

**THE EVOLUTION OF THE HERO:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE NOVEL IN CANADA**

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## ABSTRACT OF

### The Evolution of the Hero: A Comparative Study of the Novel in Canada

This study examines the development of fictional heroes in Canada's founding cultures over the past century as part of a continuing search for a "national" hero-figure. Using models derived from Joseph Campbell's Primitive Mythology and The Hero with a Thousand Faces as a frame of reference, the study identifies fictional protagonists as either Preservers of Tradition or Agents of Change, figures incorporating the elements of continuity and change in the process of evolution. The hero's acquisition of "Canadian" traits and attitudes is described in terms of his changing "world-view" as this concept is used by Jean-Charles Falardeau in "l'Evolution du héros dans le roman québécois."

Organized thematically and chronologically, the study presents the hero's development through six chapters which correspond to stages in the maturation of an individual as identified by the activities of imitation, the rejection of imitated models, the discovery of new models, the testing of identity, the reshaping of beliefs and the confrontation of death. The significant fading of referential models in later chapters is examined as part of a movement toward the complex heroes of Postmodern literature.

## ABSTRACT

The study concludes that, despite superficial similarities, Canadian novels in French and English represent two distinct and separate literatures, the result, on one hand, of a growth-producing dialogue rooted in the idea of la patrie, and on the other, of an extended monologue of fidelity to ideals imported from abroad. Consequently, although the French-Canadian novel presents a hero closely akin to the spirit of the American Adam and Australia's "Wild Colonial Boy," Canadian literature as a whole has not produced a national hero figure. Nevertheless, since the evolution of the hero is a continuing process, Canadian literature may yet produce the encompassing metaphor from which such a hero might emerge.

## CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Thomas E. Farley was born January 14, 1917, in Lloydminster, Saskatchewan. He received the Bachelor of Arts degree from Carleton University, Ottawa, in 1949, and the Master of Arts degree from the same institution in 1963. The title of his thesis was "Love and Death in Canadian Poetry." He received the Master of Education degree from the University of Ottawa in 1974.

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## INTRODUCTION

As the title of this dissertation suggests, new literatures, like new societies, do not burst into life fully grown. Their gradual unfolding is influenced by many factors, including a heritage of myths and heroes whose adaptation to new conditions involves more than physical growth and may be seen as stages in a process of evolution. Such a process is more subtle and complex than development from province to statehood, as the noted historian A. R. M. Lower observed in 1958:

Growth into nationhood in the sphere of culture is a much longer and more intricate process, one much harder to see, usually a much more tantalizing one, than the mere acquirement of political independence. <sup>1</sup>

Some notion of why Canada's questionable "nationhood" does tantalize Canadians and puzzle visitors may be gleaned from the special supplement on Canada in The Atlantic of November, 1964, in which Canadians assess the state of the nation one hundred years after the Charlottetown Convention. John Conway asks "What is Canada?" and replies that it is a century-old experiment that failed. Brian Stock, a scholar in England, analyzes why young men leave and concludes that it is because Canada provides no patria,

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur R. M. Lower, Canadians in the Making (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1958), p. xix.

no zeitgeist, no great literature and no soul. Gérard Pelletier discusses "The Trouble with Quebec," while Marcel Faribault asks "Can French Canada Stand Alone?" All these Canadians share the perplexing vision of a nation that may or may not exist.

In that same number of The Atlantic, Douglas LePan links the dilemma of Canadian authors with the idea of "representative man":

No one can tell yet what mask to carve for Canada, which type to choose--a pulp savage or a bank teller, a civil servant or a broke hustler or a signalman helping to keep the peace in Cyprus or the Gaza Strip--whether the face should be serene and adventurous or withdrawn and introspective. No one can tell for certain yet whether Canada is <sup>2</sup> one nation or two.

Such insight is central to an understanding of cultural growth in any age or country. The importance assigned to representative heroes in the nineteenth century shines in Carlyle's Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History (1841) and Emerson's Representative Men (1850). The aim of this study, however, is not to trace or promote the emulation of historical figures. Nor is its chief concern with the origins of the hero (as in Lord Raglan's The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth and Drama [1936]), or his limits

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<sup>2</sup> Douglas V. LePan, "The Dilemma of the Canadian Author," The Atlantic, CCXIV (November 1964), 160-64.

in history (as in Sidney Hook's The Hero in History [1943]), or a taxonomy of his types (as in Northrop Frye's Anatomy of Criticism [1967]), though it recognizes a debt to all of these. The focus of this study is the fictional hero-figure, who may begin as part of the cultural baggage brought by a young society to a new land but who is altered in response to new conditions and new needs until he is both a product and a representative of his society. One thinks of the American frontiersman and the Australian bushranger of the 1800s, who run so strongly through their respective literatures and who developed into national myths in response to national need.

For more than a century, heroes in the Canadian novel have served a similar need, preserving, remodelling and symbolizing a growing sense of what it is to be Canadian. Though Canadian literature cannot boast such encompassing national figures as the American Adam<sup>3</sup> and Australia's

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3 R. W. B. Lewis, in The American Adam (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), states that "The new habits to be engendered by the new American scene were suggested by the image of a radically new personality, the hero of the new adventure: an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry . . . standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources. It was not surprising, in a Bible-reading generation, that the new hero (in praise or disapproval) was most easily identified with Adam before the Fall" (p. 5).

"Wild Colonial Boy,"<sup>4</sup> the search for a figure representative of society, which underlies and shapes the hero in so many Canadian novels, raises a further question which this study will address: May not a comparative study of the hero also illuminate the unity or disunity, growth or decay, character and direction of Canadian literature?

Viewing literature and its heroes as a process developing through stages is not new in Canada. "Each author is an 'heir of the ages,'" states Lionel Stevenson in his Appraisals of Canadian Literature (1926), "and it is impossible to imagine a literary masterpiece appearing full-blown without this evolution having preceded it."<sup>5</sup> Lorne Pierce places French and English authors "side by side" in An Outline of Canadian Literature (1927) and insists that "Hereafter they must share equally in any attempt to trace the evolution of our national spirit."<sup>6</sup> In the field of

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4 J. P. Matthews, in Tradition in Exile (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), describes Jack Dowling, "The Wild Colonial Boy," as the most famous of the bush-ranging outlaws subsumed into the figure of a nationally representative hero in the nineteenth century and rendered internationally popular in the twentieth as the "Swagman" of Banjo Paterson's ballad, "Waltzing Matilda" (pp. 165-77).

5 Lionel Stevenson, "A Manifesto for a National Literature," in Canadian Anthology, eds. Carl Klinck and Reginald Watters (Toronto: Gage, 1974), p. 581.

6 Lorne Pierce, "Foreword," An Outline of Canadian Literature (Toronto: Ryerson, 1927), n.p.

critical theory, Northrop Frye suggests that literature may be seen as "a vast organically growing form . . . showing a progressive evolution in time"<sup>7</sup>--a view reinforced by his democratization of the hero through the centuries in Anatomy of Criticism (1967). And there can be no mistaking the stance of Jean-Charles Falardeau in "l'Evolution du héros dans le roman québécois".<sup>8</sup>

A sense of evolution is one thing, however, and finding a central voice for a multicultural literature subject to bicultural polarization is another. Until well past mid-century, Pierce's national ideal--"A great literature" that would be "the characteristic utterance of the soul at the centre of things, about which the life of a people integrates"<sup>9</sup>--was overshadowed in English Canada by rationalizations for the lack of a national literature,<sup>10</sup> and in Quebec by the pursuit of a "national literature"

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7 Northrop Frye, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" (1949), in Our Sense of Identity, ed. Malcolm Ross (Toronto: Ryerson, 1954), p. 265.

8 Jean-Charles Falardeau, "l'Evolution du héros dans le roman québécois," a paper presented to the "conférences J. A. de Sève," at the Université de Montréal, February 15, 1968.

9 Pierce, p. 17.

10 See, for example, Desmond Pacey, "The Novel in Canada," Queen's Quarterly, LII (Autumn 1945), 322; Northrop Frye's conclusion to editor Carl Klinck's Literary History of Canada (1965) and D. G. Jones' Butterfly on Rock (1970).

which excluded English Canada, as Larry Shouldice notes in Contemporary Quebec Criticism (1979).<sup>11</sup> That is not to say that critics writing in one of the official languages were unaware of fiction and criticism in the other. Works such as Jack Warwick's The Long Journey (1960), Jean-Charles Falardeau's Notre société et son roman (1972), Jeannette Urbas' From Thirty Acres to Modern Times (1976) and Dick Harrison's Unnamed Country: The Struggle for a Canadian Prairie Fiction (1977) invite readers to explore fiction in both languages and, together with periodicals such as Ellipse (1969-- ) and The Canadian Review of Comparative Literature / Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée (1974--), contribute to a more comprehensive vision of literature in Canada. Even today, however, the twin psyches of Hugh MacLennan's Two Solitudes (1945), though they may touch, do not protect and greet each other, but, to a large extent, seem to confirm Wittgenstein's belief that the boundaries of a language are the boundaries of a world.

The rise of comparative studies and the repeated threats of separatism in the past two decades have refocused critical attention on Pierce's bicultural ideal. Comparatists are increasingly challenging many of our assumptions regarding literature and the hero, at one time questioning

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<sup>11</sup> Larry Shouldice, Contemporary Quebec Criticism (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 4.

whether an English-Canadian literature exists,<sup>12</sup> at another denying the existence of Canadian literature in French.<sup>13</sup> As a result, such works as Jean-Charles Falardeau's Notre société et son roman (1972) and Ronald Sutherland's Second Image (1971) and The New Hero (1977) are now part of an energetic debate as to whether Canadian literature is one entity or two, or many.

In this debate, Falardeau's view that Canada has two separate and distinct literatures, each operating on a different literary "axis,"<sup>14</sup> is opposed to Sutherland's contention that they are not separate, but "share a single mystique" and are co-producers of a new Canadian hero.<sup>15</sup> The issue, of course, is more than literary. Behind these positions, which Philip Stratford calls "separatist" and

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12 John McClelland, "Is There an English Canadian Literature?" The Canadian Forum, L (October 1970), 240.

13 John Moss, in Sex and Violence in the Canadian Novel (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977) states: "There are many literatures in Canada, in many languages, but there is only one Canadian literature and that is written in English" (p. 307).

14 Jean-Charles Falardeau, Notre société et son roman (Montréal: Hurtubise HMH, 1972), p. 58.

15 Ronald Sutherland, The New Hero (Toronto: MacMillan, 1977), p. vii.

"centralist,"<sup>16</sup> may be seen French Canada's long-standing fear of assimilation and English Canada's equally historical fear of Quebec separatism, adding intensity and complexity to the literary problem.

E. D. Blodgett, in Configuration: Essays on the Canadian Literatures (1982) illuminates the importance and the difficulties of this problem, which he sees as emerging from "two nations" and two literatures. Given this division, Blodgett argues against a Frygian approach to these literatures as tending "to obscure the metonymies of national literatures by the metaphor of universal forms"<sup>17</sup> and supports Stratford's argument that "the metaphor of the ellipse contains the problems that both Falardeau and Sutherland imply":

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16 Philip Stratford, "Canada's Two Literatures: A Search for Emblems," Canadian Review of Comparative Literature / Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée, Special Issue (Spring 1979), 133.

17 E. D. Blodgett, Configuration: Essays on the Canadian Literatures (Downsview: ECW Press, 1982), p. 14.

We are on the threshold of one, as all literatures and their criticisms are on the threshold. . . . our threshold is at once historical and linguistic --two histories and two languages--each requiring the re-spective glance that guides any comparative method. To be, then, on a threshold, where what draws apart is what draws together, is precisely where the comparatist of Canadian literatures ought to be--contingent, fragile, unwilling to accept, finally, the illusion of the universal solution, self-absorbed, unguided by the enigmas of the other presence. 20

Despite the danger of ultimately "finding one's self lost," which is confronted in the postscript to Configuration, Blodgett's vision never wavers from the need for a model with the capacity to reveal similarities while not obscuring those distinctions that are required for a productive analysis of Canada's francophone and anglophone literatures.<sup>21</sup> It is here, I suggest, that the fictional hero, a metaphor of man and society and a basis for literary comparisons capable of revealing both similarities and differences, can play a valid and useful role.

As we shall see, the hero-figure can participate in and yet transcend both culture and time. His growth and changes provide a way to assess the literature he inhabits and its fundamental themes, of national identity, self-esteem and orientation in time and space, which are, in

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20 Blodgett, p. 35.

21 Blodgett, p. 35.

Blodgett's words, "as old as Virgil" and yet "particularly valid for any theoretical frame of reference that would ask . . . how the Canadian and Québécois literatures relate" today.<sup>22</sup>

Whence do Canada's early heroes originate, and what factors conduce to making them "Canadian"? What is the relation, if any, of Canadian heroes to classical heroes of the past? What are the similarities and differences between the fictional heroes of English and French Canada? What role do heroes play in enabling society to remodel its inherited myths? And to what degree do they exhibit an identifiably "Canadian" face in the flux of Modern and Postmodern literature?

As a way of engaging these questions, which are germane to the current "political" debate as well as to the growth of the hero, this study examines the hero in a supra-national and trans-temporal context as well as in what may be called the "national context" which binds him to the time, place and culture of a particular society. The sources of this frame of reference are, respectively, the Myth of the Hero in Joseph Campbell's Primitive Mythology (1968) and The Hero with a Thousand Faces (1973),

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22 Blodgett, pp. 15-16.

and the hero's "vision du monde" as described in Falardeau's "l'Evolution du héros dans le roman québécois" (1968).<sup>23</sup>

The way in which these mutually-defining elements function, separately and in concert, may be sketched as follows.

In The Hero with a Thousand Faces Campbell presents the universally recurring Myth of the Hero as a magnification of the formula of separation, initiation and return enacted in the rites of passage:

A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder; fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow men.

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Campbell's use of the term "monomyth" to identify the hero's adventure makes it clear that his subject is a single general myth. But it is important to note that this myth may function in either of two ways, as he explains in Primitive Mythology:

Functioning as a "way" mythology and ritual conduce to a transformation of the individual disengaging him from his local, historical conditions and leading him toward some kind of ineffable experience. Functioning as an "ethnic idea," on the other hand, the image binds the individual to his family's system of historically conditioned sentiments, activities, and beliefs, as a functioning member of a sociological organism.

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23 Falardeau, "l'Evolution du héros," p. 9.

24 Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 30.

25 Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology (New York: Viking, 1968), p. 462.

In this study, I have chosen to call the hero of the "ethnic idea" the Preserver of Tradition and the hero of the "way" the Agent of Change, in keeping with the functions they perform. These prototypical figures are as ancient as the myths of King Arthur and Prometheus and recur throughout literature to our own day. Every such hero, wherever or whenever found, is bound by a sense of covenant appropriate to his function--pledged to reinforce the traditional ways of his society, or, by virtue of his "ineffable experience," to contribute to its transformation and growth.

Each of these types, then, carries a political valence, one favouring conformity to group needs, the other encouraging individualism. The first type, with its emphasis on society's need for unity and stability, is idealized, at least implicitly, in Edmund Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France;<sup>26</sup> the second, with its emphasis on the

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<sup>26</sup> See The Harvard Classics, 1st edn. (New York: Collier, 1909), Vol. 24, in which Burke affirms that "Society is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living and those who are dead, and those who are to be born. Each contract of each particular state is but a clause in the great primaeval contract of eternal society" (p. 245).

individual's need for independence and self-realization, in Tom Paine's Rights of Man.<sup>27</sup> These long-standing positions, central to British government and American independence, as history and literature may be read to show, represent the competing value systems over which the American Revolution was fought, and between which the Canadian fictional hero later struggled to emerge. In literature they repeatedly appear as opposing types of the hero, which opposition may be charted as follows:

THE PRESERVER OF TRADITION

is a hero of gentle birth  
but clouded reputation

who clears his name and  
confirms his rightful  
place in society

by "revealing" himself  
through an adventure in  
which he is reborn, typi-  
fying rather than exceed-  
ing his society's virtues  
and performance.

He confers a boon which  
has power to confirm the  
traditional ways of  
society, and his reward  
is resumption of his  
social position.

THE AGENT OF CHANGE

is a hero of common origins  
with no reputation

who makes his name, but not  
necessarily a place, in  
society

by "becoming" himself  
through an adventure in  
which he is reborn, exceed-  
ing (at times contradicting)  
his society's virtues and  
performance.

He confers a boon which  
has power to change the  
traditional ways of  
society, and his reward  
may be exile.

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27 John Dos Passos, in Tom Paine (Philadelphia: Longmans, Green, 1940), cites the following passage from The Rights of Man (1791) indicative of Paine's position: "The fact therefore must be, that the individuals themselves, each in his own personal and sovereign right, entered into a compact with each other to produce a government: and this is the only mode in which governments have a right to arise, and the only principle on which they have a right to exist" (p. 125).

Like their prototypes in Campbell's Primitive Mythology, these heroes "symbolize" and re-enact functions that are of as much importance to the individual's growth as they are to his society's. And they are as manifestly alive and well in history as in fiction.<sup>28</sup>

Much as Burke and Paine exemplify the stances of the Preserver of Tradition and the Agent of Change in history, protagonists such as Sydney Carton in Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities (1859) and Huck in Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1889) dramatize them in the novel. In background, reputation, mythic adventure and final reward, Carton and Huck clearly suggest their supra-national types, the Preserver of Tradition and the Agent of Change. The first of these, a gentleman-wastrel, in the experience of revolutionary chaos of the kind Burke warns against, reveals his power of self-sacrifice--is spiritually renewed--, typifying his nation's highest virtue. He gives his life for his friends. Carton's gift confirms Burke's ideal and wins him a hallowed place in the memory and myth of his society. Huck, the son

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28 Northrop Frye, in The Critical Path, An Essay on the Social Context of Literary Criticism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), discusses these functions in terms of a "myth of concern" and a "myth of freedom" (p. 45). In Frye's discussion, however, moral overtones tend to favour the "myth of concern." A parallel situation in classical Indian philosophy is noted by Campbell in Primitive Mythology, p. 467.

of a disreputable father, makes his name by discovering himself through an adventure in which he, too, is renewed; but his new self-knowledge exceeds and contradicts his society's performance. His example, reflecting the independent and self-reliant ideal of Paine, has the potential to change traditional ways; but Huck, foreseeing the constraints of urban life, decides to light out for the territories.

