the Scriptures, offers some of his theories.[18]

Jake does not have the difficulty physically leaving home that the artist figure in the middle stage did; but he will return several times, each time better understanding its importance to him and coming to terms with it. First he attempts to go to New York, but is turned back at the Canadian-American border because his name resembles that of his cousin Joey who is suspected of participating in unamerican activities. Refusing to be defeated in his goal, Jake takes the next-best step of going to Jenny in Toronto, looking for a contact to get into the CBC. He has no illusions about this network which he suspects is infested with nepotism and mediocrity, however, if he can acquire the techniques there of directing he can then go to a more dynamic film-making centre and develop his art. A party Jenny has for her CBC friends confirms Jake's worst suspicions about the Corporation. Jenny, still spewing out hatred concerning Uncle Abe, and Doug, her impotent husband, serve as images reflecting Richler's general comment on its state. The guests too are dull, pretentious and lack originality and vision. Jake is bored and appalled, but desperately needs the training the CBC can give him, so hangs onto Doug's every word, providing the suitable wide-eyed admiration he knows the weak man needs. Sure enough, before the evening is out, Doug has promised, although he knows nothing about Jake's abilities, to do something for him. Jake does receive sound technical training with the CBC and meets another talented Canadian, Luke Scott, a playwright. Together Jake and Luke plan to go to England where they hope they will find the freedom they need to develop their artistic abilities. Richler goes beyond Davies in suggesting that Canada can provide some training and technique, but agrees that in order for the artist to develop further he must travel abroad.

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[18] Richler, St. Urbain's Horseman, p. 133.

Jake and Luke have rosy visions about England as a cultural mecca. For Jake England represents the novels of Jane Austen, decency, wit, political maturity and a literary experience, while Canada is just miles of wheat fields and indifference. When Jake and Luke get to England they speak apologetically about Canada and parody themselves as naive colonials abroad. However, it is not long before Jake begins to adjust his conceptions of England, and more particularly, London. He realizes with a start that he is better trained than many of his equivalents in the BBC and finds to his amazement that he is bossing the others in the studio, speeding up takes and experimenting with new angles and ideas. Also, the people who work for the B.B.C are just as bored as their counterparts in the CBC. Jake finds that the parties he attends are not frequented by people much more exciting or intelligent than those in Montreal or Toronto. It comes as a major blow to find, after he does break into film, that even the people at the very top do not command his respect, but are a motley crew of neurotics and hypochondriacs, each fighting desperately to stay up there. Further, success has come too easily to Jack Hersh. In a period of a few years in England he is a successful film director, has a beautiful wife and three children and lives in a sumptuous home in a fashionable part of London. However, he is disillusioned with the emptiness of his success; because he does not feel he merits it. He drinks heavily and indulges in neurotic fantasizing. His disillusion is complete when, on returning to England after attending his father's funeral in Montreal, he finds a friend, Harry Stein, to whom he loaned the use of his house while he was away, having an orgy with an au pair girl Harry has picked up in a restaurant. The girl, irate because Jake will have nothing to do with her offered affections, later accuses Jake of sexual assault and indecency as a way of getting even with him, and he has to stand trial. His English experience has turned into a nightmare for Jake who by this time experiences a crisis of identity, purpose and meaning in life. He asks himself: "What am I doing in this country . . . What have I got to say to these nutty, depraved people?"[19]

Jake finds that the avenue to solving his crisis leads back through his roots and family. While in Montreal for his father's funeral, he discovers he can no longer silently suffer Uncle Abe's hypocrisy and particularly his attitude to Joey. Abe considers Joey to be nothing better than a gangster and war profiteer, while Jake believes Joey to be the Golem who has fought for his people's rights in Montreal, Germany, Israel and South America. When Abe makes snide comments about Joey, Jake leaps to his defence, publicly telling Abe that the pride of the Hersh family rides not on Abe's complacent shoulders, but on Joey's. He flings himself out of the apartment and punches the grossly fat and overly-protected Irwin, Abe's son, telling him that the Hershes did not emigrate to Canada and suffer the pogroms before that so that "this jelly, this nose-picker, this sports nut, this lump of shit, your [Abe's] son, should inherit the earth."[20] Jake at last is taking a position in the family he as a younger man thought he could leave behind. Back in London, after the trial where he is acquitted, Jake is still experiencing a crisis, because he wants to know definitely whether his view of Joey is the right one. His belief in Joey as the avenging St. Urbain's Horseman is the only real absolute he has in life. The answer finally comes as he is poring through the journal he has kept of the Horseman's activities. He wonders, "What if the Horseman was a distorting mirror and we each took the self-justifying image we required of him?"[21] With this revelation it does not now matter what Joey Hersh really did and what his motives were in Montreal, Germany, Israel and South America. What is important is what ideals Jake himself holds and perpetuates. Jake at last finds a deep inner peace that allows him the first good night's sleep since the trial began.

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[19] Richler, St. Urbain's Horseman, p. 175.

His experiences in England also help Jake to develop a more mature relationship with Canada than the one he had while living there. Discovering that England is not the utopia for the artist that he had expected it to be mellows Canada's supposed deficiencies in that area. Seeing it from this fresh and rather surprising vantage point, he then realizes that each time he has returned to Canada, it has claimed him more:

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[20] Richler, St. Urbain's Horseman, p. 386.

[21] Richler, St. Urbain's Horseman, p. 433.

> Tomorrow country then, tomorrow country now. And yet -- and yet -- he felt increasingly claimed by it, especially in the autumn, the Laurentian season, and the last time he had sailed the tranquil St. Lawrence into swells and the sea, it was with a sense of loss, even deprivation, and melancholy, that he had watched the clifftop towns pass. Each one unknown to him.[22]

He realizes too that he had blamed Canada for weaknesses and faults within himself and that it was not really culpable for his discontents.