What makes Carton a typical British gentleman and Huck a picaresque American boy, of course, is not adherence to a universal model or myth. Types as they are, they are also deeply and complexly rooted in a particular time, place, and society. As Falardeau suggests, culture, and hence new cultural roots, are dependent on the individual's multiple links with his surrounding reality; that is, on the protagonist's world-view or "vision du monde." It is this vision, "qui tout à la fois tient de celle du romancier, de celle de sa société et de son époque,"<sup>29</sup> which stamps the protagonist with the marks of a particular culture and time. Aspects of this vision--the hero's character, goals, attitudes, self-image and relations to others--vary in their frequency, nature, and emphasis from novel to novel. But within each

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29 Falardeau, "l'Evolution du héros," p. 9.

novel their cumulative effect reveals important connections between the hero, his land, and his society.

Novels were selected for this study on the basis of their usefulness in exploring these connections. Beginning with the imported hero of The Seats of the Mighty and the resident Quebec hero of Jean Rivard in the nineteenth century, the search follows heroes in the two cultures through twentieth century metamorphoses in peace and war into the elusive forms (or anti-forms) of the 1970s and 1980s. Whether these are heroes of sacrifice (The Sky Pilot in No Man's Land and Menaud, maître-draveur), heroes of new growth (The Manticore and Salut Galarneau!), or heroes of apocalypse (Beautiful Losers and Prochain épisode), the context provided by Campbell and Falardeau enables us to locate and describe them at various stages of their development, to differentiate between them (by type and by vision du monde) and to suggest an hypothesis for their role in Canada's literary and cultural growth.

If, as R. W. B. Lewis believes, "a culture achieves identity not so much through the ascendancy of one particular set of convictions as through the emergence of its peculiar and distinctive dialogue,"<sup>30</sup> the interplay of the

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30 Lewis, p. 2, adds, "the historian looks not only for the major terms of discourse, but also for major pairs of opposed terms which, by their very opposition, carry discourse forward."

Preserver of Tradition and the Agent of Change as expressions of that dialogue should provide a useful indicator of cultural growth.<sup>31</sup> Whether expressed within or between novels--or, indeed, within or between protagonists--such a dialogue, or its absence, can throw informing light on the nature and rate of growth of the culture. A prophetic example of this dialogue as a measure of cultural development may be seen in the early history of Canada. Following the American Revolution, the ascendancy of one particular set of convictions in British America placed the British Preserver of Tradition and Agent of Change in the roles of players in a zero-sum game. Any gain by one of them meant a corresponding loss by the other, a fact which tended to perpetuate the players' adversarial roles. Since Loyalism meant adherence to tradition, any Agent of Change was an enemy agent; consequently, dissent almost disappeared.<sup>32</sup>

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31 See, for example, Lionel Trilling's frequently quoted statement on culture in The Liberal Imagination (New York: Doubleday, 1953): "A culture is not a flow, nor even a confluence; the form of its existence is struggle, or at least debate--it is nothing if not a dialectic" (p. 7).

32 For the stultifying effects of Loyalist conformity in early Canada see F. W. Watt, "Literature of Protest," Literary History of Canada, pp. 457-61. The question of novels of "searing protest" is dealt with in chapter II of this study. See also Gaile McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome: Explorations in the Canadian Landscape (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

In French Canada under British rule, on the other hand, the common cause of patriotism softened the adversarial roles of the Preserver of Tradition and Agent of Change into those of rival brothers. As a result, the fictional habitant and coureur de bois--opposing types, but always members of the family--move through literature differing as to means, but never as to ends, on questions concerning the welfare and preservation of la patrie. As early as 1846, a habitant and a voyageur appear as rival brothers in Patrice Lacombe's La Terre paternelle. They are engaged, not in a zero-sum game, but in the kind of dialogue Lewis and Trilling associate with cultural growth. One of the aims of this study, therefore, will be to look for a dialogue of growth in novels of both languages as the hero's development is examined in the context derived from Campbell and Falardeau.

The organization of the study is both thematic and chronological. Its six chapters present successive steps in the hero's development in two cultures, as indicated by his changing world-view.<sup>33</sup> These steps, which correspond to stages in the growth of an individual, are: the imitation of parental models, their later rejection, the discovery or

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<sup>33</sup> See Charles and Mary Beard, The American Spirit (1942) (New York: MacMillan, 1957), pp. 1-3, for a definition of "world-view" used throughout this study as equivalent to Falardeau's "vision du monde."

creation of new models, the testing of identity, the reshaping of myths, and the confrontation of apocalypse. The focus of the study is on the similarities and differences between heroes as representatives of their respective cultures and on the possibility that a hero of national stature and scope may appear.

In chapter I, the prototypical heroes of Gilbert Parker's The Seats of the Mighty and Antoine Gérin-Lajoie's Jean Rivard set anglophone and francophone protagonists on divergent paths, one dominated by the monologue and "garrison mentality" of the aristocrat in exile, the other by the dialogue emerging from a centuries-old oral tradition and the democratizing experience of the pioneer. Chapter II traces these "influences" in Ralph Connor's The Sky Pilot in No Man's Land and Félix-Antoine Savard's Menaud, maître-draveur, in rejections of the past in F. P. Grove's Fruits of the Earth and Ringuet's Trente Arpents, and in the search for selfhood in Morley Callaghan's They Shall Inherit the Earth and Jean-Charles Harvey's Les Demi-civilisés. The next chapter, examining the need for time-transcending models, compares the World War II heroes of Colin McDougall's Execution and Jean Vaillancourt's Les Canadiens errants in terms of their distant analogues, the miles christianus and the classical Greek warrior. Chapter IV follows the shift in emphasis from Preserver of Tradition to Agent of Change

in Hugh MacLennan's Barometer Rising and Germaine Guèvremont's Le Survenant, and considers the historical redefinition of the hero's commitment in MacLennan's The Watch that Ends the Night and Gérard Bessette's La Bagarre. Comparative analysis of these developments leads to a reconsideration of the significance of suicide in the hero's search for identity. Chapter V deals with the primitive hero and woman-as-hero in an increasingly technological society, comparing Rudy Wiebe's The Temptations of Big Bear with Yves Thériault's Ashini, and Margaret Laurence's The Diviners with Claire Martin's Doux-amer. The perceived inadequacy of past cultural beliefs to cope with the conditions of modern life motivates different approaches to remodelling mythologies in works by Robert Kroetsch and Roch Carrier. In chapter VI the apocalyptic heroes of Leonard Cohen's Beautiful Losers and Kroetsch's What the Crow Said, on the one hand, and Hubert Aquin's Prochain épisode and Jacques Benoît's Jos Carbone, on the other, show the continued divergence in the paths of heroism followed by the two cultures, leading to the hero of fantasy in one and the hero of revolution in the other. Representative patterns of the hero and his world-view are recapitulated in Robert Harlow's Scann and André Langevin's L'Elan d'Amérique.

Throughout this study, the word "hero" is intended in its broadest sense: that of "the central character in a work of fiction"--to which must be added, "whose world-view sooner or later includes a sense of communal destiny."<sup>34</sup> This working definition, derived from an historically broadly-based mythic adventure, applies to protagonists of either sex, regardless of character or rank, from "hero-god" to "anti-hero," in novels ranging from "epic" to "Postmodern." The sense of communal destiny is important, for it is in the relation between his own and his society's world-view that the hero, Campbell's symbolic carrier of the destiny of Everyman at the universal level,<sup>35</sup> becomes, at the local level, the builder of his nation's culture.

In literary studies, of course, there is always the danger of generalizing in such a way as to transform the subject into an object; in this case, of reducing the heroes studied to a preconceived formula. The context borrowed from Campbell and Falardeau is not an end here, but a means, providing the hypothetical framework for a comparative study in which Canadian heroes rise, change and fade in their own

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34 For a view of the intimate links between personal and communal destinies, see Beard, p. 2.

35 In The Hero with a Thousand Faces, p. 36.

rich variety of forms.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, Campbell's expressions, "call to adventure," "road of trials," "realm of night," "world of common day"--and other terms in a lexicon to a great extent self-explanatory and yet highly symbolic--are employed heuristically, rather than being adhered to slavishly throughout. Used in this way, the monomyth, hero types, and world-views serve to reveal the patterns and relationships of the hero as he exists within his specific and variously-expressed culture. David Daiches, in an examination of the modern critical spectrum, indicates two basic approaches to literary criticism. The first attempts to relate fiction to the civilization of which it is a part; the second, more prevalent in Canada today, analyzes the relations between the parts and the whole of a particular work.<sup>37</sup> With full respect for the usefulness and validity of both approaches, this study places its emphasis on the first.

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36 As the title of The Hero with a Thousand Faces implies, "the universal goddess makes her appearance to men under a multitude of guises" (p. 302). Moreover, Campbell adds, "there is no final system for the interpretation of myths, and there will never be any such thing" (p. 381).

37 David Daiches, "Fiction and Civilization," in The Modern Critical Spectrum, eds. Gerald J. Goldberg and Nancy M. Goldberg (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 109-10. "After we have worked from the wider context inward and from the work outward," Daiches adds, "we shall probably find that the greatest works are those which, while fulfilling all the formal requirements, most adequately reflect the civilization of which they are a product" (p. 113).

In a study of this scope, a word is in order regarding the inclusion or exclusion of certain authors and works. Dave Godfrey, for example, is a Canadian whose prize-winning novel, The New Ancestors, has no direct bearing on the evolution of the Canadian fictional hero, and is therefore excluded. In Louis Hémon, on the other hand, we find a non-Canadian author whose Maria Chapdelaine marks a turning point in the Quebec hero's evolution and is incorporated into a later novel, Menaud, Maître-draveur. Both of these are included. In a similar way, F. P. Grove's contribution to the Canadian vision and its evolving hero seems clearly to outweigh the factors of his European birth and upbringing.

Criteria are also required in determining which of an author's works to analyze. One such criterion is the need for the novel to be representative of its author's best work and to match closely the novel with which it is compared cross-culturally. In Grove's case, Fruits of the Earth seems to me quite as representative of its author as Settlers of the Marsh, Two Generations, Our Daily Bread, The Yoke of Life or The Master of the Mill. In addition, it offers a valid and illuminating basis for comparison with Trente Arpents, plus an opportunity to touch on Grove's American experience and the frontier myth of the United States.

A similar process underlies selection of the other authors and works addressed.

Whether heroes or novels in one language surpass their counterparts in the other as literary achievements is a question this study does not attempt to answer. Its aim, rather, is to use the metamorphoses of the fictional hero in Canada's founding cultures as "un miroir qu'on promène le long d'un chemin."<sup>38</sup> But it does this in a special and a double way. It is special in that the earlier idea of an ordinary mirror has almost disappeared in the complexity of the travelling rear-view mirrors of Sutherland and Frye,<sup>39</sup> the inverted or distorting mirrors of Aquin in Prochain épisode and Trou de mémoire, and the splintered mirror that Harlow fashions in Scann. It is double in the sense that the way in which these authorial mirrors reflect changes in the hero is at least as important as the way in which the hero reflects society; and it is the hero's growth which is our primary concern. To use another analogy, this study is also an attempt to find a path through the literary forest

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38 As Réjean Robidoux and André Renaud point out in Le Roman canadien-français du vingtième siècle (Ottawa: Editions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1966), "Cette définition [du roman] . . . a connu une singulière faveur auprès des créateurs et des critiques, depuis que Stendhal l'a reproduite en épigraphe à l' un des chapitres du Rouge et Noir" (p. 9).

39 See Sutherland, The New Hero, p. 32, and Northrop Frye, Divisions on a Ground (Toronto: Anansi, 1982), p. 181.

while emphasizing that the path is not the forest, much less a substitute for the riches the forest contains. Its approach is exploratory, tracing complexes of similarities made possible by differences. "All literature," as Harrison observes, "grows out of a time and a place,"<sup>40</sup> and, if it is true that the novel is "la société rêvée . . . transfigurée . . . transcendée," in Falardeau's words,<sup>41</sup> it is also true that one of the most revealing and influential elements in this process of dream, transfiguration and transcendence is the fictional hero, whose development in Canada the ensuing chapters attempt to follow.

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40 Dick Harrison, Unnamed Country: The Struggle for a Canadian Prairie Fiction (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1977), p. xiv.

41 Falardeau, Notre société et son roman, p. 76.

## Chapter I

### CRITICAL PATHS AND HERO MODELS

The study of a national literature, therefore, besides giving aesthetic pleasure, provides a key to understanding the character of a nation, its conditioning forces, its formative myths, its dreams, its nightmares, its successes, its failures . . . .

--Ronald Sutherland,  
"A Literary Perspective"<sup>1</sup>

On September 13th, 1983, the following notice appeared in the obituary columns of the Montreal Gazette:  
"WOLFE: General James. Died Quebec City, September 13th, 1759. Sadly missed."

This mordant commentary on the question of national unity is a sharp reminder of Canada's inherent dualism,<sup>2</sup> of her heroes and history, and of what seems to be a peculiar Canadian problem: the absence of a hero-figure of national stature and scope. Yet this lack of an historical "Father

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1 Ronald Sutherland, "A Literary Perspective: The Development of a National Consciousness," in Understanding Canada: A Multidisciplinary Introduction to Canadian Studies, ed. William Metcalfe (New York: New York University Press, 1982), p. 401.

2 See, for example, Mason Wade, ed., Canadian Dualism / La Dualité canadienne (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960); also, Jean Bouthillette, Le Canadien français et son double (Montréal: Hexagone, 1972).

of our Country," and even the absence of a fictional Canadian "Adam," may not be entirely a disadvantage. In a nation created by the political union of two cultures rather than forged in revolution and civil war, a composite hero, in all his complexity, may prove more fully representative of a complex national character. And the making of a world-view by which the hero preserves or transcends society is not an act limited to heroes alone. It is manifest in tribes and nations, and shared by Everyman, as Charles and Mary Beard point out:

Every person, whether primitive or highly civilized, has a conception of himself and the universe in which he lives and works or idles. This is his idea of the world--his world-view. . . . With more or less reference to its prescriptions and logic, he acts, he conducts his affairs light and grave. To some world-view all his limited ideas, such as democracy, liberty, authority, are subjected for 3 evaluation.

A key to the development of the hero and of his society is therefore the relationship between their world-views. It is the aim of this chapter to show that nineteenth-century heroes in Canadian literature, acting as Preservers of Tradition, aptly reflected the world-views which their respective societies wished to maintain after the disasters of the British Conquest and the American Revolution.

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3 Beard, p. 1.

Following Wolfe's victory, British and French-Canadian world-views seem to have been taken from opposite ends of a powerful telescope. To Britons at home and in the colonies, the course of Empire seemed one of limitless expansion, a vista so awesome, records James Williamson, that "the Duke of Bedford voiced the opinion of many who stood aghast at the measureless ascendancy their country had attained and looked with prophetic insight to some fearful Nemesis in the years to come."<sup>4</sup> For the French left in America, the Conquest "was the reversal of reversals --Les Bastonnois (the Canadian name for the New Englanders) triumphing over those who had so frequently triumphed over them."<sup>5</sup> Thus, even at this early stage, the English-Canadian hero's path was beset with the dangers of space-sickness and pride which would strongly influence English-Canadian literature,<sup>6</sup> while in the path of the French-Canadian hero arose the problem of achieving "the miracle of survivance, survival."<sup>7</sup>

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4 James Williamson, A Short History of British Expansion (New York: MacMillan, 1931), p. 406.

5 Lower, p. 87.

6 See, for example, Northrop Frye's Conclusion to Literary History of Canada, pp. 828-44.

7 Lower, p. 89.

The American Revolution, which energized and impelled the rebellious colonies so powerfully towards the future, did nothing of the kind for English Canada, as Lower explains. But if "Canada started its life with as powerful a nostalgic shove backward into the past as the Conquest had given to French Canada,"<sup>8</sup> there was nevertheless a radical difference in the way each of these societies rationalized its post-Revolutionary plight.

In English Canada, the adjusted world-view was one of a United Empire, nobler and greater than the United States,<sup>9</sup> its loyal adherents "full of heart and hope, with heads erect / And fearless eyes, victorious in defeat."<sup>10</sup> This vision, which sustained colonial hearts for more than a century, was bolstered by imported heroes. Here, on the frontiers of Empire, protagonists with clouded reputations could redeem themselves, refurbish Britain's glory, and dream the ultimate dream of "going home." Jenni Calder describes the imperialist hero as the natural result of British expansionism meeting the conditions of frontier life:

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8 Lower, p. 136.

9 Lower, p. 135.

10 William Kirby, "Autumn, The Hungry Year" (1887), quoted by W. R. Riddell in William Kirby (Toronto: Ryerson, 1923), p. 98.

The imperialist hero was inevitable. Britain's Empire was perfect territory for heroism, combining the challenge of unknown, savage tribes, primitive conditions, and the blossoming in the late nineteenth century of the imperial idea added conviction to the hero of the Empire. 11

The movement of this expansive, outward-looking world-view was radically opposed to the vision preoccupying French Canada at the same time. Here, particularly in the later opinion of Canon Groulx, the Conquest was an "unmitigated disaster,"<sup>12</sup> a shock that turned defeated eyes towards the soil. Yet something mysterious and positive must have been going on as well. With defeat came a renewed sense of French-Canadian solidarity, a deeper appreciation of North America as la patrie, and a revitalized vision of the pays d'en haut,<sup>13</sup> all of which helped to provide French Canada with something closely akin to the conditions of an Adamite

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11 Jenni Calder, Heroes, from Byron to Guevara (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1977), p. 66.

12 Lower, p. 90.

13 See Jack Warwick, The Long Journey: Literary Themes of French Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), for a detailed critical view of this semi-mythical wilderness in Northern Quebec which serves as the locus of adventure for voyageur and coureur de bois in French-Canadian literature and which provided an imaginative escape from the sense of subjugation which French Canadians associated with British rule.

"fresh start"<sup>14</sup>--the seeds essential to a "national myth."<sup>15</sup> In this sense, even before a recognizably "Canadian" literature appeared, history had blazed different paths for two Preservers of Tradition in Canada: one, an aristocratic stranger, loyal to a cultural centre far across the sea; the other, a democratic, indigenous protagonist rooted in the land and dedicated to la nation canadienne.

What emerged in English Canada was the vision of a single dauntless hero, often isolated but never discouraged, whose brilliance and daring at a crucial moment would shape the course of history. The prototype of this figure is the British hero of Gilbert Parker's The Seats of the Mighty, Robert Moray, whose fictional exploits extend the frontiers of "Vaster Britain" by assisting Wolfe in the capture of Quebec.<sup>16</sup> Captain Moray, the classic Preserver of Tradition in the cause of an expanding empire, is presented as typifying

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14 As Lewis points out in The American Adam, "The American myth saw life and history as just beginning. It described the world as starting up again under fresh initiative, in a divinely granted second chance for the human race, after the first chance had been so disastrously fumbled in the darkening Old World. . . . America, it was said insistently from the 1820's onward, was not the end-product of a long historical process (like the Augustan Rome celebrated in the Aeneid); it was something entirely new" (p. 5).