Richler presents the expatriate Canadian artist as achieving a mature and mellowed relationship with a homeland that as a young man seemed to him to be woefully inadequate and backward.[23] However, the solution is not to return to his country of origin -- Jake is a successful film director in England and there are no big film companies in Canada -- but rather to make peace with his country and perhaps more importantly with himself, determining his own direction and beliefs in a world that is less than perfect wherever he may be.

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[22] Richler, St. Urbain's Horseman, p. 5.

[23] In an earlier novel, Son of a Smaller Hero (London: Deutsch, 1955) Richler presented another artist figure, Noah Adler, who, like Jack Hersh, grows up in Montreal in the forties and fifties. Like Jake, Noah gradually becomes disillusioned with his family and place of origin, and in the end leaves them behind, seeking more promising vistas. However, this is as far as the novel goes. It is basically a "portrait of the artist as a young man" novel, presenting the growing up experiences and gradual alienation of the artist from family and community. It does not, like St. Urbain's Horseman, deal with the expatriat artist and his gradual reconciliation with his past, nor is it as experimental and mature a novel in its form as the later one.

A novel which develops the theme that physical place is of little consequence to the artist, but that it is his mental attitude that is crucial in developing the creative imagination is Leonard Cohen's Beautiful Losers (1966).[24] In this novel Cohen employs two central characters who initially epitomize very different attitudes to life. They are F. (his complete name is never given), a dynamic, positive thinking visionary and a second character whose name is not given at all, a fearful, guilt-ridden man. The names (or lack thereof) of the two complement their respective qualities. F. in contemporary slang connotes the sex act and is an image of virility and potency appropriate to the first character, while the complete lack of any suggestion of a name for the second character accurately reflects him as a nonentity. A review of the histories of the two men clarifies their differences. F. was born in Montreal, raised in an orphanage and because of his poverty and lack of training, experience and opportunity was sent to work in a clothing factory as a young man. However, from the beginning he determined that he would triumph over circumstances. He eventually acquired the money to buy the same factory and through his affable nature and active cultivation of friends in the community was even elected to parliament. It is F.'s way to celebrate life and to live every moment to the utmost. It would never occur to him to mourn lost opportunity or his station in life. Above all, he is aware of the sources of power or "magic" in his society, electronics and technology, and rejoices that they have released culture and aesthetics from the exclusive domain of the few and extended them to the many through mass-produced books, magazines, records, machines and cosmetics. Rather than lament like many of his contemporaries the ascendancy of "pop" culture, he delights in it, experimenting with its infinite possibilities. Even as a boy he related to pop through his love of comic books and particularly through his belief in the promises offered by the Charles Axis advertisements they contained. He faithfully sent away for the Charles Axis body builder and followed the regimen prescribed by Axis. Sure enough, he developed a body that was all he could have hoped for. He has remained faithful to the popular culture of his age all his life, attending mass political rallies, going to all the latest movies, trying the latest gadgets and experimenting with cosmetics. His love of life also extends to those around him. He does his best to awaken in others the joys to be derived from the here and now. His best friend, the character who goes nameless throughout the novel, has a wife, Edith, whose face was badly scarred in adolescence by acne, and who is ashamed of her appearance. F. experiments on her face with the latest ointments and creams available from the cosmetics industry and sure enough, Edith develops a beautiful complexion. It is not only that the cosmetics have helped smooth over the rough testure of her skin, but also that F. has inspired confidence in her through his own strong faith in the ability of the cosmetics to heal. F. controls his life and experience through positive thinking and it is this process of operating from the inside out rather than letting the external oppress him that gives him the power he has.

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[24] Leonard Cohen, Beautiful Losers (New York: Bantam Books, 1967).

The other central character in Beautiful Losers is almost exactly the opposite of F. in his mental attitudes. Although born with more advantages that F., he has never succeeded in life. It is his style to be careful, low-key, and unimaginative in all he does. As a boy he watched with cynical disdain as his friend F. practiced his Charles Atlas exercises. Even when his friend began to develop his splendid physique he refused to believe in the program and afterward could only lament that things always seemed to go well for F, but not for him. He epitomizes the same defeatist attitude that Monica Gall's father, and certain characters in the middle stage of the literature seemed to rejoice in. As a man this character develops a more retreatist attitude to life and chooses as a career that of the scholar which allows him to justify his preference for sitting in dark, stuffy rooms in archives and libraries; poring through decayed books and manuscripts. He is incapable of meeting life head-on, so apprehends it second or third hand through books. The difference between the scholar and F. is exemplified when we learn the different ways in which they both learn Greek. The scholar learns it by studiously isolating himself with a grammar and painfully memorizing the language while F. easily, quickly and joyously picks it up by talking with the Greek restaurateurs in his constituency. The subject of the scholar's life work and his approach to it also indicate certain things about his character. He has devoted himself to the study of a nearly extinct Mohawk tribe. His selection of these people as meriting his lifelong attention reflects his own predilection for victimization and failure. Moreover, as he becomes more and more engrossed in their history, he grows increasingly alienated by the world in which he lives, lamenting the fact that people are not what they used to be and that God is dead and belief a thing of the past. He has been studying the period of the tribe's conversion by the Jesuits in the seventeenth century and reading of the miracles attributed to the mystic, Catherine Tekakwitha. As he studies the accounts of her visions he is convinced that he lives in an age of iron. He is particularly captured by the legend of how, after marring her body with every kind of physical mortification she died and turned a miraculous, smooth white. The irony of the scholar's devotion to Catherine Tekakwitha is that all along he is married to Edith, the last surviving member of the same tribe and that in a sense Edith has experienced a miracle that parallels that of her famous ancestor. F., through his application of cosmetics and inspiration of Edith's belief in these modern-day miracles, has helped her develop a smooth, beautiful complexion. If only the scholar had the eyes to see he would apprehend the miraculous occurring around him, as F. does. The extent of his devotion to the past is realized when it is learned that the scholar has difficulty making love to the beautiful and sensual Edith. In spite of all her attempts at making herself desirable, he guiltily refuses to allow himself the pleasure of a total and joyous embrace. It falls to F. to provide Edith with the love she needs.