15 Lower, p. 91.

16 Gilbert Parker, The Seats of the Mighty (1896) (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971).

rather than exceeding the virtues of his society.<sup>17</sup> In talent, temperament, breeding, and circumstance, however, he also satisfies all the requirements of Calder's imperialist hero. A daring officer in enemy hands just before the fall of New France, he is poised for the moment of destiny in which he will single-handedly turn the tide of battle in Britain's favour.

As the novel opens, Moray's easy life as a hostage of the French in Quebec, although lightened by the friendship of beautiful Alixe Duvarney, has clouded his reputation by placing a question mark over his military prowess. Suddenly he is called to adventure by the accusation that he has broken his parole and is a spy. Moray vows to defend his honour as an officer and a gentleman. But, since his effective defence might damage the reputation of a lady at the French court, he must remain silent, contending as best he can with Bigot, the corrupt Intendant, and Doltaire, a brilliant but evil rival for the hand of Alixe. Events carry

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<sup>17</sup> Although these virtues are raised to dramatic levels for the purposes of the novel, Moray's background is not untypical of British officers in this period. Lower notes that "The typical eighteenth-century British 'officer and gentleman' was a man with a family behind him, a family with property, which meant servants in the house, and property in land, which meant tenant farmers outside it, touching their caps. His military education had been thorough, though not liberal, and if it were joined to a good mind, it could produce a good specimen. He probably spoke French reasonably well, an important asset in Canada" (p. 96).

Moray into an underworld of intrigue, dungeons, and attempted assassination, partially offset by unexpected aid from his barber, Voban, and a peasant soldier, Gabord. But it is Alixe who becomes his protective goddess, marries him secretly, and assists in his escape.

Moray's underworld closely resembles Sydney Carton's in A Tale of Two Cities. Both are Preservers of Tradition fighting the same enemy and embodying the highest virtues of their society, one in military valour, the other in civilian self-sacrifice.<sup>18</sup> In both cases, the broader conflict is between order and chaos, honour and corruption. Having been held three years by captors who had promised to release him in three months, Moray feels free of his parole and duty-bound to escape and assist the besieging English forces. What Campbell would call his "magic flight," achieved through the effect of ghostly costumes on his superstitious guards, enables him to meet four of his countrymen, capture a French ship, and join the British fleet. Here his knowledge of Quebec is of crucial importance. He is able to advise Wolfe

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<sup>18</sup> Like the hero of A Tale of Two Cities, who throws off the false "cardboard" image of his family name to reveal himself in the image of Sir Philip Sidney, England's Renaissance ideal of the perfect gentleman, Moray reveals himself at his true value in time of crisis. Both heroes receive the mythically prescribed reward, one in this life, the other in the memory of society.

of a secret approach to the fortress, to participate decisively in a great battle, and to rescue Alixe after the city falls.

Moray is now the master of two worlds. He has come to admire the chivalry of Montcalm while despising Bigot and Doltaire, to respect the honest habitants, tolerate Catholicism, and love Alixe. It is only the baseness of Bigot and Doltaire that enables Moray to see the British as an army of liberation. As he leads his bride from the cave where she had hidden, they emerge symbolically--Britain and French Canada--into the sunlit peace of a new Dominion:

A pleasant green valley lay to the north, and to the south, far off, was the wall of rosy hills that hid the captured town. Peace was upon it all, and upon us (p. 206).

Moray's world-view matches perfectly the larger imperial design: it is aristocratic, ambitious, confident and all-embracing. His sword, presented to his father by the first King Charles, his early prosperity as a plantation-owner in Virginia, his bilingualism and, perhaps most importantly, the tone he adopts with his jailers throughout his captivity, all proclaim the aristocrat. His ambition, less overt since he is an officer and a gentleman, is nevertheless reflected in his view of a captaincy as a humble rank--a view that would be held only by one aspiring to much higher command. Brought lame and ailing for interrogation by

Montcalm, his pride and confidence do not desert him:

"I can not hope for justice here," said I, "but men are men, and not dogs, and I ask for humane usage till my hour comes and my country is your jailer" (p. 104).

This breadth of vision is reflected again in his awareness that "My marriage with Alixe had been made a national matter --of race and religion" (p. 153), a problem he confronts with the cool resourcefulness of the Renaissance's universal man. Both Moray and Alixe, in fact, consistently reflect the courtly qualities to be found in the gentlemen and ladies of Castiglione.

Like Sydney Carton, Moray is steadfastly the "English gentleman" in every situation--cultured, brave and gentle, a respecter of women and the aged--but, above all, the defender of honour, law, and order against the forces of lawlessness. Equally at ease in the salons of the rich or advising generals on tactics in the field, he wears his lineage easily, as a gentleman should. Breeding, though vital, is not so much emphasized as set in contrast with lack of breeding. Against Moray's casual mention of his father's relationship to the Stuarts and his friendship with Governor Dinwiddie, Doltaire's impassioned confession of his mixed noble and peasant blood glaringly implies that it is this "taint" which accounts for his base character. Moray, on the other hand, will not break his word, even to save

his own life. And in the struggle for Alixe it is character, not intellect, that wins:

There was no question of yourself and Robert Moray--none [Alixe tells Doltaire]. Him I knew to possess fewer gifts, but I knew him also to be what you could never be. . . . Monsieur, if you had had Robert Moray's character and your own gifts, I could--monsieur, I could have worshipped you (p. 181).

What Doltaire could never be, of course, is an English gentleman, that gift which falls naturally to Moray and is essential to his role as Preserver of Tradition. And it is not a gift which overstresses humility. Moray's hero and model is none other than General Wolfe; and his statement that "chance sometimes lets humble men like me balance the scales of fate" is surely a touch of sprezzatura, as he demonstrates by adding, "and I was humble enough in rank, if in spirit always something above my place" (p. 2, emphasis added).

Unlike the Agent of Change, who learns and grows through his adventure, Moray appears on the scene a hero fully grown, wanting only the opportunity to reveal himself through an adventure that will prove his qualities and confirm his rightful place in society. Since he embodies the strength and virtue of an entire people, it is not appropriate for him to make mistakes. Instead, he moves swiftly (and almost always successfully) from action to

action, a shining example of British superiority and pluck on the frontiers of Empire.

For English-Canadian readers, the figure of Moray filled an important need at the centre of the continuing Loyalist hope for an unyielding hero reflecting the spirit of Susanna Moodie's "Oath of the Canadian Volunteers" (1839) and William Kirby's "Canadians Forever" (1887).<sup>19</sup> In the imaginative life of a Dominion that would have preferred to be a Kingdom,<sup>20</sup> Moray embodied the required British response to an ebullient American society outside the gates and an unsettling French society within. As his adventure shows, he has none of the individualism of the American frontiersman,<sup>21</sup> and is a symbol of unity and determination rather than growth. Yet his roots reach back to the English Renaissance, and his image, casting its shadow over Sarah Jeannette Duncan's The Imperialist (1904) and reborn in Ralph Connor's Corporal Cameron of the North West Mounted Police (1912), rides into the twentieth century on the surge of Empire.

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19 Both of which are reprinted in The Evolution of Canadian Literature in English, ed. Mary Jane Edwards, 1st edn. (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), I, 173 and 219.

20 Edwards, I, 13.

21 See, for example, F. J. Turner, The Significance of the Frontier in American History (1893) (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966), pp. 221-22.

In French Canada, the hero faced an even more exacting task. To redress the trauma of defeat in a society described by Lower as "arrested in its development,"<sup>22</sup> required both a Preserver of Tradition and an Agent of Change --a double hero capable of reaffirming in his people those values the conqueror could neither pre-empt nor destroy, while fashioning for them a world-view which included the hope of change.

Difficult as the problem was, the resources for its solution were at hand: first, in the solidarity of religion, language, and the land; second, in the hitherto proscribed figure of the lawless coureur de bois, who could now enter into debate with the habitant half of the double hero; and finally, in the potential for rebirth in the primitive world of the pays d'en haut, which corresponded closely with Turner's idea of the frontier in the United States.<sup>23</sup>

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22 Lower emphasizes both the discouragement of the French and their need for a fresh start in Canadians in the Making: "We are forced, therefore, to deal with an uncompleted evolution. A society that had reached the provincial stage was arrested in its development and did not reach the national life to which, possibly, it might have attained. All began over again, and the New French had to learn to relive their lives as 'new subjects' of the British king. Their story from that day onward was to consist in a patient rescue of themselves from the débâcle that came upon them . . ." (p. 82).

23 Compare, for example, the frontier of Jean Rivard, le défricheur and that of Frederick Turner in The Significance of the Frontier in American History.

The potential for growth in the debate between the habitant and coureur elements in the French-Canadian fictional hero is illustrated as early as 1846, in Patrice Lacombe's La Terre paternelle. With fairy-tale simplicity this short novel tells the story of a preferred older son whose wastefulness reduces his family to landless poverty, and of a spirited younger son who leaves home for the dangerous life of a voyageur. The tale ends happily with the return of the voyageur, who buys back the ancestral land, so reunifying his family and restoring its prosperity. Myth's message in La Terre paternelle is clear. Without the inspiriting example of the risk-taking coureur, the habitant cannot achieve true growth. He remains a futureless, one-dimensional man.

The value of the défricheur lies in his duality. Clearing his quelques arpents at the forest's edge, half way between the footloose coureur and the habitant bound to his land, he is a pioneer with options, open to either way of life. Often, when he has tamed the land, he will suddenly pull up stakes to plunge deeper into the forest and begin afresh, repeating the compulsive cycle of Samuel, the restless head of the family in Maria Chapdelaine (1914). Again, his dual nature may turn him, later in life, toward the more settled ways of the habitant, as it does in Antoine

Gérin-Lajoie's Jean Rivard, économiste (1864). But first, in the pages of Jean Rivard, le défricheur (1862), he goes back in time to mark out once again the path the French-Canadian hero is to follow.<sup>24</sup>

A rural youth of uncertain future, his education cut short by his habitant father's death, the protagonist of Jean Rivard, le défricheur discusses the merits of farming and law with his parish priest. Soon after, he hears the mythical call to adventure in a dream that carries him into an immense virgin forest, where a mysterious voice tells him all that he sees can one day be his. Leaving his mother's farm for this dream forest, he receives unexpected aid from Judge Lacasse, enabling him to find, purchase, and start clearing the land that one day will bear his name. It is interminable and exhausting work. But, aided by a loyal helper, Jean passes all the physical and moral tests imposed by the wilderness. In return he is granted a vision of "the good life" on the frontier, where man is close to nature and God.

This central message of Jean Rivard, le défricheur is reinforced by repetition in letters from Gustave Charmenil,

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<sup>24</sup> Antoine Gérin-Lajoie, Jean Rivard, le défricheur suivi de Jean Rivard, économiste (Montréal: HMH Ltée, 1977).

Jean's former schoolmate, who sought his fortune in the city and now regrets his choice:

O heureux, mille fois heureux le fils du labour-  
eur qui, satisfait du peu que la providence lui  
a départi, s'efforce de l'accroître par son tra-  
vail et son industrie, se marie, se voit revivre  
dans ses enfants, et passe ainsi des jours pais-  
ibles, exempts de tous les soucis de la vanité  
sous les ailes de l'amour et de la religion (p. 38).

At times this message echoes the peaceful joys envisaged by Sydney Carton for the Darnays in A Tale of Two Cities; at others, it is clearly a frontier saga in the Adamite style. The result is a mixture of Dickens' preservation of the past and Cooper's commitment to the future in his Leatherstocking tales. Far from being a threatening realm of night for Jean, the wilderness is a supernatural and benevolent milieu, "the great good place," a northern Eden in which the fresh start of a Canadian Adam comes close to the American ideal romanticized by Cooper and analyzed in Jackson's account of the American frontier.

Yet, unlike the hero of the Leatherstocking tales, Jean Rivard is both willing and able to abandon his early role as the Outrider of society for marriage and a traditional conservative life in the settlement he founds. Returning briefly to the world of common day in the village, he confers the gift of his example on the habitants of Grandpré, marries Louise and carries her off to the forest

home he has prepared. Here the mythic cycle is completed and his dream is realized. Master of two worlds and a bridge uniting wilderness and civilization, Jean becomes farmer, father, businessman, mayor, and member of parliament as Rivardville burgeons through the chapters of Jean Rivard, économiste (1864).

Is Jean Rivard a Preserver of Tradition or an Agent of Change? As défricheur, his humble origins and quest, as well as his self-reliance, democracy and sanguine outlook on life, all point to the Agent of Change, American style. Yet these qualities are counterbalanced by his essential conservatism and his dependence on the Church in worldly as well as in spiritual affairs. "D'abord je sais que nous sommes sur la terre pour travailler," he writes in a letter to Louise; "c'est le Créateur qui l'a voulu ainsi, et ce que l'homme a de mieux à faire c'est d'obéir à cette loi" (p. 76). Although his forest adventure presents Jean as a mixture of types--part democratic woodsman and part Napoleonic conqueror--both the weight given to his Preserver function in the adventure and his world-view clearly establish him as a Preserver of Tradition.

Inherent in this world-view is a sense of nationalism rooted in the Canadian soil, a sentiment diffused and overpowered by the Imperial Dream in nineteenth-century

English Canada. Jean is fully aware that some of his compatriots seek their fortunes in the United States, but he rejects the idea of emigration as unpatriotic. Instead, he considers it his duty and destiny to push back the wilderness, establish a family, and contribute to his growing society:

On n'est pas patriote en ne faisant rien pour augmenter le bien-être général. En outre, n'ai-je pas plusieurs raisons particulières de travailler, moi? Que deviendrait ma pauvre mère avec ses dix enfants si je ne pouvais l'aider un peu par la suite? Puis, comment pourrais-je songer à me marier un jour? Ces deux dernières considérations suffiraient seules pour me donner du coeur quand même les autres n'existeraient pas (p. 76).

Unlike the American frontiersman, who insists on his personal freedom while acting as society's Outrider,<sup>25</sup> Rivard gives priority to his role as Preserver of Tradition even in his lonely struggle to push back the frontier. His life is a re-enactment of the dream of New France which was arrested by Wolfe in 1759.

Jack Warwick, in The Long Journey, refers to this expansionist ideal as rayonnement.<sup>26</sup> Its locus is the pays

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25 And, in an important sense, this insistence renders Leatherstocking's acts of assistance to society more pure, since they implicitly reject society's rewards. The early Outrider's celibacy, however, as well as his vital individualism, was not suited to a Roman Catholic society.

26 Warwick, p. 48.

d'en haut and its heroes coureurs de bois, voyageurs, and pioneers. Its source is the "notion that the civilizing role was an historic truth vested in the French Canadians as a people," which may well have bolstered their resistance to assimilation by the English.<sup>27</sup> Warwick's analysis of this complex myth throws interesting light on the pays d'en haut and its heroes, including Jean Rivard:

In situating his novel in the Eastern Townships, Antoine Gérin-Lajoie opened interest in this tract of pays d'en haut and also hit on the literary principle of the pseudo-North. This was rough virgin land calling for a spirit of adventure, but not too far from Mother Church's apron strings. There was no question of having to adopt the life of the coureurs de bois. The hero is nevertheless characterized by courage, independence, closeness to nature, untutored practical skills which come forth to meet needs of all kinds, and by a subtle strength which is equal to that of the forest itself. These are all the virtues, real or legendary, of the coureurs de bois and voyageurs. They have been transferred to the pioneer, and combined with other virtues more proper to the stable life. 28

If, as Warwick suggests, Jean Rivard is at heart a conservative, tradition-preserving pioneer, why does his image as défricheur consistently shine with the appeal of the adventuresome and footloose coureur? Possibly for the same reason that the idea of the pays d'en haut became over-idealized as

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27 Warwick, p. 49.

28 Warwick, p. 53.

a reaction to British rule, in answer to pride and the human need to feel free. Proscribed by conservative tradition and the Church in New France, the dissenting spirit of the coureur gained new life and acceptance as part of the reply to Britain's presence. Consequently, it appeared not only as traits appended to the conventional pioneer, but as a general attitude, giving an aura of purpose and assertiveness to the hero's acts.

The therapeutic potential of this composite figure should not be underestimated. Seeming to scan the future while re-enacting and confirming the values of the past, it embraced--and even partially resolved--the anxieties, conformities and contradictions of a society fearful for its continued existence. The self-assertive coureur spirit may be sensed beneath these contradictions and conformities, pressing to emerge as soon as the forces keeping it partly in check weaken through social evolution and the passage of time.

Within their nineteenth-century context, then, the world-views of Moray and Rivard may be seen as reflections of the world-views of their respective societies. But types such as Moray and Rivard also raise the question of how they will adapt, or fail to adapt, to changing conditions as French Canada finds new opportunities for self-determination

and English Canada begins to express a yearning for autonomy and identity. Significant foreshadowings of change appear as early as The Imperialist (1904), with its portrait of the Canadian hero as "dutiful loser," and Marie Chapdelaine (1914), recalling and reinforcing the importance of the coureur.

Sarah Jeannette Duncan's The Imperialist<sup>29</sup> introduces a Canadian-born hero to imperial horizons, and finds him wanting. Lorne Murchison, a small-town lawyer, is called to adventure by the dream of a commercial British Empire in which Canada is to play a vital role. But his entry into the world of politics is inauspicious, for expediency and manipulation are offensive to his high ideals. As the story unfolds, Lorne is revealed as the Canadian preserver of a British tradition not entirely accepted in Canada, which now has important economic links with the United States. In a critical public address, he passionately urges "imperial preference," even at the cost of sacrificing Canada's ties with the United States, and forfeits his party's confidence. In quick succession he loses his candidacy, his fiancée, and his political future, ironically enough, to a cool-headed young opportunist from England. His failure in this test

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29 Sarah Jeannette Duncan, The Imperialist (1904) (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968).

on the "road of initiation" cannot be redressed. Though he is rescued from his plan to lose himself in the United States, Lorne returns to the world of common day without the hero's mastery of two worlds or any gift with which to preserve or reform society. He is a "dutiful loser" whose own moral rectitude and rigid ideals have denied him the success of which he dreamed. His story of opportunity thrown away closes on a dying fall:

Here, for Lorne and for his country, we lose the thread of destiny. The shuttles fly, weaving the will of nations, with a skein for ever dipped again; and he goes forth to his share in the task among those by whose hand and direction the pattern and colours will be made (p. 268).

So Lorne ends his adventure, not as a "has-been" but as a "might-have-been."

Duncan's early realism throws a useful light on Canada's "divided mind" by revealing opposition to Lorne's world-view in other characters in her novel. Against Lorne's romantic dream of Empire rise the counter-forces of Octavius Milburn's self-interest and continentalism, Advena's confidence in the nation as it is "in most respects," and Findlay's Adamite dream of the future in his adopted Canada. All of these agencies of change, of course, are also part of the author's larger and more practical world-view. In this, Duncan presents a complex vision, which approves imperialism but is optimistically nationalistic and future-oriented,

sharing the hero's sense of Canada's moral superiority over the United States,<sup>30</sup> without satisfying (as it realistically cannot) his need for a sense of personal and national identity.