Having achieved financial and political success, F. next devotes his life to helping others apprehend the magic he has discovered in life. Not only does he help Edith to become a more beautiful and fulfilled person, but he secretly regards her husband as the greatest challenge to his abilities. If he can convert the little man he will indeed have achieved much. All his life his scholar friend has rejected his methods and attitudes, considering them to be unsound or overly enthusiastic, not polite enough. Like the residents of Davies's Salterton, the scholar subscribes to a dull, correct mediocrity. However, after Edith commits suicide over the frustration of her marriage, F. begins to make headway with his friend. He traumatizes him by telling him of his affair with Edith, breaking down the scholar's formality and reserve. He actually gets his friend to confess that secretly he has always wanted to be one of the super-heroes in the comic books. Having finally penetrated his friend's psyche this far, F. then starts taking him to political rallies and movies, awakening him to the true world around him. F. is a kind of Christ figure devoted to bringing revelation and salvation to others. Cohen's purpose in creating him is not unlike that of Symons in creating Hugh Anderson.[25] Both authors seek to awaken their respective societies to the possibilities of life in the world around them, and seek to eradicate the doubt, victimization, guilt and fear that pervade society. Symons launches his attack more at the Presbyterian influence on English-Canada, whereas Cohen seeks to convert all of western society which tends sometimes to assume that mechanization and technology, the contemporary gods, are necessarily bad. By providing fresh lenses with which to see twentieth-century society, Cohen asserts that there is as much reason to celebrate now as there ever was. Further, Cohen, like Symons, links one's vision to one's creativity. By having his characters overcome the negative tendencies toward doubt and fear he leads the way to artistic productivity and fulfillment. F. continues the gradual conversion of his friend. When F. is taken to hospital suffering from a terminal illness, he leaves the scholar his worldly possessions and a program for changing his lifestyle. As F. lies in hospital he writes his old friend a letter to be delivered five years later at which time he knows the erstwhile scholar will be ready for the next stage in his transformation.

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[25] The central character in Symons's Place d'Armes, discussed in Chapter V.

For five years the scholar follows F.'s instructions. He lives in F's treehouse, sets off firecrackers as F was wont to do and takes to seducing young men, also one of F.'s pastimes. The intention of all of this is, of course, to overcome the stifled, limited patterns to which the scholar has conformed in the past, and to awaken him to new and liberating possibilities. Finally after this period of time has passed the former scholar receives the letter from F. which exhorts him to come down out of the treehouse and to go beyond even F.; that is, not just to be aware of magic in the world around him, but to become magic, because:

> God is alive. Magic is afoot. God is alive. Magic is afoot. God is afoot. Magic is alive. Alive is afoot. Magic never died. God never sickened. Many poor men lied. Magic never weakened. Magic never hid. Magic always ruled. God is afoot. God never died.[26]

As he descends from the treehouse, the season reflects what is about to happen. It is spring and life is returning to Montreal after the paralysing winter. Just then his young male friend rushes up to tell him that he has informed his parents of their activities together, and a posse has been sent to apprehend him. The old man steps out onto the highway in order to get a ride into downtown Montreal. From now on he perceives life only as he wants to. He sees himself in terms of the contemporary mythologies of his day -- those of the cinema. A beautiful girl, naked below the waist, drives up in a big, shiny Oldsmobile and offers him a drive. He makes love to her and she lets him out at the theatre where he and F. and Edith used to go to see films. Inside, his eyes blink in time to the shutter of the projector. When one of the ushers aims his flashlight at him, he is invisible. He has become the picture. The scene next shifts to an amusement arcade on St. Lawrence Boulevard. A person, an amalgam of F. and the former scholar, is playing one of the machines. The crowd recognizes him as either the terrorist (F.'s last defiant act was to attempt to blow up the Victoria monument on Sherbrooke Street) or the pervert (referring to the scholar's habit of inviting young men into his treehouse). Some surge to claim him, others to expel him. But as they do, there is a miraculous occurrence. The old man disintigrates, from the inside, his shape becoming that of the hourglass, the waist of which is the future, the "Point of Clear Light"[27]. Through his middle time passes both ways; he has transcended time. He gradually expands into a movie of Ray Charles, the moon in one lense of his sunglasses, his piano keys across the sky. This is the magical moment in which the everyday world and myth become one, when "somebody makes it", when there is artistic creation.

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[26] Cohen, Beautiful Losers, pp. 197-198.

Cohen's message to contemporary society is to embrace and celebrate the world we live in and to enter the very mythology of the age which finds its expression predominantly through the electronic media. The creative person must actively translate the world around him into his own personal vision or movie. In order to deliver his message, Cohen employs a Canadian setting and Canadian history and images: Jesuits, Indians, French-Canadians, snow, canoes and teepees. It is in Montreal that Cohen offers the possibility of someone "making it".[28] Beautiful Losers links Canada past and present, postulating the theory that there has been life here all along, since at least the times when the Jesuits started recording history, if only the type of Canadian represented by the scholar, that is the guilty, self-conscious, life-denying Puritan, afraid of dreaming, hoping, expressing, feeling and failing, will seize it. But Cohen also expresses his message in terms of the modern age. He sings of synthetics, gadgets, machines, commercial foods, cosmetics, comic books, films, all the products of a time that to many people is merely cheap and shoddy and he shows that, seen through imaginative and creative lenses, they are no worse than the accoutrements of any other era. Reality, he proclaims, is internal. It is the individual's perception of it, not the object, that is important.

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[27] Cohen, Beautiful Losers, p. 305.

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[28] Cohen has written an earlier novel about the artist in Montreal. Like Richler's Son of a Smaller Hero, The Favourite Game (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963) is a "portrait of the artist as a young man" novel which describes the growing up experiences of its central character, Lawrence Breavman. Like Noah Adler, Breavman finds certain limitations in his family and native city, and quests other experiences and people. He spends some time in New York, learning the mythologies of that city. However, Breavman takes a different and surprising direction at the end of The Favourite Game. Whereas Noah leaves his city behind, Breavman comes to the conclusion that although a "religious stink" hangs over Montreal and there are influences there that can be debilitating for the artist, this is the one place that is full of fire and magic for him; he will not leave it, but will stay and record the favourite games and patterns of life there. It can be seen that Beautiful Losers follows logically from The Favourite Game, Cohen continuing to assert the importance of the artist's imagination triumphing over matter.

One way or another, through nationalism or internationalism or through celebration of the self, the authors of the literature of the artist of the third stage present their artist figures as overcoming the limitations that hampered the artist figures in the earlier stages. As a group, they present artist figures who are more successful, fulfilled and confident than their earlier counterparts. They also present more diversified types of artist figures with more varied experiences, mirroring their own more varied urban and international experiences and the more supportive climate for the artist in Canada today. Further, the fiction of the third stage is more experimental in the forms it takes, from the archetypal psychological journey structure of Atwood and Hood to the journal of Symons to the complicated back-and-fourth presentation of time and event by Laurence and Richler to the innovative three-part (first-person narrative, letter, third-person omniscient narrative) structure of Cohen. The literature of the third stage also employs different patterns of imagery, notably love and fertility, to mirror the improved state of the artist. One important point to observe about the novels discussed in the third stage is that often they are not the first or the only novels by the respective authors as they frequently were in the middle stage, but they are often second or third or fourth novels, also reflecting the better climate for the writer in Canada today and the apparent variety and stimulation to be gained from urban and international experiences. Indeed, there is an open-ended quality to a discussion of the literature of the third stage, because even as one contemplates it more fiction of the artist by the same authors is being published. One thinks of Robertson Davies's trilogy (Fifth Business, 1970; the Manticore, 1972; World of Wonders, 1975) or Margaret Atwood's Lady Oracle (1976). This situation leads one to anticipate new breakthroughs and developments in the presentation of the artist figure in future Canadian fiction.

CONCLUSION

Three major stages, reflecting the historical development of Canada, have been indicated in this study of the artist figure in Canadian fiction: the settlement stage (1850s to 1920s), the rural and small-town stage (1920s to 1950s) and the urban stage (1950s to present). The dates of these stages are general and sometimes works belonging chiefly to one stage will be found in a period dominated by characteristics of another stage, but they reflect the major divisions of the literature of the artist as it has progressed in this country. Although individual works about the artist contain their own qualities and concerns, looked at in relation to each other and as a whole they reveal patterns of the development of the artist figure within the individual stages and overall, leading to a definition of a tradition of the artist figure in Canadian fiction.

In the settlement stage (1850s to 1920s) the artist is an individual born and raised in England or Europe who has come to the colony or the new country as a mature person already shaped by his place of origin. The central theme in settlement writing, which is basically autobiographical, the writer and artist being one, is that of physical and psychological adjustment to the new and often difficult environment. The frontier demands long hours of hard physical work which reward the individual with only the basics of survival: food and shelter. In this world the artist finds little leisure time or extra energy for creativity. Rather, he works long hours and is exhausted at the end of the day. Mental activity is stifled. The artist feels cut off from more sophisticated cultural centres and resents the absence of intellectually stimulating conversation and activity. There is no audience for his work, either among his neighbours who do not have the time or interest to acknowledge it, or from distant publishers, many of whom are not interested in the serious study of frontier themes. There are also difficulties in that the artist's aesthetics have been learned in a more civilized world and he at first finds the surfeit of raw nature that surrounds him unattractive and even chaotic and ominous. He often has his apriori ideals and expectations disappointed by the hard reality of his new environment.

Because the artist does not have much time to devote to his creative work and because of the kind of practical, reduced world he inhabits and reflects in his writing, he is not very experimental or elevated in the forms and styles he chooses. Rather, his writing takes the homely or basic forms of letter, journal or auto biography in which he deals with his experiences in the frontier setting. If there is heightening or embellishment, it is usually of his own frustrations and disappointments as a writer in an environment that is unsympathetic, even at times seemingly hostile, toward his craft. Certain images pervade the autobiographical writing of the settlement artist; reflecting his sense of isolation, and failure and fear: images like "dark", "prison", "moans", "bog" and "wolves". The tree falling unheard in the forest is the symbol one writer employs to describe his sense of loneliness and artistic failure. Another refers several times to the fallen trees that litter the floor of the dark, silent forest, reflecting her sense of a disordered, reduced and frightening world. A representative picture of the artist in the frontier emerges from this literature, a nocturnal picture of a lonely log cabin in a small clearing surrounded by tall, dark trees, and of an individual sitting inside the cabin at a table near a stove writing by the light of a single candle. One feels that the writing is therapeutic, a method of maintaining a sense of order and civilization in the face of the dark unpredictable forest.

If one can observe the settlement artist's writing over a period of time, it reveals that progress is made in the artist's adjustment to the new environment. Gradually the new world becomes more familiar and even loved as it pervades the conscious and subconscious of the artist, and the old world recedes. However, the settlement artist is never convinced he has achieved the success and recognition he would have in other, more sophisticated centres and there is a pervasive note of self-pity, disappointment and even failure in his writing. Another phenomenon that occurs over a period of time is that the artist does start to move toward more fictional and creative forms and styles in the treatment of his own history and condition. Sometimes it is just a matter of heightening a sketch with emotional embellishments, but sometimes it is more. As one looks closely at the settlement writing about the artist, one finds that certain themes and situations are common to the writers and thus take on representative and even archetypal qualities. Looked at from our perspective today they epitomize the earliest struggles of the writer in this country to translate his raw experiences and sensations into more creative, polished and lasting forms.