Lorne himself is a striking example of the "divided mind,"<sup>31</sup> for his world-view is much more North-American than he imagines. He sees gentility as a market commodity and the gentleman--developed in England into "the finest human product there is" (p. 98)--as an item being rapidly "manufactured" in Canada (p. 99). His idea of a vigorous policy of Empire "conceived by its younger nations" (p. 122) has strong implications of change, yet he foresees England's continuing as "the heart of the Empire, the conscience of the world, and the Mecca of the race" (p. 124). What he fails to see is his own duality and the tide of continent-alism eroding the Imperial Dream in his own land.

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<sup>30</sup> Allan Smith's "The continental dimension in the evolution of the English-Canadian mind," International Journal, XXXI (Summer 1976), points out in connection with The Imperialist that "Canada, indeed, emerged from Duncan's pages as a more perfect representative of what the New World might produce than the United States itself. Uncorrupted by excess, it had not squandered its potential to regenerate in a surfeit of materialism and republican bad manners" (p. 465).

<sup>31</sup> A condition by no means limited to Canadian prose. See W. P. Wilgar, "Poetry and the Divided Mind in Canada," in Masks of Poetry, ed. A. J. M. Smith (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1962), p. 69.

Here again the protagonist's world-view and inner conflict reflect those of his society, a Canada "ranged against itself."<sup>32</sup> And for Lorne, this expanding vision of Empire is too much, too soon. The imported protagonists who follow in A Beautiful Rebel (1909) and Corporal Cameron of the North West Mounted Police (1919) reconfirm British origins and breeding as the sine qua non of the imperialist hero. Like Moray, they are Canadian only in the locus of adventure and choice of marriage partners. But there is change indicated as well by these two elements, which serve as significant reminders of the question: where do the Canadian roots of the hero begin?--or almost begin. Captain Etherington, the English-born hero of A Beautiful Rebel,<sup>33</sup> having won fame, social status and love in the War of 1812, does, in fact, break with the traditional imperialist hero, who invariably returns to the mother country at the end of

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32 Lower points to an attitude of colonialism that made some Canadians attempt to be "more British than the British" (p. 246) as well as to serious internal divisions in both Canadas: "On its English side, it was as bitterly divided by denominationalism as was French Canada by belief and unbelief" (p. 276).

33 Wilfred Campbell, A Beautiful Rebel: A Romance of Upper Canada in Eighteen Hundred and Twelve (Toronto: Doran, 1909).

his adventure.<sup>34</sup> He resigns his commission, to settle in Canada with the republican-minded Lydia Bradford. Their children, the author suggests, will represent the peaceful merging of two great traditions (p. 317). Although this compromise vision uniting the opposing myths of Empire and the American frontier is not a formula for instant citizenship, it is an imaginative step towards Canadianizing the fictional hero.

In Corporal Cameron of the North West Mounted Police,<sup>35</sup> though his hero marks a return to the imperialist Outrider of Britain's Dominions, Ralph Connor, too, ends his tale of adventure with intimations of more genuinely "Canadian" heroes to come.<sup>36</sup> The protagonist in this drama, an international soccer star and scion of "an old and distinguished family" (p. 135), leaves Edinburgh University under a cloud to find

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34 Calder writes: "It is essential that the imperialist hero does not commit himself to the colony where he has his adventures. . . . The hero's inability to forget that he is an Englishman means that he returns to England in the end" (p. 74).

35 Ralph Connor, Corporal Cameron of the North West Mounted Police (New York: George M. Doran, 1912).

36 It may seem ironical, then, that Corporal Cameron presents, in an early pure form, the "Mountie" hero that motion pictures were to distort into an internationally popular but thoroughly misleading "representative image" of Canada. See Pierre Berton, Hollywood's Canada: The Americanization of Our National Image (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), p. 111.

adventure in Canada, "the waster's refuge." On a farm in eastern Canada, he guides young Tim Haley to excellence in his work, entertains with outstanding skill on the pipes, rouses community pride by winning the Highland games, and inspires Mandy, a simple farm girl, to a life of high purpose and culture. But the tide of empire is moving west. Cameron joins a survey crew in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, where his road of trials is beset with blizzards, Indians, and corrupt whisky traders. Repelled by the lawlessness around him, he enlists in the North West Mounted Police, whose men, in culture and breeding, are "in very many cases the equals and sometimes the superiors of the officers" (p. 401). In a short time he is recognized by his commandant as the Force's "universal man" and by the reader as the imperialist version of the fictional lawman in the western United States. As the story comes to its end, the newly-promoted Corporal Cameron has won the reward of finding his true vocation--bringing law and order to the untamed West--and is about to marry Mandy, now a dedicated professional nurse and a hero's worthy bride.

But the implications are strong in these early novels that the final scene is not the end, and that a new nation with native heroes is not far off. Cameron, Etherington, and Moray all share the same imperious traits and

the same imperial world-view. But it is a view which now includes a positive, albeit colonial, future for Canada. If none of these heroes returns to Britain for his reward, it is because the function and duty of the Preserver of Tradition is not to discover the new, but to secure and preserve the old. Successful completion of the hero's task in all three novels transforms a lawless underworld into a law-abiding and therefore habitable world of common day. Not only is there no further need to return to the safety of "the Old Country," but a new imperial duty is implied. Hero and bride are already at home. They are safe within that Vaster Britain which it is now their function to populate and their reward to enjoy. As protagonist and emblem of this grand design, Corporal Cameron reaffirms a vision already established by Etherington and Moray, that world-view in which raw colonies blossom into civilized societies under the benevolent warmth of an imperial sun.

Dick Harrison illuminates the difference in world-view and function between the Canadian Mountie as Preserver of Tradition and the American Western hero as Agent of Change:

The Western hero . . . . is at home in the wild environment and has the mobility and mastery of violence of the savage as well as an understanding of the savage love of freedom which enables him to mediate between the two forces. The Mountie, by contrast, is more thoroughly identified with the civilized order and values than are the settlers themselves. He cannot stand between them and the savages in any but a physical way; rather than a mediator, he serves as an arbitrator in the dispute between savagery and civilization, imposing a solution based on higher authority. 37

This difference in heroes reflects an equally profound difference in outlook. Where the American settler and his society saw the West as a stage for "re-enactment of the process by which Americans ceased to be European and became American," his Canadian cousins retained the Old World's "faith in an established, unseen order which characterized the settlement of the Canadian West."<sup>38</sup> It is not hard to see how these outlooks, if firmly held, could take on the power of self-fulfilling prophecies. In his comparison of Corporal Cameron and Owen Wister's The Virginian (1902), Harrison describes these differing views as they relate to justice and the law:

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37 Dick Harrison, Introd., Best Mounted Police Stories (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1978), p. 3.

38 Harrison, Introd., Best Mounted Police Stories, pp. 13 and 6.

In Wister's Wyoming, justice is roughly defined by codes of behaviour developed to suit the local conditions of life. . . . The law, as the Judge says, in explaining a lynching, comes originally from the people; when they take it back into their own hands, it is not a defiance by an assertion of the law.

The young Mountie, on the other hand, is merely an instrument of the law which, like the whole system of order he maintains and the whole code of values by which he lives, is created elsewhere. His strength lies in his total acceptance of an authority emanating from a remote centre of empire.

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The consequence of these opposing world-views, in this century as in the past, is an English-Canadian mind twice divided: first, by a tug of war between new environment and old allegiances; second, by the French fact. In contrast with this tendency to fragmentation, the native prototype of French Canada established in Jean Rivard is reinforced by J. B. Caouette's Le Vieux Muet ou un héros de Chateauguay (1901) and draws new strength and inspiration from Maria Chapdelaine (1914).

In Le Vieux Muet, Caouette pushes the agrarian, patriotic, and religious virtues of the terroir to their limits, achieving not so much a novel as a romanticized religious tract. His idealized protagonist, Jean-Charles Lormier, may be best described as an ecclesiastical version

of the hero-as-frontiersman. Jean-Charles, the strong and modest son of simple habitants, wins military fame at sixteen, fights a wounded bear with his hands, defends his wastrel brother's reputation, respects his true love's decision to become a nun and, having dedicated his life to Christ, dies while celebrating mass. In every way, Jean-Charles is the paragon of nineteenth-century French-Canadian virtues. In his very perfection, however, this rural Bayard "sans peur et sans reproche" tends to close the door to further growth for heroes of his type. The moral question of how life should be lived has been answered, but the practical and political question of how the French-Canadian people is to survive and flourish remains, the problem addressed in Marie Chapdelaine.<sup>40</sup>

Even a superficial comparison of Le Vieux Muet and Marie Chapdelaine shows something of the adjustment which had to be made in French Canada's world-view to engage the political realities of the twentieth century. It was one thing to idealize "the golden past," but quite another to confront the decisions that had to be made by representatives of a changing Quebec. In Le Vieux Muet, Caouette shares the

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<sup>40</sup> Louis Hémon, Marie Chapdelaine: récit du Canada français (1914) (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1924). The impact in Quebec of this novel by a transient writer from France is reflected in Marie Chapdelaine: Évolution de l'édition 1913-1980 (Montréal: Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, 1980).

terroir world-view of both Lacombe and Gérin-Lajoie, whose work, as Mireille Servais-Maquoi points out, belongs to the "recettes de bonheur" of the previous century, while Hémon's belongs to the "sauvegarde de l'héritage" of a new era.<sup>41</sup>

Though she possesses neither the virago traits of Heywood's Women Worthies<sup>42</sup> nor the assertiveness of Nele, the irrepressible spirit of the common people in Tyl Ulenspiegl,<sup>43</sup> Maria Chapdelaine is an important guardian of her heritage. As woman--and hence as the traditional custodian of the race--she is able to encompass and preserve the conflicting ideals of habitant and coureur, and to imbue this union with new values as she passes it on to a new generation of canadiens. Like the Church to which she adheres, she is aware that the hand that rocks the cradle has a special power of its own. She is, as well, a hero with options and the power to choose; but she cannot vacillate between the opposing appeals of her suitors. Maria must

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41 Mireille Servais-Maquoi, Le Roman de la terre au Québec (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1947), pp. 21 and 45.

42 Eugene M. Waith, "Heywood's Women Worthies," in Concepts of the Hero in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, eds. Norman T. Burns and Christopher J. Reagan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), pp. 222-38.

43 Charles de Coster, Tyl Ulenspiegl (1869), trans. Allan Ross Macdougall (New York: Pantheon, 1943).

identify and declare her allegiance. And when she does this, the myth of French Canada is reborn with the power to transform the lives of habitant, coureur, and défricheur.

Adolescent Maria is called to adventure from her monotonous round of farm chores by François Paradis, a proud and handsome young man who has sold his farm and, in the spirit of the old coureurs, trades furs and works as a woodsman in the chantiers. In summer they plight their troth amid the blueberries, and Maria experiences for the first time the dreams of young love. But winter turns their love into a road of trials on which isolation, loneliness, and anxiety are by no means the severest tests. Lost in a blizzard while trying to reach Maria, François dies in the wilderness; and Maria, turning to the world of common day, must choose between city life in the United States with Lorenzo Surprenant and a hard existence on the frontier as the wife of Eutrope Gagnon. As she ponders the attractions of the city, her mother's death tips the scales, ennobling the vision of frontier life and bringing to Maria a trinity of voices which reveal her destiny.

Each of these voices intensifies Maria's already deep feeling for French Canada as la patrie. The first voice reminds her of the Edenic qualities of the terroir; the second, of her language and cultural identity; the third,

of her responsibility to her ancestors and the "pays neuf où une racine ancienne a retrouvé son adolescence" (p. 251). Though these voices are presented as entirely natural ones, their tone conveys a sense of the supernatural and evokes an image of the pays d'en haut as mythic and even sacred ground. Together, these voices transform the message of Maria's personal duty into a vision of social destiny:

De nous-mêmes et de nos destinées, nous n'avons compris clairement que ce devoir-là: persister . . . nous maintenir. . . . Et nous nous sommes maintenus, peut-être afin que dans plusieurs siècles encore le monde se tourne vers nous et dise: Ces gens sont d'une race qui ne sait pas mourir. . . . Nous sommes un témoignage (p. 252).

As a witness and living testament to this destiny, Maria transcends the limits of the Preserver of Tradition, for her altered world-view includes the risk-taking coureur. If not the master of two worlds, she at least provides the neutral ground on which these opposing worlds can meet. Like the male protagonist in Sir Walter Scott's Waverley (1814), she is a passive hero standing between order and outlawry, conformity and freedom, and functioning, according to Georg Lukács, as a meeting place for these extremes.<sup>44</sup> But, where Waverley

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44 See Georg Lukács, The Historical Novel, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (London: Merlin Press, 1962). "Through the plot, at whose centre stands this hero," writes Lukács of Scott's protagonists, "a neutral ground is sought and found upon which the extreme opposing forces can be brought into human relationship with one another" (p. 36).

merely brings together, Maria unites. Her gift to society is a new appreciation of the mythic duality of tradition and change without which a nation cannot grow. Within her altered world-view, the coureur figure of François Paradis is subsumed into the collective myth, a lasting reminder of the ideal and potential of the pays d'en haut.

The world-views reflected in Maria Chapdelaine and The Imperialist indicate the contraction of French and British dreams of Empire produced by the Conquest and the American Revolution. Yet it was not so much these defeats themselves as the responses they elicited which dictated the paths fictional heroes would take in the two cultures. In French Canada, the Conquest launched "a species of revolution" continued by the French,<sup>45</sup> while in English Canada Imperialism pre-empted Loyalist sentiment before nationalism could begin.<sup>46</sup> Well into the twentieth century, the opposing currents of thought which Lower has ascribed to Canada and the United States could be discerned in the contrasting fictions of the two Canadas:

It was English upper-class romanticism, its feelings for the ritualized, stylized life ('it is not done') versus the democracy that had emerged from the forest with its empiric tests of utility and its lack of restraint. 47

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45 Lower, p. 222.

46 Lower, p. 349.

47 Lower, p. 139.

These positions were reinforced by the newness of Canada to British settlers and the long-standing familiarity of French Canadians with all aspects of the frontier; and perhaps most importantly by the early foundation that an indigenous hero, his potential for dialogue, and a rich oral tradition provided for Quebec literature. Edith Fowke, in her Foreword to Folktales of French Canada, cites Luc Lacourcière's account of the role of folklore in this foundation. "From the beginning of Canadian history to the middle of the nineteenth century," writes Lacourcière, the absence of a press, and other factors which denied French Canada a written literature, forced the growth of folklore and a flourishing oral tradition. Consequently, "this period, which appears to some historians as a new dark age, was truly the golden age of oral literature."<sup>48</sup> One need not look far to see the advantage of this oral tradition's dependency on native speech and environment. The resulting sense of belonging to the land gave a powerful impetus to French-Canadian literature when it appeared.

What are the other differences between the Preservers of Tradition who dominate the novel in both cultures well into the twentieth century? Essentially, they are differences in world-view. Though both are heroes of fidelity

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48 See Edith Fowke, Folktales of French Canada (Toronto: NC Press Limited, 1981), p. 7.

who may be seen as Outriders of their societies, each is faithful to a different vision of himself, the world, and his role in it. One is aristocratic, outward-looking and imperialistic; the other democratic, circumscribed and nationalistic. The first is the standard-bearer of an ideal imposed from afar; the second, a native protagonist rooted in North America. Yet both are pledged to world-views that are oriented to the past and offer no guarantee of a successful future. Perhaps the most important question affecting the development of these romantic visions of heroism as they move out of the nineteenth century is this: How will they fare under the impact of twentieth-century realism?

## Chapter II

### DECLINE OF THE ROMANTIC HERO

Non, nos romans ne sont pas des héroïdes,  
et nos romanciers estiment que l'ère de la  
chevalerie et des belles aventures est close.  
Ils ne manifestent pas le désir de nous pré-  
senter des hommes plus grands que nature,  
plus forts que l'infortune, des hommes main-  
tenant droite et haute la tête humaine parce  
que doués de vastes qualités de coeur et  
d'esprit.

--Charles Maurel,  
"Nos héros de romans"<sup>1</sup>

In many ways Canadian novels between the two World Wars reflected the search for a hero who would at last fully express what it meant to be Canadian, though each of the two founding European cultures conducted the search and responded to the absence of this ideal hero in a different way. The cri du coeur with which Charles Maurel denounced the unsatisfying heroes of Quebec fiction in 1945-46 might equally have been addressed by English-Canadian critics to their own literature. But what evoked fiery protest in Quebec became in English Canada merely a subject for rationalization or regret. In both cultures, "The Breakup of the Old Order"

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Maurel, "Nos héros de romans," Le Canada Français, XXXIII (1945-46), p. 350.

which has been said to characterize the wave of literary realism between the wars, subjected the hero to significant transformations.<sup>2</sup> But these transformations were produced by world-views so different that even the words for "survival," "Canadian" and "nation" conveyed different meanings in English and French. Consequently, though between-the-wars heroes in both cultures faced dilemmas of fidelity to the past, their responses to those dilemmas were by no means the same. While the French-Canadian hero agonized over how to transform and sometimes even reject the inhibiting past which had made him, the English-Canadian hero was forced to repress, deny or sublimate in imperialistic fervor his impulses toward freedom and autonomy.

In Quebec, Maria Chapdelaine's reaffirmation of dualism in the figure of the habitant/coureur may be seen as a re-creation of a condition similar to adolescence, in which conflicting desires for tradition and change are part of the process of growth. The result, for a considerable time, was a confused protagonist, unable to choose between opposing ideas which would later be the source of growth

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2 Ronald Sutherland, in Second Image (Toronto: New Press, 1971), p. 3, and The New Hero (Toronto: MacMillan, 1977), p. 6, refers to the evolution of the novel in both cultures as taking place in relation to three major interlocking themes: 1) The Land and the Divine Order; 2) The Breakup of the Old Order; and 3) The Search for Vital Truth.

through dialogue. As Falardeau observes of Jean-Charles Harvey's novels in general, "le héros se consacre fougusement à un idéal de liberté tout en ambitionnant de l'intégrer à des valeurs traditionnelles confusément mais puissamment ressenties."<sup>3</sup> In the same way, heroes in Rex Desmarchais's and Robert Charbonneau's novels (again considered generally) are seen as struggling to reject traditional values:

Ils cherchent la "vraie vie" mais ils situent celle-ci dans des modèles excessifs de pureté, d'abnegation, de renoncement qui sont plus exigeants que les modèles anciens. 4

These struggles, recurring so frequently in Quebec heroes between the wars that Falardeau calls them variations on a fundamental theme,<sup>5</sup> are clearly analogous to the struggle of the adolescent in rejecting parental values. The aim in both cases is the establishment or discovery of a new identity, and the method is dialogue, private or public.