In the late nineteenth century writers born at about the time of

Confederation emerged to reflect the nationalistic pride of this period. Some of these writers wrote novels containing Canadian artist figures whom they describe, in their patriotic zeal and enthusiasm, as taking the salons of Europe by storm. Although these novels are often weak or unconvincing in terms of character development and plot, they are the earliest deliberately fictional portrayals of the artist in Canadian fiction, and they do reflect certain themes and images found not only in the settlement writing but also in succeeding stages of writing about the artist in Canada. Therefore they deserve and have been given attention in this study.

An important difference between the artist presented in the popular fiction of the 1880s and 1890s and that of the settlement stage is that he is not the narrator, but a fictional character in a novel and therefore imaginatively reflects the authors' hopes and concerns about the Canadian artist. Another important difference is that the artist in such fiction is described as being native born, growing up in Canada rather than coming here at some point in his life. Unlike his forebears in the settlement literature, the artist figure lives in a small town or a rural community that has been inhabited by several generations of his family and therefore he feels strong ties with Canada. However, he is portrayed as feeling isolated from larger, more sophisticated centres of art and culture, much as the settlement artist portrayed himself. Another similarity between the two is that the artist figure in the fiction often feels a strong sense of artistic isolation within his own community. His friends and neighbours do not understand or appreciate his interest in music, painting or writing. Rather, his society is pre-occupied, like that of the settlement artist, with the practicalities of life and has no room in its philosophy for imaginative creativity. In fact, it is a narrow, limited world that does not look beyond the immediate concerns of day-to-day life. The artist figure, like the others in the community, must work full-time at some practical occupation, like farming, in order to have the necessities of life. As with the settlement artist, there is little leisure time or wealth in this world and therefore no niche in it for a full-time artist. One might wonder how, in this practical world, an artist emerges; the answer provided by the fiction is that for some unspecified reason the rare individual does come along with a heightened sensitivity to and appreciation of the world around him. Often in this literature the artist figure is described as obtaining inspiration from the land, the beauty and spiritual qualities of which he recognizes. The land is not looked at as a source of frustration as it had been by the settlement writers, partly because the writers of the fiction were born and raised here and have themselves developed a strong relationship with it and partly because they did not have to work the land in the same elemental way their settlement ancestors did. While the land may be a source of inspiration to the artist figure in the fiction, his artistic accomplishments at this stage are rude and untutored and there is a pattern in this fiction of the artist figure going abroad to perfect his talents through instruction. Another reason for his having to leave his native terrain is that there is not the critical and discriminating audience in Canada that there is in old world centres. Thus the patterns of the settlement literature are often reversed in this fiction, the artist figure going to Britain and Europe in search of training or like-minded souls.

Almost invariably, presumably because of their nationalistic pride, the writers of the popular fiction of the 1880s and 1890s portray their artist figures as taking the European salons, concert halls and art galleries by storm. This is one of the weaknesses of the literature, for usually the reader is not convinced that the artist figure merits the kind of meteoric success he achieves abroad, but it is important to observe the pride in their country shown by the writers. The novels may be naive, but they evidence great hopes for the cultural development and accomplishment of Canadians and a belief in the ability of Canadians to compare favourably in international circles. The age and tradition of the old world is usually contrasted to Canada's rude and undeveloped condition in this literature, yet some writers propose that Canada is the place of the future and have their artist figures return home. There is a formula the writers of this fiction employ to describe the achievement of success by their artist characters in Europe. The artist figure must unite the themes and spiritual qualities of his place of origin with the stylistic techniques he acquires in Europe in order to find success in his particular medium. If he does not remain faithful to his place of origin, his art becomes inconsequential and deteriorates. His inspiration always comes from Canada. Some writers who have their artist figures remain in Europe after achieving success there portray them returning to Canada for part of each year for spiritual renewal. Other, often more penetrating writers have their artist figures return to Canada permanently to deal in depth with the world that shaped them. The controversy among Canadian writers about whether it is better for the artist to remain in Canada and find expression here or to go abroad and create, developing a more international style and outlook, is one that continues throughout twentieth-century Canadian fiction about the artist.

The second major stage of the development of the artist figure is what is here called the rural and small-town stage which roughly covers the period of the 1920s to the 1950s, although, again, these years are approximate. In this stage the writers of the fiction are native born and belong to families who have lived in Canada for several generations and they present indigenous artist figures in their fiction. Unlike the settlement writing, which tended to be autobiography moving toward fiction, the writing of this period is a refinement of autobiography, in which the authors take their own times, places, feelings, and psyches and translate them through their imaginations into a complete statement in novel form. While the authors have without doubt been influenced by such non-Canadian writers as James Joyce and D.H. Lawrence in their choice of novels about the artist as hero, they do give voice in their fiction to the peculiarities of the condition of the artist in their own society, that of post-settlement, pre-urban Canada. They do not write, as did their settlement ancestors, about adjusting to a new land, but rather what it is like for the sensitive individual who craves expression to grow up in whatever area of Canada shaped him: the Annapolis Valley or southern Ontario or the western prairie. The writing of this stage deals in more depth than did the fiction of the 1880s and 1890s with the psychology, sociology and general conditions of the small town and the country. Certain situations described in the fiction are very much like those described in the settlement writing, particularly the necessity of the artist figure to work hard at some occupation other than his craft, a sense of isolation from larger, more sophisticated centres and the frustration of living in a society that is apathetic or even hostile toward art. Once again a native audience is lacking, partly because there is still little leisure and wealth and partly because settlement attitudes about practicality characterize the society, denying the artist a place.

The artist figure in this landscape is not confident of a strong native cultural tradition. He reads books or sees paintings done by artists in more sophisticated centres but has no models to help him express his own place. Indeed, he wonders whether it does merit expression, for it is not at the forefront of world developments, but rather is a reduced world of farm rituals, small-town activities and even poverty and ugliness. These conditions result in the artist figure at times being painfully hesitant and self-conscious concerning his craft, partly because the society in which he lives is unsupportive and narrow in the area of art and partly because he feels isolated from more sophisticated cultural centres and yet intimidated by the great traditions of cultural expression found elsewhere. The artist figure is presented with images that express doubt and frustration: images of tyrannical, hard fathers; sterile, repressive women and tight, narrow families pervade the literature, as do images of guilt, animalism, war and the grotesque. There are also images of entrapment and persecution, the artist figure feeling enclosed and victimized in a tiny, prying circle or hell-hole. As a result of his frustrations within his society the artist figure is usually presented as feeling the need to escape. The means of escape include books, trains, the city, mountains and the imagination. However, as much as the artist figure may yearn for escape, he seldom can make a physical break from the world he grew up in, either because he is afraid of the outside world, which is foreign and strange or because he has a strong love-hate relationship with the place that has formed him, and cannot leave it. The latter case results in strong patterns of paradox in the literature, the artist feeling the validity of the rural world that has shaped him, yet also realizing its inadequacies. The fiction of this stage is a fiction of struggle, frustration and even at times failure as the artist figure strives to achieve expression in the face of the difficulties and paradoxes of his situation.

However, while the artist figure within the fiction may fail to externalize his feelings in a permanent art form, there is the further paradox that the authors of the fiction of this stage have done so, and that their writing is, at its best, powerful and successful in articulating the dilemmas of the artist in their time and place. While the artist figures within the fiction show their lack of confidence in their own work by throwing it into fires or under beds or into drawers, walking in silent spaces and even, at the worst, going mad, their author-creators are artistic successes. Even if the authors of the fiction of this period did manage to produce strong novels and have them published, they did not develop much of an audience response in Canada. Canadians during this period looked elsewhere for literature, particularly to England and the United States. This, along with the limited experience of many of the authors of this period, accounts to some extent for the fact that many of the authors did not go on to write more quality novels. Canada even as late as the 1950s was not mature and confident as a cultural environment.

In the third stage of the development of the artist figure in Canadian fiction, which extends roughly from the 1960s to the present, he is presented in an urban environment and reflects the situation of writers in Canada today, many of whom grew up in or moved to the city and write about urban experiences and situations. The artist figure in contemporary fiction does not feel as physically and culturally isolated as his predecessors but rather finds that the city supplies some advantages that were lacking in the rural environment: training, audience, leisure and wealth. If he experiences difficulties, they are less externally caused than were those of the rural artist. There are some artist figures who, though they have been brought up in the Canadian city, feel that even that is not enough, but that they must go to bigger and better centres where art flourishes, usually outside of Canada. Because his environment is generally more supportive than that of the rural artist, the urban artist seldom feels trapped or inadequate or victimized. If he does, it is usually because of more universal or personal causes and concerns, rather than a function of a narrow society.

The urban artist is usually a success at his craft, works at it full-time and lives by it. Travelling comes naturally to him, and he easily moves from place to place, in search of new experience and material. The urban artist has a supportive family and encouraging friends with whom he can discuss his work, while the rural artist invariably had noone to talk to. The city is a source of stimulation for the urban artist figure, keeping him abreast of new developments in his area. Whereas the artist figure in the rural stage was invariably a writer or a painter, the urban artist takes many different forms (film director, coloratura, folk singer, commercial artist) reflecting a more varied environment with greater potential for expression. The images employed to present the artist figure in this literature are very different from those of the rural stage: travel, love and progeny.

Two schools of writing have been discovered in this study concerning the artist in the urban stage: the nationalist and the internationalist schools. Each school offers theories concerning the state of the artist in Canada today and prescribes directions for the future. The nationalist school conveys a strong sense of the existence of native cultural traditions in Canada and propounds the theory that the successful artist in Canada today is the one who is aware of these traditions. There is a conscious use of "archetypal" Canadian imagery in this fiction, such as canoes, log cabins, and the Northland, and a realization of Canadian history and culture is crucial in the development of the artist figure. Often this literature takes the form of a journey, the artist confused and disorientated at first because he does not have a strong sense of place or identity, but gradually acquiring it either through going to the land and experiencing a spiritual renewal or through awakening to a strong sense of the past. The writers of this kind of fiction are militant in their conviction that the Canadian artist figure must know and embrace his roots and origins. Through this process they feel a strong, confident native tradition will continue. They offer their artist figures as saviours, leading the way to a cultural occupation of our country by all Canadians. They are also quite political in their statements, defining the enemies of Canadian culture and participating in "holy wars" against them. They are conscious of overcoming the inhibitions to expression that have historically hampered the Canadian artist. They insist that the Canadian artist must no longer feel isolated and self-conscious but rather must joyously occupy and express his land, finding strength through others of his own kind. There is a strong tone of confidence in this literature.

Those writers of the fiction of the artist who belong to what is here termed the internationalist school take a different position on the Canadian artist and the direction he should follow. They propose that Canada is still a limited place for the artist and that he must put the pursuit of technical excellence ahead of parochial national considerations. He must go to whatever part of the world will offer him the best training and the most critical audience and compete with the best in his field in order to realize his full potential. The writers of this fiction portray their artist figures making journeys, as do the nationalist writers, but they are journeys away from Canada, which is portrayed as limited and narrow, toward international centres of art and sophistication. The transformation from colonial to international artist is not easy, and sometimes there are surprising revelations. The writers define the forces that have inhibited the artist in Canada and present their artist figures triumphing over them, one by one. There are dramatic patterns of exorcism and revelation in this regard. Often the writers have the artist figure stay abroad, where he will continue to compete and find stimulation; returning home would be a backward step. However, there are some writers who present the artist figure as discovering that it was a naive illusion to expect that any mere place could give him all he had hoped for as an artist and that even the so-called international cultural centres can be limited and imperfect. Rather than depend on external props and influences the artist must develop his own strong objectives and standards and be true to them, regardless of place. In fact, the true artist creates his own world.