In English Canada, loyalty to the status quo prohibited this kind of dialogue, which, if not repressed by the individual himself, was sure to be suppressed by official censure and public opinion. From the moment of

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3 Falardeau, "l'Evolution du héros," p. 17.

4 Falardeau, "l'Evolution du héros," p. 17.

5 Falardeau, "l'Evolution du héros," p. 17.

Confederation (as The Imperialist suggests), the native hero was trapped between his need for a national myth and his pledged allegiance to the myth of Empire. If he affirmed the new nation, he seemed to betray the ideal of Empire; if he affirmed the Empire, he left himself "open to the charge of denigrating Canadian nationhood," as Joseph Levitt points out in 1982.<sup>6</sup> Even to recognize the conflict between these loyalties was to put in question an English-Canadian's dedication to the nebulous but powerful Loyalist ideal. The result was a hero caught in the "double bind" of colonialism, since the national temper or ethos, according to F. W. Watt, "offered no adequate outlet (except emigration) for those who had criticisms, reservations or competing ideals."<sup>7</sup> In his examination of English Canada's literature of protest, Watt notes a number of "progressive" periodicals in the twenties and thirties, including the Canadian Mercury, which aimed at "the emancipation of Canadian literature,"<sup>8</sup> and he refers to the "searing protest" of Grove and Callaghan against "the rottenness of the social and political structure of the

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6 Joseph Levitt, A Vision Beyond Reach: A Century of Images of Canadian Destiny (Ottawa: Deneau, 1982), p. 30.

7 F. W. Watt, "Literature of Protest," Literary History of Canada, pp. 457-73.

8 Watt, p. 468.

day."<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the fictional hero himself did not rise in protest against the system, even in the two novels specially cited by Watt: Morley Callaghan's They Shall Inherit the Earth (1935) and Irene Baird's Waste Heritage (1939).

Most important to the hero's development in this period are the distinctly different paths of realism which appear: in English Canada, the avoidance of political implications critical of "the system"; in Quebec, the use of such implications for the purpose of social criticism. Thus, while English-Canadian realism focuses on climate, geography and environment to rationalize the Canadian condition, Quebec realism is engaged in rejecting--and simultaneously assimilating--its past. Within these trends, the colonial in his double bind and the coureur, now legitimized, continue to shape heroes of sacrifice, heroes of the land, and urban heroes who emerge as the Old Order breaks up or is otherwise transformed.

In English Canada, the most deeply rooted of these figures is the kind of protagonist who might be termed the hero of sacrifice. Born of the Loyalist response to the American Revolution and sanctified in a Loyalist myth "that

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9 Watt, p. 472.

took on the Christian process of agony, defeat and resurrection,"<sup>10</sup> he was a psychologically satisfying reply to ebullient heroes of the United States, a hero whose moral superiority was proven by his sacrificial suffering.

All heroes, of course, may be said to learn through suffering in their "constant movement from passion and ignorance towards freedom and knowledge of the truth," as William Gilman observes.<sup>11</sup> When this suffering goes beyond the temporary loss of security and expected tests of valour, however, and involves the sacrifice of freedom, sanity or life itself, the protagonist may appropriately be called a hero of sacrifice. The change by which such a hero becomes a myth involves a double transformation: first, the hero's rebirth in the memory of society; second, society's growing awareness of its preservation and renewal through his act. Two novels which attempt this transformation in the period between the wars are Ralph Connor's The Sky Pilot in No Man's Land<sup>12</sup> and Félix-Antoine Savard's Menaud, maître-draveur.

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10 Dennis Duffy, Gardens, Covenants, Exiles: Loyalism in the Literature of Upper Canada/Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 23.

11 William H. Gilman, "The Hero and the Heroic in American Literature: An Essay in Definition," in Patterns of Commitment in American Literature, ed. Marston LaFrance (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 9.

12 Ralph Connor, The Sky Pilot in No Man's Land (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1919).

Although The Sky Pilot in No Man's Land is a product of the First World War, its sacrificial hero recurs repeatedly in English-Canadian fiction. This essentially Christian figure--here the centre of a dramatic parable--dominates the novels of Morley Callaghan, casts its tragic light over the heroes of Frederick Philip Grove, and illuminates Colin McDougall's World War II novel of human sacrifice, Execution. While Canadian fidelity revivifies the Loyalist response in The Sky Pilot in No Man's Land, the still muscular Christianity of Victorian England animates a United Empire at war.<sup>13</sup>

In keeping with its high moral tone, The Sky Pilot opens in the invigorating air of an Edenic western Canada, which turn-of-the-century novelists tended to see as "the garden of the world."<sup>14</sup> Answering the call to war, evangelists Barry Dunbar and his father enlist as commissioned padre and sergeant in the service of their King and Empire.

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<sup>13</sup> Walter E. Houghton, in The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), points to the fame of Charles Kingsley, the country squire as muscular clergyman: "He lived his life 'for Esau and with Esau,' hunting, swimming, fishing--and preaching to the hard-riding squires and hard-fighting soldiers of Hampshire 'a healthy and manly Christianity, one which does not exalt the feminine virtues to the exclusion of the masculine.' It was this Christianity, which had considerable vogue in Victorian England, that was dubbed, not too unfairly, Muscular" (p. 204).

<sup>14</sup> Harrison, Unnamed Country, p. 30.

Young, cultured and superbly athletic, a musician and boxer as well as a devoted son, Barry is ideally prepared for his road of trials overseas. Before embarkation he proves as ready to challenge his Commanding Officer on the immorality of swearing and drinking as he is later to face physical danger at the front. In France, where his leadership and selflessness win the respect of his men, he meets Phyllis Vincent, a nursing assistant, and learns from his mortally wounded father that a Sky Pilot's duty is not to judge but to share. Fired by this gift of new understanding, Barry moves into battle, helping the wounded, comforting the dying, and later refusing leave when his exhausted men are re-committed to the front. Such heroic dedication can have only one end. Though he returns briefly to England and marries Phyllis, he is inexorably drawn back to the trenches, where he gives his life to save one of his men.

Here the novel falters, at the very point where a transformation of the hero might have taken place. Barry's death is not an effective analogue of the Son rejoining his Eternal Father; nor is the power in the gift of brotherly love for which he dies preserved in the promise of his pregnant wife to "carry on" (p. 349). The Sky Pilot presents a myth that fails in the evolution of the Canadian hero. The muscular Christianity exemplified by the young clergyman

is not mythically reborn in the heart of a people, British or Canadian, but fades to an ideal of sacrificial loyalty somewhere between the two. Despite the novel's religious tone, Barry's death is seen as final. Phyllis's conviction that she will "never see him again," but that nevertheless "God is Good" (p. 349) says little for earthly or heavenly empires. It serves more to underline the Loyalist inclination to sacrificial suffering.

This uncertain ending in a novel that might easily have combined imperial and national pride in victory with a final vision of rebirth seems to indicate the fundamental ambiguity in the Imperial Dream which is borne out by later novels. Within a decade of The Sky Pilot's appearance, Gander Stake, the hero of Robert Stead's Grain (1926), flatly refuses the same imperial call to arms, and the soldiers in Charles Yale Harrison's Generals Die in Bed (1930) present an uncompromising indictment of war and its instigators.<sup>15</sup> These reversals of imperial sentiment point once again to Canada's divided mind, which is as evident in diplomacy as it is in literature.

Politically, the period 1919-1939 is marked by an important series of steps in Canadian independence, including

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<sup>15</sup> See John Moss, A Reader's Guide to the Canadian Novel (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1981), pp. 263, 122.

Canada's insistence on signing the Treaty of Versailles (1921), exclusion of British signatories from the Halibut Treaty (1923), the shift from Empire to Commonwealth (1931) and Canada's delayed decision to enter World War II in 1939. Each of these steps to independence, however, is accompanied by Canadian insistence that the changes are technical and that the invisible ties of Empire are as strong as ever. This contradiction is one that literary critics tend to ignore and historians treat with delicacy. Carl Wittke, for example, writes in A History of Canada (1941):

Although the Great War stimulated the spirit of Canadian nationality and brought forth a new insistence by all political parties on complete national autonomy, this did not foreshadow a widespread desire to break the bonds binding the Dominion with the rest of the Empire, even though these bonds consist to a large extent of sentimental considerations. 16

In fiction and criticism of the period the causes of the divided mind are simply not confronted. English-Canadian novels between the wars ignore equally the anti-colonial temper of politics and the extraordinary opportunities for a national literature in Canada's new frontiers of the air.<sup>17</sup>

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16 Carl Wittke, A History of Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1941), p. 352. My point is that this socio-political thrust for autonomy did not emerge as literature. See Clara Thomas and John Lennox, William Arthur Deacon: A Canadian Literary Life (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).

17 For the history of two decades filled with aviation "firsts" which produced not a single novel dealing with this saga of the air, see J. R. K. Main, Voyageurs of the Air (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967) and Larry Millberry, Aviation in Canada (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979).

Here, it would seem, is a key to major differences between novels in the two cultures over a considerable period. In English Canada the gap between myth and reality was ignored or concealed, with "the great majority of novelists" content to provide readers with "some form of romantic escape."<sup>18</sup> A similar gap between social reality and social dream was recognized and attacked in French Canada. And, not surprisingly, these attacks met with severe and almost immediate reprisals from defenders of the status quo within Quebec itself.

As early as 1904, the publication of Rodolphe Girard's Marie Calumet was denounced by the Archbishop of Montreal and its author dismissed from his position with La Presse.<sup>19</sup> In 1914, Arsène Bessette's revealing novel of journalistic hypocrisy and corruption in Montreal, Le Débutant, was "completely ignored at the time of its publication."<sup>20</sup> In 1918, Albert Laberge's denunciation of the

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18 Desmond Pacey, "Fiction 1920-1940," Literary History of Canada, p. 659.

19 As Madeleine Dirschauer observes in The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 299. See also Jean Richepin's preface to Marie Calumet (Montréal: Editions Serge Brousseau, 1946), pp. 9-13.

20 Annette Hayward, "Novels in French 1900 to 1920," The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature, p. 596.

grimness of rural life in La Scouine scandalized the clergy and earned him the title of "le père de la pornographie au Canada."<sup>21</sup> In 1934, Jean-Charles Harvey categorically condemned the clergy and Quebec civil power in Les Demi-civilisés and, as a result, says Ramon Hathorn, "was for many years a pariah" in his own society.<sup>22</sup>

The effect of this clash between the forces of tradition and change was not elimination of the myth of the terroir, but, as Guy Monette observes, a rift in Quebec literature of the period:

The novels seem to be characterized by conventionality on the one hand and by a marked deviation from it on the other. The deviation, which consisted chiefly of innovative literary techniques, was insidious because it finally broke down the norms established by the nationalistic ideology of conservatism. 23

A further effect of this conflict was an increased emphasis on the novel of the land:

Since a magnification of the rural world is one of the components of the ideology of conservatism, this period saw the novel of the land reach its highest point, both quantitatively (by following the ideological norm) and qualitatively (by deviating from it through realism). 24

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21 Servais-Maquoi, p. 100. Much of Laberge's impact, of course, was by reputation, since publication of this book did not take place until considerably later.

22 The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature, p. 338.

23 Guy Monette, "Novels in French 1920 to 1940," The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature, p. 598.

24 Monette, p. 599.

This deviation, however, which was to set Quebec fiction on a new path, owed less to innovative techniques than to the appearance of the liberated coureur as Agent of Change on the contested ground of Quebec's cultural dialogue.

From this dialogue emerged such influential novels as Félix-Antoine Savard's Menaud, maître-draveur (1937) and Ringuet's Trente Arpents (1938).

Menaud, maître-draveur<sup>25</sup> is the story of an aging "boss of the river-drive" who suddenly sees the danger of assimilation by the English and is plunged, like Maria Chapdelaine, "dans l'univers de sa conscience."<sup>26</sup> As the novel opens, its hero, a hardy sixty-year-old widower, enjoys the best of two worlds, alternately farming his land in a habitant community and living a coureur's life on the river or roaming his ancestral mountain. Overnight, however, he is called to adventure by the words of Maria Chapdelaine and sees in his English employers those "étrangers" who have acquired "presque tout le pouvoir" (p. 13). Now they threaten to take over his ancestral land, helped by

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25 Félix-Antoine Savard, Menaud, maître-draveur (Montréal: Fides, 1945).

26 Réjean Robidoux and André Renaud, in Le Roman canadien-français du vingtième siècle (Ottawa: Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa (1966), present parallels in crisis and character between Menaud and Maria Chapdelaine (pp. 32 ff).

treacherous men like le Délié.

Keeping his fears in check, Menaud leads a logging crew, including his only son Joson, into the ambiguous ancient forest. Re-living the past around campfires by night, travelling by day, alternately inspired and threatened by the natural world, they approach their goal, the dangerously swollen river Noire. Here, attempting to clear a log-jam, Joson is drowned, and Menaud crosses the threshold into a world of grief and guilt. Convinced that he has betrayed his son and his people, Menaud buries Joson and retires from life with his daughter Marie. But his road of trials is not yet over. The English proceed legally to lease the ancestral mountain, and le Délié, confident of his power, approaches Menaud to bargain for Marie in marriage. Furious, Menaud drives him away. But the community is already divided between those willing to sell the land and those who would fight to retain it. In answer to an inner voice, Menaud sets off alone in winter to rouse patriots in defence of the land and almost perishes like François Paradis. A rescue party returns him to the community. But, for the old maitre-draveur there is no magic flight back to the world of common day. A sad, mad figure shouting his warnings against "les étrangers," he unknowingly confers on society the gift of his tragic experience. Josime, an old patriot, perceives its

meaning. "C'est pas une folie comme une autre!" he tells his neighbours. "Ca me dit, à moi, que c'est un avertissement!" (p. 152).

Menaud, maître-draveur is a landmark in the growth and self-awareness of the French-Canadian hero as representative of his society. In the crisis of a social fragmentation held in check by the time-binding vitality of the old man's solidary vision of the past, Menaud himself may be seen as a reiteration and resolution of Quebec's duality. Underlying his adventure is the transfer of responsibility for la patrie from Maria Chapdelaine, who represents the fusion of coureur freedom and habitant responsibility, to Menaud, who imbues the coureur/habitant figure with action. Critics have noted the strong organic links between Maria Chapdelaine and Menaud, the symbiotic relationship between coureur and habitant spirits, and the importance of their symbolic union in coping with the forces of change.<sup>27</sup> Among the nascent values emerging from Savard's work, suggests Servais-Maquoi, "héritage et héritiers se mêlent, se confondent dans une quasi-identification."<sup>28</sup> A new relationship is born between the once-conflicting ideas of freedom and le terroir:

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<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Robidoux and Renaud, pp. 34 ff and Servais-Maquoi, pp. 72 ff.

<sup>28</sup> Servais-Maquoi, p. 75.

Dans l'optique de l'auteur, la liberté de la race canadienne-française se confond avec la certitude de conserver la terre héritée, de sauvegarder l'intégrité de ce patrimoine. . . . Le héros de Mgr Savard--qui est l'homme canadien-français--ne peut vivre que dans la mesure où il est libre. Et il ne peut être libre que dans la mesure où sa terre lui appartient. 29

This same mystical fusion of man and his land, hinting at a profound identity which they somehow share, imbues Menaud's tragic defeat with intimations of ultimate victory.<sup>30</sup> Not only is the sacrificial victim received back into the community, where his voice is heard as prophetic, but the very ideals which his adventure failed to actualize reappear harmoniously alive in the author's larger world-view. It is Menaud's mind, not his vision, which breaks under the strain. Sustained and intensified by a web of cultural metaphors, this unifying vision reaches into the past beyond Maria Chapdelaine, to evoke the heroes of Louis Fréchette's La Légende d'un peuple (1887) and echo the tocsin of F.-X. Garneau's "Le dernier huron" (1840).<sup>31</sup> Across almost a century it repeats the message of La Terre

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29 Servais-Maquoi, p. 77.

30 Robidoux et Renaud, p. 40.

31 François-Xavier Garneau's "Le dernier huron," although published in 1840, has its psychological roots in the Conquest and the Rebellion of 1837. Behind its Indian mask, it is a warning to French-Canadians that their race, too, may disappear.

paternelle, that without the risk-taking actions of the Agent of Change, neither the Preserver nor the tradition he is trying to maintain will survive. It is in this sense, as inspired time-traveller and conscience of his people, that Menaud reaches his full stature. He is a hero conscious of his destiny and aware that it is rooted in Canadian soil.

Although Barry and Menaud may be seen as equally faithful heroes following different cultural paths, Menaud's sense of being one with the land lends his character a more passionate intensity. As the maître-draveur's patriotism rises to the point of madness, the young clergyman's acquiescent sacrifice, free of such deep ties to place and unrelieved by intimations of immortality, is a measure of the waning power of the Loyalist Dream. Nevertheless, a comparison of protagonists as different as a British-born chaplain and a Canadian-born habitant/coureur leaves a number of questions concerning man and the land unanswered. How will future Canadian heroes compare when they are judged on the basis of a common agrarian myth? May not the fresh start implicit in the Breakup of the Old Order give rise to a protagonist rooted firmly in English-Canadian soil? What are the lessons to be learned in the two cultures from the myth of man and the land?

In many countries, the rapid growth of technology in the twentieth century gave rise to fears that the human psyche would be destroyed, that humanity would not survive the dangers of its own inventions. "A feeling of powerlessness has become rife," wrote Karl Jaspers in 1931, "and man tends to regard himself as dragged along in the wake of events which, when in a more sanguine mood, he had hoped to guide."<sup>32</sup> In Canada, where this undertow dominated novels such as Robert Stead's Grain (1926) and Frederick Philip Grove's Our Daily Bread (1928) and Fruits of the Earth (1933), the Breakup of the Old Order provided a more obviously shared ground for comparison of heroes of the land in both cultures.

The thematic similarities between Ringuet's Trente Arpents and Grove's Our Daily Bread detailed in Sutherland's Second Image<sup>33</sup> are evident, too, in a comparison of Trente Arpents<sup>34</sup> and Fruits of the Earth.<sup>35</sup> The heroes of both fictions, Euchariste Moisan and Abe Spalding, are obsessed with the desire to possess land. Both enjoy early success,

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<sup>32</sup> Karl Jaspers, Man in the Modern Age (1931), trans. Eden and Cedar Paul (New York: Doubleday, 1951), p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> Sutherland, Second Image, pp. 6-9.

<sup>34</sup> Ringuet (Philippe Panneton), Trente Arpents (1938) (Montréal: Fides, 1973).

<sup>35</sup> Frederick Philip Grove, Fruits of the Earth (1933) (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969).

sacrificing loyal and long-suffering wives to their obsession, and both end in failure and defeat, their values rejected by their children, their dreams denied.