The kinds of fiction in which the artist of the urban stage is presented are more varied than those of the earlier stages, with more conscious use of archetypal imagery and different forms like the psychological journey and the journal and more experimentation with the use of time. The artist figure also takes more shapes and becomes more complex as a personality. There is an open-ended quality to the literature of the third stage, since it is still vital and growing, and the reader looks forward to new possibilities in the development of the artist figure in Canadian fiction.

Bibliographic Note

The bibliography consists of primary sources and secondary material selected and read for the thesis and is not a complete and exhaustive listing of all works of English-Canadian literature and criticism concerning the artist figure. Some but not all of the secondary material germane to the thesis topic is referred to in the body of the thesis or in the footnotes. A brief note on the more important secondary material not previously discussed will reveal its significance to the topic.

There are some general studies of Canadian literature that, while they are not exclusively about the artist figure, do discuss works in which that figure occurs. They also reveal general historical and thematic patterns of the literature, some of which are observed in this study. Northrop Frye in his "Conclusion" in the Literary History of Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), discussed in the Introduction of this thesis, advocated thematic analysis of Canadian literature in order to achieve a fuller understanding and appreciation of it. Several subsequent studies have employed Frye's approach. Douglas Jones in Butterfly on Rock (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970) notes an Old Testament quality and a theme of exile in Canadian literature. These patterns are also noted in the thesis, particularly in the literature of the artist in the frontier and the rural environment, although the last section, on the artist in the more recent literature, suggests that they are changing. Margaret Atwood's Survival (Toronto: Anansi, 1972), also discussed in the Introduction, devotes a chapter to the artist in which she observes that he is frequently a failed figure in the literature. Again, this is a pattern confirmed in the first two sections of the thesis, but which the thesis notes is changing. Atwood also discovers the archetype of the Hecate figure referred to in Chapter Six of the thesis. Atwood's overall conclusion in Survival, that the theme of survival (physical, economic and cultural) is an important one in Canadian literature, is also suggested in the thesis, although interpretations of individual works are frequently of a less negative quality than Atwood's (for example, The Mountain and the Valley). A study of man and nature in prairie fiction, Laurence Ricou's Vertical Man/Horizontal World (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1973) is a helpful work in understanding the influence of the prairie on the Canadian imagination. Ricou particularly studies the fiction of Martha Ostenso, Sinclair Ross and Margaret Laurence, important figures in the thesis, although his perspective is more general. Ricou notes the importance land, nature and the seasons play in prairie fiction, a theme noted in the thesis in the study of Wild Geese, As For Me and My House and The Diviners. John Moss in Patterns of Isolation (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974) proposes that the theme of isolation has characterized Canadian literature since its beginnings. He notes that frequently the artist figure is presented as isolated. This is also a theme discussed in the thesis.

A very helpful historical study that provides background for an understanding of the development of creative writing in Canada is Wilfred Eggleston's The Frontier and Canadian Letters (Toronto: Ryerson, 1957). Eggleston analyses the forces that have helped and hindered writing in Canada. There are also collections of essays that are helpful as background for the topic. Carl Ballstadt's The Search for English-Canadian Literature: An Anthology of Critical Articles from the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries includes essays of the period referred to in the title on such important questions as nationalism, culture and economics and European and American influences on Canadian literature. As these are questions that still receive much consideration today, the essays are important in achieving a perspective on the general topic of the development of a Canadian literary tradition. Two collections of essays by various scholars on Canadian fiction also serve as general background for this study: A.J.M. Smith's Masks of Fiction (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1961) and George Woodcock's The Canadian Novel in the Twentieth Century (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975). One essay, Warren Tallman's "Wolf in the Snow", first published in Canadian Literature (V [Summer, 1960], 7-20 and VI [Autumn, 1960], 41-48) and reprinted in several anthologies, discovers a general tendency in Canadian writers to present hesitant, self conscious central characters who feel uncomfortable in their particular place and time. He notes these in Mitchell's Who Has Seen the Wind, Ross' As For Me and My House Buckler's The Mountain and the Valley and MacLennan's Each Man's Son. However, he notes that an alternative kind of character can be found in the literature, one that epitomizes a less colonial, more assertive North American attitude. He employs Richler's The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz as representing this possibility. Tallman's essay anticipates the new directions taken by Canadian literature in the last decade and a half, and is a helpful supplement to a study of the artist.

There are several important studies of the individual writers referred to in the thesis. Carl Ballstadt in "Proficient in the Gentle Craft " (Copperfield, V [1974] , 99-109) analyses Susanna Moodie's response to landscape, particularly water, in Roughing It In the Bush. He notes that there is a development from early fear of the Canadian landscape to an acceptance of it on its own terms, a process also observed in the thesis.

There are several studies of Frederick Philip Grove. The most important from the point of view of Grove as artist, because it reveals the extent to which Grove's "autobiography", In Search of Myself, is really a fictionalized account of his European years, is F.P.G.: The European Years (Toronto: Oberson, 1973). This study is discussed in the thesis. Ronald Sutherland has also done a study of Grove, Frederick Philip Grove (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969), which describes Grove's vision as being essentially tragic. The publication, The Grove Symposium (John Nanse, ed., Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1974) held after Spettigue's revelations about the true facts of Grove's early years, includes some helpful material, particularly Louis Dudek's paper, "The Literary Significance of Grove's Search", for it reiterates Grove's literary technique, described in In Search of Myself, of representing life archetypally and helps us to see the autobiography in those terms.