A further similarity is the apparent breakdown of the monomyth, which event precludes fulfillment of either the Preserver of Tradition or the Agent of Change. Neither Abe nor Euchariste is reborn through his adventure, nor is either of their societies preserved or renewed. Both seem victims of an overwhelming fate. Although Abe may be said to obtain the gift of tragic awareness, his final vision is of a diminished world ruled by a hostile destiny:

The moment a work of man was finished, nature set to work to take it down again. . . . This great mechanical age was bound to come to an end; and the resources of the planet would be scattered all over its surface (p. 134).

The same sad note sounds the end of Euchariste's dream in Trente Arpents:

Ce sont les choses qui ont décidé pour lui, et les gens, conduits par les choses (p. 238).

Yet shared themes do not of themselves prove cultural kinship,<sup>36</sup> any more than the apparent breakdown of the monomyth

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<sup>36</sup> Paul Stuewe, for example, in "Beyond Survival," Books in Canada, XII (February 1983), points to the danger in comparing themes which are so general as to be banal. To conclude that a work of fiction "displays the themes of . . . love, the complexity of human relationships and the subtlety of truth," he suggests, "is about as insightful as presenting sodium and chloride as themes of salt," since "it is in fact difficult to think of any worthwhile imaginative writing not characterized by concern with . . . love, the complexity of human relationships and the subtlety of truth" (p. 9).

in times of stress proves the failure of Myth. In spite of their thematic similarities, Fruits of the Earth and Trente Arpents employ different myths, attack different myths, and play radically different roles in the history of the hero's evolution. Both protagonists end as spiritual orphans in the universe, but for different reasons and with clearly different results.

Abe Spalding represents a myth of the American frontier, imported to Canada and defeated by the myth of a destiny hostile to man's pride. From his initial appearance as a risk-taker engaged in the traditional American activity of "moving on," Grove's epic hero, the huge, taciturn seeker of his unique destiny, seems a natural outcropping of the Adamite myth. He is an Agent of Change with the independence, self-reliance and belief in the future of the American pioneer.

But Spalding is fatally flawed with materialism, that philosophy of secular success the American mythos was able to assimilate at an early stage,<sup>37</sup> but which neither

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37 Sacvan Bercovitch, in The American Jeremiad (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), writes: "The Yankee Jeremiahs . . . substituted a regional for a biblical past, consecrated the American present as a movement from promise to fulfillment, and translated fulfillment from its meaning within the closed system of sacred history into a movement for limitless secular improvement" (p. 93).

Grove in A Search for America (1927) nor Loyalists in Canada could accept. The compulsion to dominate the land and outdo his neighbours, which makes Abe "a hero and a saga-figure" (p. 85), is motivated by a form of hubris and leads to the punishment of the Over-Reacher: "fate and circumstances seem to conspire to mock Abe's dream."<sup>38</sup> It is worth noting that the goal of this dream is neither Adamite freedom nor terroir identity, but conquest. Abe's vision of a prairie empire as The Promised Land--with its sense of moral superiority, its lack of Canadian nationalism,<sup>39</sup> and its Old World faith in an established, unseen order--is entirely in harmony with Harrison's description of the vision that characterized the settlement of the Canadian West, and with Duffy's view of Loyalism in Upper Canada.<sup>40</sup>

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38 M. G. Parks, Introd., Fruits of the Earth, p. xi.

39 See Stanley E. McMullin, "Grove and The Promised Land," in The Canadian Novel in the Twentieth Century, ed. George Woodcock (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1945), for Grove's own definition of his role as "spokesman of a race --not necessarily in the ethnographic sense; in fact not at all in that sense; rather in the sense of a stratum of society which cross-sectioned all races" (p. 35).

40 Duffy, in Gardens, Covenants, Exiles, implies a merging of heavenly and earthly covenants. On the one hand, Canada's "preservation and enhancement signified the role that morality played in history." On the other, "That Canada existed at all testified to the strength of the covenant between two parties, the colonials and the imperial power" (p. 8).

In keeping with this world-view, Abe emerges as a protagonist of tragic stature. He is a driven patriarch whose tragedy lies in the disintegration of his dream. In Douglas Spettigue's words, Abe "stands above the settlers of his district like an island out of the sea," a being of superior capacity and will. "But in Grove as in Greek tragedy," Spettigue reminds us, "the stature of a leader is no defence against his 'fate.'"<sup>41</sup>

In his role as archetypal pioneer challenging the untamed wilderness, Abe commits a crucial error. He is determined to conquer the land. His fate is to see his vision of a greening empire eroded by nature and brought to dust like the foundations of his once proud home. What Spettigue calls the saving grace of "willpower that returns Abe Spalding to his duty as natural leader of Spalding District"<sup>42</sup> falls short of full restoration. As Fruits of the Earth ends, Abe is a bowed figure in a diminished universe and, in this, typical of Grove's tragic heroes. The same pervasive mood of hostile fate hovers over Grove's Two Generations and Our Daily Bread. In each case, the established unseen order fails

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41 Douglas O. Spettigue, Frederick Philip Grove (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1969), p. 104.

42 Spettigue, p. 109.

to support the expansionist dream. The hyper-idealistic hero is left unfathered in space and time, more spiritually isolated than when his adventure began.

A similar fate seems to befall the French-Canadian hero during the Breakup of the Old Order in Quebec. Yet the differences in myths and heroes are significant. Euchariste Moisan, for example, whose name evokes images of Holy Communion and harvest, cannot be unfathered in the Christian sense of being deserted by God, for the logos governing Trente Arpents is an ancient, pagan version of Fortune's wheel, on which Euchariste, as Everyman, rises and falls in strict obedience to the wheel's unvarying revolution. The result is a regressive leap from a vision of man free to choose to one of man inexorably bound by his environment. In Trente Arpents the terroir myth is turned upside down. The controlling metaphor is Fortune's wheel, and the unheroic hero is Fortune's pawn, his narrow destiny locked to the four seasons of the year, as Servais-Maquoi points out.<sup>43</sup> Consistent with this unvarying cycle, the final image of the novel is not Euchariste Moisan, but the symbol of Fortune's wheel, la terre:

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43 Servais-Maquoi, p. 152.

. . . la terre dont là-bas la vie continue sans  
 lui . . . la terre qui avant lui, avec lui,  
 après lui, rest immuable, éternelle et indif-  
 férente aux malheurs de ceux qu'elle a nourris.<sup>44</sup>

In many ways, Euchariste's fall is similar to Abe Spalding's. Yet the two novels have entirely different effects on the literatures in which they appear.

Although Trente Arpents is not the first novel to undermine the idealized vision of the terroir,<sup>45</sup> Ringuet's powerful realism probably deals the terroir myth its heaviest blow. Against the positive vision which sustains both Jean Rivard and Maria Chapdelaine, this revelation of the dark underbelly of the terroir world, equally cyclic but stripped of God and devoid of aim, presents an opposing world-view that cannot be ignored. It must be destroyed or accepted, or somehow brought into balance with the earlier myth. Later authors might avoid or ignore the anti-terroir fact, but they would not be able to avoid being read in the context of dynamic contraries highly conducive to the dialogue that Lewis and Trilling find essential to cultural growth. In contrast with this, Fruits of the Earth, repeating The Imperialist's pattern of an idealistic hero brought

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44 Servais-Maquoi, p. 154.

45 Among the outspoken predecessors of Trente Arpents, for example, are Albert Laberge's La Scouine (1918) and Claude-Henri Grignon's Un Homme et son péché (1933).

low by hostile destiny, does not find itself confronting a strong opposing world-view. Thus, it reconfirms the Loyalist myth "as a model of exile, discontinuity and loss,"<sup>46</sup> and inhibits the emergence of dialogue or debate.

The breakup of an old order, which is also the birth of a new order, seldom follows an exact chronology, pattern or plan. It may be marked, as in Quebec, by a series of literary explosions, confrontations, and demands for change, or, as in English Canada, by a deep, scarcely perceptible "sea change" whose meaning becomes clear only in retrospect. In both cases, however, myths continue to exert their influence, as may be seen in two novels of the thirties dealing with the search for selfhood and kinship in the unreceptive technological city. First published in 1934, Morley Callaghan's They Shall Inherit the Earth<sup>47</sup> and Jean-Charles Harvey's Les Demi-civilisés dramatize the increasing gap between hero figures in English and French Canada. In the first, an alienated genteel hero, implicitly a Preserver of Tradition, suffers the consequences of pride and atones for his moral error in a hostile universe; in the second, a

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46 Duffy, p. 107.

47 Morley Callaghan, They Shall Inherit the Earth (1934) (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969).

rebellious Agent of Change explodes on the urban scene to battle a corrupt society.

As They Shall Inherit the Earth begins, its hero, Michael Aikenhead, has fled his father's affluence for a rented room in the city, where he awaits the call to adventure and searches daily for work as an engineer. On a visit to his father's country home, he becomes indirectly responsible for the drowning of his step-brother, David Choate. Police rule the death accidental. But Michael, who has concealed his role in the drowning, has crossed the threshold of his accusing conscience, and rumours linking his father with Choate's death deepen his anxiety. A road of trials, through guilt and remorse to forgiveness and self-acceptance, leads Michael across three testing grounds: the paternal home of his childhood, the secular city, and a wolf hunt in the wilderness.

Sustaining the hero in his trials is Anna Prychoda, an earth-mother who becomes his mistress and later his haven from alienation when the wolf hunt convinces him that he is alone in a hostile world. Dwarfed by a vast and threatening universe, Michael repents his overweening pride and is granted the reward of perceiving that the secret of life is not to judge, but to share. When he learns that Anna is pregnant, he is glad. Returning to the city, they marry

and, in a moment of crisis at the hospital, Michael is able to pray for Choate's forgiveness and God's mercy before the birth of his son symbolizes the hero's gift of renewal to society. Subsequently, as he achieves atonement with his earthly father and restores family unity, it is clear that his life is to be narrower but deeper, his world and its possibilities reduced but enriched by moral vision and human ties. His world-view is one that British refugees from the American Revolution would have understood.

Mirroring a century of rapidly changing values, They Shall Inherit the Earth presents a hero neither fully Preserver of Tradition nor Agent of Change, but rather, as F. W. Watt points out, "a type of the secularized modern man . . . without ideals or faith" whose "pride, solitariness and independence" are "a personal analogue of the universal inhumanity, sickness, or sin of the time."<sup>48</sup> Yet this hero clearly participates also in the vision Loyalism helped to produce. As Duffy suggests, his is "a habit of mind that emphasizes loss and the prospect of loss, the fall of traditions of civility," and a generally negative attitude that persists to this day.<sup>49</sup>

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48 F. W. Watt, Introd., They Shall Inherit the Earth, p. viii.

49 Duffy, p. 132.

Michael Aikenhead's world-view is dominated by two powerful elements of English-Canadian myth, the "wilderness terror" which generates a "garrison mentality"<sup>50</sup> and an "inhibiting Calvinist tradition" which, as Sutherland indicates, includes belief in man's total depravity, God's divine grace, and an eternal salvation available only to the "elect."<sup>51</sup> Throughout his parable of exile, guilt, repentance, and atonement, Michael's vision is one of postlapsarian man and hostile nature in which the horizon of solidarity recedes before him, much as the horizon of Empire receded before his ancestors. Having eaten the apple of the tree of knowledge and lost his childhood Eden, he rejects a corrupt society--his father's false world of advertising, Huck Farr's wolfish individualism, and Bill Johnson's Communism--and flees to primitive nature. Here, however, as he listens to the "threatening wolf's moan . . . out of the core of the hostile world" (p. 193), he experiences the deep terror which Frye describes as a cardinal theme of English-Canadian literature:

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50 Frye, Conclusion to Literary History of Canada, pp. 830-31.

51 Sutherland, Second Image, pp. 62-63.

It is not a terror of the dangers or discomforts or even the mysteries of nature, but a terror of the soul at something that these things manifest. The human mind has nothing but human and moral values to cling to if it is to preserve its integrity or even its sanity, yet the vast unconsciousness of nature in front of it seems an unanswerable denial of these values. 52

Whatever the psychological validity of this theory, the religious turn it gives to terror in English-Canadian literature is apt. In the case of Michael Aikenhead, problem and solution are equally, to use the term broadly, Calvinistic. Repenting his error of pride and turning to Anna (whose name means "grace"), the hero is gratuitously awarded the gift of faith, his father's forgiveness, and love. Presumably Michael will find fulfillment in the family circle which, as the novel closes, his father is about to join.

Yet it is difficult to erase the image of Michael as a protagonist out-faced and dwarfed by hostile destiny, content, in the end, to live in a diminished world. Like Lorne Murchison in The Imperialist, he finds society offensive to his ideals and is reduced to anonymity on its fringes; like Barry Dunbar in The Sky Pilot in No Man's Land, he agrees not to judge, and thereby forfeits a voice in his own destiny; and like Grove's Abe Spalding, he repents his pride but fails to find a home within society. All of these

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52 Frye, Conclusion to Literary History of Canada, p. 830.

heroes are faithful upholders of an imperial or biblical ideal who are somehow denied fulfillment of their dream. Unable or unwilling to deepen and extend their Canadian roots, they cannot find the "great good place" that pioneer heroes in Quebec and the United States have been able to see in the here and now. They are consequently denied the kind of frontier vision that enriches Gérin-Lajoie's Jean Rivard, le défricheur (1862) and extends across more than a century of American fiction, from James Fenimore Cooper's The Pioneers (1823) to Conrad Richter's The Trees (New York: Bantam, 1952).

The argument may be advanced that in French Canada, too, the hero suffers rebuffs, is battered by misfortune, and experiences defeat. True, but these experiences are rendered more bearable by commitment to a common cause, and energized by the surrounding cultural dialogue. Opposing terroir and anti-terroir ideas, intensified by novels such as Jean-Charles Harvey's Marcel Faure and Lionel Groulx's l'Appel de la race, both published in 1922, create something other than a myth of hostile destiny. They provide the basis and impulse for a debate which transforms both hero and author as they internalize and begin to come to terms with the duality of Quebec. Marcel-Aimé Gagnon makes the point in a biography of Jean-Charles Harvey, emphasizing

the degree to which the author and the hero of Les Demi-civilisés are one. Both categorically reject religious absolutism and sexual taboos, recreate a romantic vision of the past, condemn the evils of bourgeois society, and dedicate themselves to libertarian ideals and human dignity.

"Max Hubert," Gagnon continues, "est un personnage authentique. C'est Jean-Charles Harvey à peine dissimulé."<sup>53</sup> In the same way that Max Hubert is a "précurseur de l'homme québécois," Harvey is a "précurseur de la révolution tranquille."<sup>54</sup>

Max's story begins in the poor and mystical "pays de montagnes et d'eau" of an idealized rural Quebec (p. 13). A fatherless boy of mixed ancestry,<sup>55</sup> Max is torn between a call to priesthood and his yearning for worldly adventure. He receives unexpected aid and advice from a heretical old

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53 Marcel-Aimé Gagnon, Jean-Charles Harvey. Précurseur de la révolution tranquille (Montréal: Beauchemin, 1970, p. 59).

54 Robert Major, in Parti pris: idéologies et littérature (Ville LaSalle: Editions HMH, 1979), writes: "La décolonisation est véritablement création d'hommes nouveaux. Mais cette création ne reçoit sa légitimité d'aucune puissance surnaturelle: la 'chose' colonisée devient homme dans le processus même par lequel elle se libère" (p. 96).

55 As Gagnon points out, "Max a les mêmes origines que celle de l'auteur de l'ouvrage. . . . un mélange de normand, de highlander, de marseillaise et de sauvage" (p. 59), which might be taken to imply that these are the roots of the true Canadian.

sailor, Maxime, who leads the boy to self-confidence, candor and a generous humanitarian world-view. Soon after Maxime's death, circumstances force Max and his mother to move to the city, where Max tries to rescue them from poverty by seeking a career in the Church, law, journalism and education in turn. Everywhere he is excluded, for the Quebec people, once proud and energetic pioneers, are now enslaved by a corrupt, authoritarian system. In a dream, Max wanders barren streets festooned with signs prohibiting every creative and individualistic activity. Finally he comes upon a hanged woman: "C'était la Liberté qu'on avait pendue!"

(p. 60).

Equally dreamlike are the elements of his salvation, which seem to spring from some folkloric myth. A beautiful goddess-figure (Dorothee Meunier) charms a wicked ogre (her rich father) into financing Max's dream of editing a new independent revue. In addition, Dorothee gives Max her undying love, demanding only that he be faithful to his high humanitarian ideals. "Je me fais une idée très haute de toi," says Dorothee, "et la pire déception de ma vie serait de te trouver, un jour, inférieur à elle" (p. 84).

With Dorothee as inspiration, mistress and soul-mate, Max builds his free-thinking Vingtième Siècle into the leading periodical in its field. But the crucial trial

of his career is yet to come. With no explanation, Dorothée enters a convent, and soon after this, reaction of the "establishment" to a controversial article by Max's colleague, Lillois, threatens the existence of the revue. Offered financial survival if he will submit to censorship, Max refuses, preferring ruin to the betrayal of his ideals and knowing the effect censorship would have on his readers:

Ignorez-vous [he asks Dorothée's father], que, le jour où vous aurez fait, de cette publication, une réplique du "Messager de Sainte-Euphémie", pas un des abonnés actuels ne voudra vous lire? Même les anciens, ceux qui nous ont abandonnés après l'affaire Lillois, vous dédaigneront (p. 167).

For Max there can be no magic flight back to the world of common day. In the adventure he has chosen, that world is inextricably mingled with the realm of night. Nevertheless, he will not forsake his friends:

Ce que vous me proposez là [he continues], ce n'est pas seulement un compromis avilissant, mais l'abandon de quatre à cinq mille amitiés solides et sincères au profit d'une bande de roués qui nous couvriront du mépris dont on accable toujours les lacheurs (p. 167).

In this context, as Guy Monette observes, literature is "a weapon for combat, and the fiction of the period usually presents characters that are more ideas than living people."<sup>56</sup> Yet the hero's stand against the worst destiny can impose

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56 Monette, p. 598.

is clear. As the drama moves to its wintry close, Dorothée flees the convent, loses her way in the freezing night, and finally reaches Max, only to die in his arms, assuring him that she will never leave him again.

This transfer of life and faith from his dying soul-mate to the hero takes place in much the same way in Le Débutant<sup>57</sup> and has important implications for Quebec literature. Despite the melodrama of the scene, it reveals in a fully integrated form the doubleness of the habitant/coureur hero, whose love of freedom is linked to a sense of social responsibility and who, like Menaud, is determined to reform as well as to endure.

Harvey's rebel hero, risking all, demanding social change, and ready, even in defeat, to spit in the eye of destiny, has no parallel in English-Canadian fiction between the wars. Although Max Hubert and Michael Aikenhead share sensitivity, high ideals, a lost Edenic childhood, and the

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57 In Arsène Bessette's Le Débutant (1914) (Montréal: Editions HMH, 1977), this dramatic transfer of sustaining spirit is even more specific. As his beloved Simone expires in his arms, "Paul Mirot vit passer dans ses yeux grands ouverts, toute son âme, qu'elle lui donnait" (p. 239). The implications of the death scene are lost and the meaning of the novel distorted, if not reversed, in the English version of Les Demi-civilisés titled Sackcloth for Banner, trans. Lukin Barette (Toronto: MacMillan, 1938), which not only implies repentance in its title, but ends on the priest's intonation of the De Profundis, setting aside the symbolic sense of Dorothée's death and her crucial last words.

battleground of a corrupt society, their attitudes and world-views are opposed. Michael's fate seems fixed in advance, a web or network of conditions he may come to know, but which he cannot alter and within which he must make do with whatever comfort he can find. For Max, on the other hand, destiny is open, a fulfillment to be won or lost through his own existential choice. In both cases these views seem consistent with the author's larger world-view as expressed in the novel. Michael's attempt to opt out of society, of course, is also a choice; but, conscious or unconscious, it is the opposite of Max's choice of confrontation. As each hero experiences the consequences of his choices, one finds atonement with his father, the other, wholeness within himself; one is diminished by his experience, the other enlarged; one presumes alienation, the other, solidarity.

Not surprisingly, differences in world-view can lead to differences in the meanings of words, in keeping with Ludwig Wittgenstein's much quoted maxim: "The boundaries of my language are the boundaries of my world."<sup>58</sup> For example, the seemingly equivalent expressions "survival" and "la

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<sup>58</sup> Wittgenstein's original statement, "Die Grenzen meiner Sprache bedeuten die Grenzen meiner Welt," appears as an epigraph to John Fletcher's New Directions in Literature (London: Calder and Boyars, 1968).

survivance," which Margaret Atwood unites as "the central symbol for Canada,"<sup>59</sup> have had different meanings in the two cultures from the earliest days. For the early British settler on Canada's harsh frontier, the crucial problem was physical survival; for the native canadien, accustomed to the rigors of frontier life, the problem under British rule was cultural and political survival. Thus in English Canada survival became a topic for literature, while in Quebec literature became a weapon for survival.<sup>60</sup> In each case tradition strongly influenced the scope of action. Between-the-wars novels in English Canada could probe all aspects of this topic except the political; in Quebec, the weapon long aimed outward for political survival was now turned inward as a weapon for political reform. Other expressions such as Canadian/canadien and nation/la nation, also retained the quite different meanings assigned them in their two solitudes. Emotionally cool and inclusive in their English forms, these expressions in French, as used in Quebec, are both exclusive and emotionally charged.

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59 Margaret Atwood, Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature (Toronto: Anansi, 1972), p. 32.

60 In Survival, Atwood points to an aspect of "Survivalism" in literature which tends to turn the hero into a perennial victim (p. 34). For literature as "a vehicle for ideology and a tool for propaganda" as well as for Quebec opposition to the "official view," see Shouldice, pp. 4-6 and other articles in his Contemporary Quebec Criticism.

In the expanding literary production of the 1920s and 1930s, however, such differences in meanings, and their effect on hero-figures, received scant attention. Desmond Pacey, a less vitriolic critic of the novels in this period than Charles Maurel, sees little in them that deserves remembering:

All that the best novelists of this period were able to do was to begin the process of turning the eyes of readers and fellow writers from a fabled past or a romanticized present towards the actual conditions of Canadian life. 61

Yet, with the possible exception of Irene Baird's Waste Heritage (1939), novels in English are little concerned with undesirable social conditions, and in no case do they attack their causes. It is rather the grandeur of spirit, the loss of which Maurel so angrily condemns in Quebec, that is missing in English Canada's heroes between the wars. In both literatures, the romantic Preserver of Tradition is gone. What seems less easy to define is the new hero-figure that takes his place.

In the English-Canadian novels engaged here, realism means the triumph of material environment over the hero's romantic vision, leading to a loss of confidence and an increased alienation of the hero from society. The same

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61 Desmond Pacey, "Fiction 1920-1940," Literary History of Canada, p. 658.

might be said of Trente Arpents. In Les Demi-civilisés and Menaud, maître-draveur, however, realism's attack on political objectives is conducted by a new romantic hero, the liberated habitant/coureur. In both of these cases, the hero suffers personal defeat but wins a striking moral victory. Separating heroes in the two cultures is the difference between a protagonist increasingly alienated and a protagonist increasingly engagé. Though the habitant/coureur is by no means free of inner conflict, the coureur side of his personality repeatedly overrides the habitant, leading him into battles that are external and political. In contrast, the genteel English-Canadian protagonist, faithful to an Order imposed from far away, subdues his rebellious inclinations and rationalizes his failure to put down Canadian roots.

In the decade of the forties, each of these hero types is re-tested in the conflagration of war.

### Chapter III

#### THE HERO AS WARRIOR

And how can man die better  
Than facing fearful odds,  
For the ashes of his fathers,  
And the temples of his Gods,

--Macaulay,<sup>1</sup>  
"Horatius"<sup>1</sup>

Or perhaps Camus is more to the essential point when he says, in L'Homme Révolté, that "the individualist cannot accept history as it is: he must destroy reality, not collaborate with it, in order to affirm his own existence". Which implies an utter revolt that has forced the conceptual Hero to give way to a new central type, whether Spartacus or Sebastian, the tortured Martyr.

--Sean O'Faoláin,<sup>2</sup>  
The Vanishing Hero<sup>2</sup>

War is the supreme challenge to the value the hero places on his relationship to his society, whether that society is envisioned as nation, regiment, family, or chance companions of the battlefield. It is this bond, surely, with the price it so often exacts--and not statistics, righteousness or mere adventure--that captures the imagination in

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Macaulay, Essays and Lays of Ancient Rome (London: Cassell and Company, 1909), p. 472.

<sup>2</sup> Sean O'Faoláin, The Vanishing Hero (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1956), p. 30.

war literature from Thermopylae to Dunkirk and Stalingrad. Historically, for a nation "carpentered" from the losing elements of the Seven Years' War and the American Revolution,<sup>3</sup> Canada's military achievements have ranked fairly high; high enough, at any rate, for the facts of history frequently to outshine the fiction intended to give them life. Behind this problem lies the failure of Canadian ideals to crystallize into a national ideology which might have provided a framework within which the native hero could be read.

Canadian images of the warrior-hero have never been sanctified by revolution nor transformed into mirrors reflecting how civilizations are altered by wars.<sup>4</sup> Canada's war fiction does not include the representative heroes nor the sweeping analysis of Ford Madox Ford's four-part Parade's End (1965) and Evelyn Waugh's three-volume Sword of Honour (1970), nor even a single novel or hero representative of the nation as a whole. "No Canadian author," as Sutherland looks back, "has ever achieved notable fame as a war novelist."<sup>4a</sup> Nevertheless, there is a Canadian war experience, at once poignant and informative, reflected, on one hand, in the

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3 Lower, p. 289.

4 That is not to say that no military spirit was present in Canada until World War II. See, for example, Maurice Lemire, Les grands thèmes nationalistes du roman historique canadien-français (Québec: les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1970).

4a Sutherland, The New Hero, p. 32.

emerging shape of a new Québécois hero, and on the other, in a variety of English-Canadian protagonists in uniform, each of whom experiences an inner conflict regarding his role as a soldier.

The persistence of this conflict in a variety of heroes implies an ambiguity in the mythos of English-Canadian literature. The historical solution to this ambiguity, in the re-mythologizing of the hero into an Agent of Change, will be dealt with in chapter IV. Our present concern is to examine the relationship between fictional heroes of World War II and analogous warriors of the classical past as the modern hero responds to war; that is, to the clash of fear and courage, savagery and nobility, selfishness and altruism, which every warrior must somehow resolve within himself. It is perhaps a commentary on Canada's traditional self-image as a peace-keeper that, in criticism and literature, these universal questions have not been more frequently or closely examined.

In the criticism of war literature in Canada, the universal paradoxes and ambiguities that variously challenge analysts such as Albert Camus in L'Homme Révolté (1951) and Andrew Rutherford in The Literature of War (1978), remain relatively unexplored. While Gérard Tougas comments favourably on both Jean-Jules Richard's Neuf Jours de haine (1948)

and Jean Vaillancourt's Les Canadiens errants (1954) in his Histoire de la littérature canadienne-française,<sup>5</sup> neither Desmond Pacey, in Creative Writing in Canada,<sup>6</sup> nor Hugo McPherson, in the Literary History of Canada,<sup>7</sup> finds Canadian war fiction worthy of serious notice. None of the 77 issues of Canadian Literature from 1959 to 1977 comments on Canadian war fiction,<sup>8</sup> and Northrop Frye, in his conclusion to the Literary History of Canada, makes no specific reference to the fiction or even fact of two World Wars. Instead, the prevailing view of the period of World War II as a literary watershed<sup>9</sup> tends to obscure its equally valid and critically more interesting role as a phase or stage for the hero's continuing development. As its influence on the

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5 Gérard Tougas, Histoire de la littérature canadienne-française (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1960), p. 203.

6 Desmond Pacey, Creative Writing in Canada (Toronto: Ryerson, 1961), p. 223.

7 Hugo McPherson, "Fiction, 1940-1960," in Literary History of Canada, pp. 715-716.

8 See Glenn Clever and Christine S. Clever, An Index to the Contents of Canadian Literature, Nos. 1-77 (Ottawa: Golden Dog Press, 1979).

9 See, for example, George Parker (ed.) The Evolution of Canadian Literature in English, 1914-1945 (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973) and the volume covering the years 1945-1970 edited by Paul Denham in the same series.

fictional hero shows, World War II is more than a handy marker for the chronological division of Canadian literature. And Ronald Sutherland's pioneer works, Second Image (1971) and The New Hero (1977), are forceful reminders of the usefulness of comparative analysis in assessing heroes in military as well as civilian roles.

In the refracted light of a half dozen novels--Hugh MacLennan's Two Solitudes (1945), Earle Birney's Turvey (1949), Jean Vaillancourt's Les Canadiens errants (1954), Lionel Shapiro's The Sixth of June (1955), Colin McDougall's Execution (1958) and William Allister's A Handful of Rice (1961)--chapter three of The New Hero examines the plight of protagonists caught in the tragic, brutalizing, absurd, and at times inspiring, heterocosm of war. Even so limited a selection, however, reveals the ambiguity afflicting the English-Canadian hero. Among these novels, only Les Canadiens errants presents a warrior-hero who consciously affirms his Canadian identity in positive terms. The Sixth of June deals with a non-Canadian hero; A Handful of Rice with the betrayal of Canadian prisoners of war by their own officers; Execution with the infliction of the death penalty on a Canadian soldier in Italy; Two Solitudes with the clash of cultures in Canada; and Turvey with the total absurdity of military life. These are not the only Canadian war novels, to be sure.

But expanding this list to include earlier novels such as Charles Yale Harrison's Generals Die in Bed (1928), and later works such as Douglas LePan's The Deserter (1964), R. J. Childerhose's Splash One Tiger (1964) and Timothy Findley's The Wars (1978), simply reinforces the impression of a hero who is not only ambiguous but representative in his ambiguity. Here, ambiguity itself becomes an aid to understanding, a specific analysable aspect of the fictional heroes of World War II.

In Second Image, Sutherland sees war as a crucial factor in the breakdown of moral values. In his view, the moral standards which had served man for centuries as guides to moral conduct were seriously weakened by events of the early twentieth century; but "it was World War II which administered the coup de grâce demonstrating once and for all that codes of morality are superficial rather than fundamental."<sup>10</sup> Sutherland's argument makes use of Jean Vaillancourt's Les Canadiens errants and Colin McDougall's Execution, and concludes that both novels reflect the final breakdown of moral values.

Since the moral values in these novels are revealed almost exclusively through the actions and reactions of

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<sup>10</sup> Ronald Sutherland, Second Image (Toronto: New Press, 1971), p. 139.

their protagonists, Sutherland's choice is particularly illuminating. Richard Lanoue and John Adam serve as Canadian infantrymen in Europe. Though their languages and cultural backgrounds differ, both are young and valiant soldiers, buffeted by the same devastating forces of war, and transformed by their experience. The similarity of conditions surrounding their tests and the clarity of their world views before and after this transformation make them rewarding subjects for analysis.

Execution is the story of John Adam's experience of war, guilt, and atonement in the 1943 Italian campaign.<sup>11</sup> Exhilarated with early success as he advances from the invasion beach to lead his platoon into Sicily, Lieutenant Adam--his biblical names recalling the first man and the prophet of the Apocalypse--feels a surge of personal pride. He has answered the call to adventure, crossed the threshold of battle and survived a warrior's initiation. But between Padre Philip Doorn, an idealist on God's crusade, and tough Brigadier Kildare, Adam occupies a dangerous middle ground. Pushed to unexpected moral decisions along his road of trials, the young officer betrays his sense of personal integrity three times.

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<sup>11</sup> Colin McDougall, Execution (Toronto: MacMillan, 1958).

The first of these betrayals occurs when two Italian deserters who have been serving as company cooks are ordered summarily shot. When Sergeant Krebs bungles the impromptu execution, Adam responds instinctively. But the blast from his sub-machine-gun which ends the captives' agony marks the beginning of his own. Guilt-ridden, he slogs deeper into battle, trying with soldierly competence and fierce concern for his men to forget his act. Around him the brutality of war continues. A British tank commander who befriends Adam has his head blown off in battle, and under the pressures of senseless killing, Doorn, the idealist, cracks and becomes a liability to the company Captain Adam now commands.

Adam's second betrayal stems from compassion for his men. Inured to fear by his obsessive guilt, he advances through slaughter as though bearing a charmed life, winning his majority and an M.C. only to face the dilemma of having to retain or reject the now useless Doorn. In an agony of guilt and pity, and against his own and the company's best interests, Adam keeps him.

In separate respites from battle, Adam meets two women, both of them spiritually mutilated by war. With the first--Elena, a prostitute who defensively insists that her lovers say "Io ti amo" before she beds them--Adam at first

rejects, then grudgingly accepts, her need for pretence. His flagrant lie, made in compassion, leaves him more acceptant of himself. With the second, Antonia, a sad, demented girl who has lost both husband and child to the war, Adam finds the gentleness and sensitivity he seeks. But a crisis of leadership cuts short their idyll in the sun. One of Adam's men, Private Jones, a retarded innocent who should never have been recruited, is on trial for a murder he did not commit.

It is this event which leads Adam into his third and final betrayal. Jonesy, although innocent in thought and deed, is trapped and condemned by circumstantial evidence and military necessity, a victim of the machinery of war. The Americans have already executed the men Jonesy innocently accompanied when they committed their crime, and Canadian authorities are convinced they must also follow through. All efforts to have the sentence commuted fail. As Adam's last desperate attempt to rescue Jonesy is blocked, it becomes clear that there can be no magic flight to safety for either of them. In a new perception of responsibility, Adam finally sees, as Padre Doorn saw before him, that he must not only accept, but participate in, this injustice if he is to give Jonesy the few shreds of comfort and dignity that can still be his in death.

Afterwards, as the columns roll north, Adam finds atonement and peace, his inner conflict resolved by the miracle of unmerited grace, symbolized by Jonesy's death. Though war and duty continue to lead him toward a future he cannot foretell, the spiritual quest has come full circle. Adam's adventure as Christian soldier is at an end.

From the standpoint of the hero as warrior, however, to see Execution solely in terms of Christian morality is to miss the point, since the classical ideal of the warrior based on "excellence" pre-dated that of the Christian soldier, or miles christianus, and is by no means extinct today.<sup>12</sup> Adam's inner conflict does not spring up as a natural response to human evil or modern war, but may be traced to the medieval clash between Christian humility and the warrior's pride, as R. R. Bolgar points out in "The Genesis and Development of the Miles Christianus"<sup>13</sup> and Bruce Wardroper confirms in "The Epic Hero Superseded."<sup>14</sup> We may also assume,

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12 See, for example, André Malraux's Le temps du mépris (1935) as well as James W. Greenlee's Malraux's Heroes and History (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1975), especially chapter 10: "Souls without God or Christ."

13 Burns and Reagan, pp. 120-44.

14 Burns and Reagan, pp. 197-220.

as Bernard Huppé suggests in "The Concept of the Hero in the Early Middle Ages," that

. . . the antithesis between the heroic and the saintly as ideals presented a primary problem to the Christian writer, who first lived with the vivid memory of a pagan heroic ideal and then faced the Viking attacks upon Christendom which called for a warrior-like heroic response. 15

The problem of the warrior must have been even more severe, for Christianity, in so far as it accepted the profession of arms, demanded nothing less than a new kind of warrior-hero, one whose message was not pride, but humility, and whose goal was conquest, not of others, but of self, as in the "parfit gentil knight" of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. For the aspiring warrior, the very idea of humility as a virtue ran against the grain, particularly in Greek thought. As J. A. Robinson notes in his exposition of Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians:

To the Greek mind humility was little else than a vice of nature. It was weak and mean-spirited; it was the temper of the slave; it was inconsistent with the self-respect which every true man owed to himself. The fulness of life, as it was then conceived, left no room for humility. 16

In the light of this clash, which is the central struggle of the miles christianus, war poses a profound metaphysical

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15 Wardroper, p. 8.

16 J. Armitage Robinson, St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (London: James Clarke and Company, 1904), p. 91.

question, which, by its very nature, is not answerable in logical terms. All that the person facing the question can do is try to come to terms with the absence of answer, which means finding an attitude or state of being which will somehow render the intolerable tolerable. This is what Major Bazin finds in a moment of grace born of the paradox that man fully realizes himself "only under the savage scourge of war," with his life in forfeit and "all his self-doubts . . . cancelled, or suspended at least, for the duration of the interval" (p. 48). And it is what Adam manages to convey when Jonesy, on the eve of his execution, asks with childlike simplicity why he is to be shot. In a moment of insight, Adam transcends the conventional reckoning of God's mysterious ways and gives the condemned man a warrior's response:

"Jonesy, [he says] You've done nothing wrong. You've never done anything wrong in your life. Now, you're not to think of that any more; just forget it completely. Pretty soon the padre and I will be back for that game of cards" (p. 210).

This fitting reply to the unanswerable question sustains Jonesy in his crisis and is a sign, in Adam, of the warrior's code of excellence.

Yet, like Major Bazin's response to the paradox of war, it cannot balance the weight of Christian morality surrounding it. As miles christianus, Adam is bound to

Christian agapé and compassion. From his initial self-image as a conquering hero to his final suffering at "the core of all humanity" (p. 223), the conflict arising from this duality is the crux of the drama. And it is one that links the medieval warrior with the recurring Preserver of Tradition in the English-Canadian novel.