Like Ricou, Robert Chambers in his study of Sinclair Ross in his Sinclair Ross and Ernest Buckler (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1975), studies the strong influence of prairie on the characters in Ross' novels. His discussion of As For Me and My House focuses on Philip Bentley as an artist, and is in agreement with the thesis. However, he does not discuss other characters as artists, as the thesis does. Sandra Djwa has two articles on Sinclair Ross, "No Other Way: Sinclair Ross's Stories and Novels" (Canadian Literature, XLVII [Winter, 1971], 10-25) and "False Gods and the True Covenant" Thematic Continuity Between Margaret Laurence and Sinclair Ross" (Journal of Canadian Fiction, Vol. 1, No. 4 [Fall, 1972], 1-42) which is also a study of the novels of Margaret Laurence. While both articles are important for an understanding of Ross' general vision, neither discusses the artist. The former studies the man-nature conflict and the question of God's justice in the fiction, while the latter investigates the relationship between the fiction of Ross and Laurence, noting the Old Testament world, the Biblical allusions and the ironic tones to be found in both. W.H. New in Articulating West (Toronto: New Press, 1972) sees As For Me and My House as a fascinatingly complex and ambivolent novel in which Ross explores the difficulties of finding truth. This study is one agreed with by the thesis which also takes the view that there are no black and white presentations of character in the novel. W. Cude, however, in "Beyond Mrs. Bentley: A Study of As For Me and My House" (Canadian Studies VIII [February, 1973], 3-18) takes the more simplistic view that Mrs. Bentley is the villain of the piece.

Of the several studies on Ernest Buckler, some of the most helpful are Spettigue's "Way It Was: Ernest Buckler" (Canadian Literature [Spring, 1967], 40-56) which investigates the structure of The Mountain and the Valley, the theme of reminiscence and the attitude to landscape. He notes some of the paradox and irony to be found in Buckler's novel, a subject developed in the thesis. Spettigue interprets the ending of the novel in much the same way as the thesis, that is, the artist is successful in achieving a vision that transcends everyday existence, and certain symbols suggest the possibility of carrying the vision out in art. Atwood, as noted above, takes the more pessimistic attitude that David Canaan dies at the moment of insight and therefore is a failure. Atwood's analysis does not take into account the overall structure and symbolism of the novel which support a more positive interpretation. Robert Chambers in his Sinclair Ross and Ernest Buckler, referred to above, studies the tensions in David Canaan between the rural and urban worlds and provides a fairly detailed study of David as artist from his early fascination with the power of words to his apotheosis on the mountain. Chambers, like Spettigue, interprets the ending in more positive terms than Atwood. Alan Young in his Ernest Buckler (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), provides an analysis of David Canaan that is basically in agreement with those of Spettigue and Chambers, but hints that a study of Buckler's letters suggests a more ironic interpretation of David Canaan might be in order. Coincidentally, Douglas Barbour's "David Canaan: The Failing Heart" (Studies in Canadian Literature I [Winter, 1976], 64-75) takes this approach. Barbour sees David not so much as a victim of his place and time, as other critics have done, but as a victim of two weaknesses in himself: a tendency toward psychological revenge and an over-developed need to fantasize, Barbour maintains that these qualities lead to David's failure. The thesis does not take Barbour's point of view. Certainly David has weaknesses, but the first one noted by Barbour does not occur in undue proportion and the second is a valid and vital aspect of the artist and not necessarily negative. One other study of Buckler is particularly important. Clara Thomas' "New England Romanticism and Canadian Fiction" (Journal of Canadian Fiction Vol. 2 No. 4 [Fall, 1973] 80-86) puts The Mountain and the Valley in the tradition of New England Romanticism, and the work of Emerson and Thoreau. She interprets the ending of The Mountain and the Valley in positive terms, as promoting the possibility of unity and fulfilment through the artistic vision.

The most complete and helpful study of The Diviners, Margaret Laurence's novel about the artist, is Clara Thomas' The Manawaka World Margaret Laurence (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), in which she analyses the novel's structure and narrative techniques, but also devotes a great deal of space to the development of Morag Gunn as an artist. The important aspects noted in the latter respect are the place Laurence gives to culture and heritage in the artist's translation of life into myth and the epic struggle of the artist to find words to express truth. Thomas notes the spiritual qualities of the novel, in its expression of affirmation and faith. She also relates the book to the others in Laurence's Manawaka series.

Michael Ondaatje's Leonard Cohen is the most helpful source on Cohen. In it he compares Cohen's The Favourite Game and Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, noting that both are poetic in style, but that Cohen presents his artist figure as being more aware of his limitations than Joyce's. He analyses Beautiful Losers as a "confessional prayer", using Cohen's terms, and as a plea by Cohen for the celebration of life, which is the same basic interpretation employed in the thesis. While Ondaatje sees the novel in positive terms, Cohen offering prescriptions for keeping magic and faith alive, and the importance of these qualities for the imaginative vision, Linda Hutcheon ("Beautiful Losers: All the Polarities", Canadian Literature, XLIX [Winter, 1974], 46-51) sees the novel in more ironic terms as a study of man's capacity for splendid self-delusion and failure. Ondaatje's interpretation is supported not only by the symbolism and structure of Beautiful Losers and Cohen's remarks on it, but also Cohen's works generally. Patricia Morley in The Immoral Moralists: Hugh MacLennan and Leonard Cohen (Toronto: Clark Irwin, 1972) presents a very interesting study of Cohen in which she relates him to the religious tradition in Canadian literature and observes that while he rebels against the most negative interpretations of puritanism and their manifestation in Canadian culture, yet he employs a theme that is basically spiritual in that he advocates love, fellowship and humanity among men and the possibility of achieving a spiritual level of being.

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