Adam's close kinship with Barry Dunbar and Michael Aikenhead is clear, in his gentility, social status, education, sensitivity, respect for women and high moral stance, as well as in the search for selfhood shared by all three. In true Preserver style, Adam twice finds himself under a cloud, but restores his reputation by a socially-approved demonstration of gallantry, typifying rather than exceeding the virtues and norms of his society. Significantly, many people, including Brigadier Kildare, attempt to help Jonesy in his final hours. As a result, Adam is saved from becoming a rebel and an Agent of Change, and is gently brought back to social conformity by Doorn, the man of God. In the end his social position is assured.

Nevertheless, he seems trapped in a closed system. Like Michael Aikenhead in They Shall Inherit the Earth, he achieves atonement only through the unmerited miracle of divine grace, and pays for it, as the novel ends, with a sadly reduced vision of humanity:

Each of them, in his fashion, was a good man. The trouble was that they were men, and being such, they were caught up in the strangling nets which man's plight cast over them: they could not always act the way their goodness wanted them to (p. 223).

Given this powerlessness in the face of destiny, what saving insight can the hero bring back to the world of common day, unless it be acceptance of his fate? As mythic hero, Adam does not become the master of two worlds or even one, for even his sought-for selfhood seems problematical. If he is "restored," it can hardly be to the prelapsarian innocence of what he had been "before Sicily" (p. 218), but only to a condition in which he can feel blameless for being caught in the nets of a system (or tradition) which must not be challenged, even when it cannot be understood.

Execution confirms the inner conflict of the miles christianus as that of the English-Canadian Preserver of Tradition, that is, as the conflict of a sensitive, morally superior idealist forced by an implacable fate to accept existence in a diminished world. Yet this moral victory, the result of divine intervention rather than of the hero's efforts, raises questions about the opposing element in Adam's conflict, the warrior's code. May not war also evoke a chivalric response in keeping with this older code, teaching lessons other than repentance of sin (as it did for Jonesy) and providing an answer for the unanswerable question

(as it did for Major Bazin)? The question has wide implications. Is it possible for a Canadian fictional hero to find an ideal other than God, as Malraux's heroes do in Le temps du mépris and L'espoir? What is the character and world-view of French Canada's hero-as-warrior? And how does he compare with his English-Canadian counterpart?

Richard Lanoue provides a thought-provoking answer to these questions in Les Canadiens errants.<sup>17</sup> Unlike Major Adam, Lanoue is neither an officer nor a gentleman, but a coureur, French Canada's long-established symbol of the uncommon common man. As his battalion undergoes its baptism of fire in Normandy, Lanoue comes into focus as part of a group forging its identity in combat. In the midst of enemy shelling, while his comrades tremble or pray, Lanoue experiences an uplifting vision in which a mysterious spirit watches over him to the heroic music of a Beethoven symphony. This moment marks the birth of the coureur-warrior and is a turning point, though not the beginning, of the hero's adventure as an Agent of Change.

From the beginning, however, Lanoue shares the tradition of the Adamite "hero in space." An orphan who answers the call to adventure by enlisting while still under age, he

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17 Jean Vaillancourt, Les Canadiens errants (Ottawa: Le Cercle du Livre de France, 1954).

explains to his commandant that he has no past, since his life began only with his enlistment. Later Lanoue writes that he will either die in battle or emerge from the war reborn. From the moment of his baptism of fire, he is the ideal soldier. Rescuing a comrade under fire, winning promotion in the field, refusing a soft assignment behind the lines in order to stay with his friends and invariably volunteering for the most dangerous patrols, he is the natural warrior, respected by comrades and officers alike. To these qualities Lanoue adds the coureur's independence and fierce pride. As Major Cousineau notes in praising him to Captain Beauvais:

Il n'a jamais voulu accepter une faveur. Vous allez le trouver orgueilleux, fermé, hostile même. Mais ne vous y trompez pas, capitaine: ce sont souvent nos meilleurs hommes qui sont comme ça. L'hostilité de ces jeunes-là est parfois irritante, mais mon expérience m'a appris qu'elle était une espèce de pureté à toute épreuve (p. 57).

Lanoue's is the purity of dedication to a goal, the warrior's vision that Major Bazin perceives more philosophically in Execution. It is not a purity that abjures women, but one that places them on the periphery of his life. His memories of Margie, the conniving woman he narrowly escapes in London, the shadowy whores of Brussels, and even La Minoune in Montreal at the novel's end, are background rather than central to the drama.

What is central is Lanoue's awareness of life. In combat, a close escape from death brings him the revelation that he has never really lived; and later, on recuperation leave in Brussels, he has a vision of what the world might be. This simple event takes on the quality of myth. After the rites of bathing, listening to music and donning his freshly-pressed uniform, he walks the city for two days and nights:

J'étais si ben que j'avais l'impression de marcher sur un nuage et y me prenait tout d'un coup l'envie de courir. J'étais pas saoul pantoute. J'étais heureux. J'étais plus dans l'armée, y'avait jamais eu de guerre. J'étais en Europe et le monde entier était heureux comme moé. J'sais pas comment expliquer ça. . . . Y m'a pris envie de grimper sur le toit de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, en l'apercevant tout d'un coup dans le soleil, et de chanter "La Brabaçonne" (p. 84).

In his apotheosis, a family of impoverished gypsies, met by chance, appears in golden and eternal light:

Y'étaient en guenilles, l'air plutôt maipropre, et y parlaient un patois dont je comprenais pas un maudit mot. Des espèces de bohémiens, j'pense. Mais y'avaient l'air heureux! . . . Ca riait, ça chantait, s'donnait des claques dans le dos pour se rechauffer! . . . J'sais pas si j'avais vu des gens aussi heureux et aussi insouciants depuis que j'suis au monde. . . . J'avais envie de rester avec eux autres (p. 85).

So, after his long road of trials, the Agent of Change gains his reward in a vision of global solidarity, of a world in which repentance is not required, one ruled by a natural benevolent power able to alter and ennoble the world of common day.

But Lanoue is unaware that society does not always appreciate and reward its Agents of Change. Repatriated, he finds his dream of higher education in a more open world defeated by the same bureaucratic machinery responsible for Jonesy's death in Execution. When an uncaring counsellor advises him to become a waiter despite his ambition and superior IQ, Lanoue explodes in rage against the system and is driven to seek oblivion in drink and the arms of a local prostitute. In a drunken ritual exchange with La Minoune, he slowly divests himself of the last of his five-dollar bills, his war memories and his post-war hopes:

A trois heures, il lui donna le dernier billet qui restait dans son portefeuille. Il avait oublié la guerre, l'après-guerre, la Vie, et lui-même (p. 250).

It is a warrior's response to the unanswerable question.

Execution and Les Canadiens errants present the opposing visions of two heroes whose historical analogues are widely separated in time. A comprehensive reading of Lanoue implies a return not merely to the miles christianus of the Middle Ages, but deeper into the legends of ancient Greece. Here Lanoue's heroic analogue appears repeatedly in the Thebaid, as the proud, egocentric, supreme warrior whose measure is excellence and whose reward is fame.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Statius, Thebaid, ed. E. H. Warmington (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928).

Theseus, in the Thebaid, is a model of this excellence or aretê.<sup>19</sup> Proud, generous and honourable, he is also honest, self-centred and courageous to a point of carelessness for his own life.<sup>20</sup> The excellence he seeks, however, is not a separate quality, but the unifying centre and source of all his martial virtues and competences--a way and a justification of life reflected equally in the fierce tyrant Eteocles, his brother Polynices, Capaneus the god-scorner, Amphiaraus the seer and other heroes of the Thebaid, regardless of differences in character and rank. For them, the quality of humility belongs only to slaves. As Theseus hopes to be transformed into a star after his death,<sup>21</sup> his aim in life is to shine (however briefly) like the sun. It is a hope akin to Lanoue's.

The Theseus-like drive for excellence motivating Lanoue and his friends is perhaps most strikingly evident in Lanoue's vow to die or be reborn in war, Bolduc's sang-froid in disarming a drunken soldier who threatens him with a loaded rifle, the dedication of Major de Repentigny, millionaire, DSO and bar, and their shared "nostalgie poignante

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19 See, for example, Michael Grant, Myths of the Greeks and Romans (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962), pp. 50-60.

20 Statius, Thebaid, I, 495.

21 Statius, Thebaid, I, 343; II, 347.

de la vie dangereuse, grandeur de l'homme" (p. 70). In the same spirit that evoked rage from young Greeks left out of battle,<sup>22</sup> Lanoue's companions caress their rifles in anticipation of the combat in which they will be used to kill. For Sergeant Lanthier, "l'incarnation de toutes les vertus viriles et militaires qu'on rêvait de posséder soi-même," his men can imagine none but a warrior's death, "entouré d'ennemis, les armes à la main, après s'être battu pendant huit heures" (p. 72). Even Lanoue's illiterate friend Xavier, remembering the march through liberated Dieppe to the cheers of ten thousand citizens, feels his adventure worth any price he may have to pay:

Moé, Richard, j'suis rien qu'un p'tit colon du Lac St-Jean, O.K. --J'ai pas d'instruction. --J'suis pas joli. --J'ai jamais couché avec une femme autrement qu'en payant pour. . . . Mais si je meurs avant mon temps, au moins, j'aurai vue queque chose dans ma maudite vie! C'est pour ça qu'on est venue jusqu'icitte, nous autres; c'est-y vrai, ça? (p. 91).

It is true. And Xavier's attitude in his search for selfhood is not far from the classical Greek stance to life.

Within this warrior band, "unis par la solidarité des compagnons de misère et de devoir" (p. 71), Lanoue is in his element, foregoing promotion to fight beside his friends, remaining silent when they are shelled by their

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22 Statius, Thebaid, I, 337.

own artillery, and ready to follow officers like Captain Beauvais "jusqu'au bout de l'Allemagne" (p. 97). With its world-view based on aretê, this regimental pride in Les Canadiens errants epitomizes the positive aspect of Major Bazin's paradox in Execution: that man fully realizes himself under the scourge of war. For Lanoue, the "amitié issue de ce 'terrain de vérité' de la guerre" is lastingly "une belle grande chose" (p. 192). It is a sense of unity and high morale springing from pragmatic necessity and causing men to risk their lives for one another without pausing to ask the reason why. It is what turns Lanoue's road of trials into "une telle aventure" (p. 193) and suffuses his vision of world brotherhood with light.

Aretê also does much to explain the difference between two events which might otherwise be viewed as morally equivalent: the killing of Italian deserters in Execution and Lanthier's shooting of the SS fanatic in Les Canadiens errants. Though both are violent acts, the first is inflicted outside of battle on men who have been given the illusion of safety through their employment as company cooks; the second occurs on the still-smoking battlefield, when the SS fanatic calls Lanthier a schweinhund--"l'injure classique" (p. 143)--and spits in his face as Lanthier's men look on. The differences in circumstances and motivation

are worth noting. As Bazin points out in *Execution*, Adam is guilty, not of murder, but of the sin of bureaucratic acquiescence, which violates both Christian ethics and the warrior's code.<sup>23</sup> Lanthier's reflex action, on the other hand, is a warrior's battlefield response to the insult to his pride.<sup>24</sup>

Separating these two acts is a significant difference in chivalric attitudes. *Execution*, like *The Sky Pilot in No Man's Land*, explicitly imposes a class system and implicitly presents Canadian troops as "the elect," fighting God's war, in which all German soldiers seem equally deserving of destruction. *Les Canadiens errants*, on the other hand, reflects both the camaraderie of the classic warrior-band and its regal leader's awareness of the respect due worthy enemies.<sup>25</sup> To the suggestion that the German soldiers are busy reading Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, Lanoue replies simply

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23 See the *Thebaid*, II, 499. Once Creon's forces are in flight, "Theseus disdains to do battle with the fugitives, his right hand thinks scorn of easy victims."

24 *Thebaid*, I, 389. A similar pride moves Coroebus to confront the god Apollo and boastfully invite his own death.

25 *Thebaid*, I, 371. For example, as King Adrastus halts the savage struggle between Tydeus and Polynices, he says to the strangers, "Mean of soul ye cannot be--such anger proves it--even through bloodshed the noble signs of a proud race show clear."

"c'est un évangile comme un autre" (p. 61); and when a captured NCO challenges Lanthier to shoot him, if he must, but to spare his men, who were simply obeying orders, Lanthier is struck with admiration for his chivalrous foe:

Il n'y avait pas plus de héros, songeait-il, dans l'armée allemande que dans l'armée canadienne; les hommes de cette trempe, en fait, étaient rares partout, et quand un Etienne Lanthier en rencontrait un, il se devait de le reconnaître (p. 104).

Nor is Lanthier alone in his regard for gallantry wherever it may be found. When Lanoue sees one of his men remove an Iron Cross from a German stricken on the battlefield, he angrily snatches it back and places it respectfully on the dying soldier's chest.

Such chivalry and the sense of a benevolent destiny colour Lanoue's world-view and influence his growth. Though he never learns the identity of the mysterious officer who gave him unexpected aid in England; and though neither he nor his superiors can fathom what spirit or devil protects him in battle, Lanoue's belief that "the spirit watches" and that the guiding hand of destiny has touched him never falters or wanes.<sup>26</sup> His religion is the warrior's code,

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26 This feeling that "nothing can happen to me" with which "a real hero throws himself into the water to save a drowning man" is a common experience, though perhaps seldom sustained to the degree achieved by Lanoue. See Sigmund Freud, Creativity and the Unconscious (New York: Harper, 1958), p. 51.

which shines through his agnosticism with the essentially pagan but unfailing light of ancient Greece:

Il y avait l'homme seul avec son destin, puissance ténébreuse. Il y avait le courage de cet homme, sa grandeur à bouche fermée. (Même quand il était bavard pour parler des choses futiles.) Avoir marcher au devant de son destin pour soumettre sa vie à l'épreuve suprême; s'être trouvé tel que prévu, face à la Mort; l'avoir défiée en combat singulier, s'être battu comme Jacob avec l'ange; --Qu'on eût vaincu ou perdu, cela, peut-être, était digne d'un homme? (p. 196).

It would be hard to find a more succinct expression of the Greek warrior ideal. Yet Les Canadiens errants conveys no sense of a flight to the past. Around the time-transcending ideal of aretê Vaillancourt fashions a hero at once modern and canadien, a product as well as a representative of the aspirations of his society.

In this coureur reborn as classic warrior, French Canada's remembered past and embattled present are linked to an expanding future by language, symbolic iconography and a sense of solidarity intensified by war. Joual expressions such as "à soère" for "ce soir" (p. 50), "aussi tough" (p. 52) and Xavier's defiant affirmation of the warrior's life (p. 91), identify the speakers as canadiens pure laine, a term dating back to the patriotes of the 1837 Rebellion, who wore homespun clothing to indicate their rejection of Britain and its manufactured goods. For Corporal Vachon, his family and old Montreal are "tout

ensemble sa patrie, son royaume, et sa terre promise" (p. 79); and when he jokingly asks what the Army will give his platoon to maintain morale on the Russian front, the ironic reply is "Une tuque de laine, une paire de raquettes et une ceinture fléchée" (p. 41), the traditional costume of both habitants and coureurs. The mood is one of ebullience and high morale. Though Lanoue's return to civilian life destroys him, life at the front is an intense, positive and memorable experience. Behind the cynical humour of tribal passwords such as "çartainemangne"<sup>27</sup> stands a motley but solidary band of brothers as canadien as they are universal. They are coureurs on a global stage, of whom Lanoue wryly observes:

De c'te race-là, y'en a toujours eu et y'en aura toujours. Quand ça sera pas pour sauver la Chrétienté, ça sera pour sauver autre chose, c'est toute (p. 90).

The statement might have come as readily from Menaud or Max Hubert.

It is possible, of course, to see Execution as a qualified victory, in which Adam achieves atonement, but

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<sup>27</sup> Akin to the ironical use of "Semper Fi!" by the United States Marines, whose motto is "Semper Fidelis," this use of "çartainemangne" for "certainment" is, as the author points out, a soldier's shibboleth, whose truculent humour is understood only by its inventors and the fully initiated (p. 66).

in a diminished universe, and Les Canadiens errants as a qualified defeat, in which Lanoue drowns his memories in wine after fulfilling himself as a warrior. Both responses are consistent, the first with the Preserver of Tradition and miles christianus; the second with the Agent of Change and coureur, as well as with the Greek warrior. However, if these opposing worlds are to be reconciled within the wider literary framework, they must first be separated from the historical reality of Canada's unified war effort and seen for what they are, the subconscious post-war fulfillment of differing cultural needs. In the light of these needs, the 1939-45 war presented Quebec with a distinct advantage and English Canada with a considerable handicap.

For the Quebec mythos, the war was an opportunity to call up the solidarity demanded by Maria Chapdelaine, to militarize the radical conservatism of Menaud, to reaffirm the anti-clericalism of Les Demi-civilisés and Trente Arpents and to explore the vision of a still broader pays d'en haut through a warlike but now socially-acceptable coureur. Significantly, all of these functions, performed by Lanoue in Les Canadiens errants, are also carried out by Noiraud, the warrior-hero of Jean-Jules Richard's Neuf Jours de haine (1948).

Like Richard Lanoue and Sergeant Lanthier, Noiraud is a natural fighting man, an individualistic yet solidary coureur who finds his métier where "les brens ronronnent comme des chats bien soignés" at the sharp end of the Allied Invasion of Europe.<sup>28</sup> Crossing the threshold of war, Noiraud finds himself in a strange "fifth dimension," a world of hate:

On commence a haïr. On haït l'obscurité, son mystère. On haït les bouffées de puanteur venues des charognes et des rêves. On haït son propre instinct de prendre abri. On haït ses propres réflexes. On haït ceux qui marchent à coté, en avant, en arrière. On haït ceux qui commandent. On se haït soit-même . . . . (p. 40).

Each chapter of the novel is a stage in the development of the hate driving Noiraud towards his warrior's destiny. Nevertheless, against this sombre backdrop, other emotions and other relationships of the hero stand out like jewels, turning the world of hate, however briefly, into its opposite. For Noiraud, war beside his friend Frisé becomes a "belle aventure," providing moments of intense solidarity, when "la compagnie est un seul homme" (p. 234); of wine and laughter in the midst of battle; of grief at the euthanasia of a fellow-warrior; and of grandeur as dirt-grimed troops moving through the beams of arc lights are transformed into

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28 Jean-Jules Richard, Neuf Jours de haine (Montréal: Editions de l'arbre, 1948), p. 171.

"des dieux habillés à grands coups de ciseaux dans le soleil couchant" (p. 244). Out of these chosen and remembered moments, Noiraud, like Lanoue, envisions a golden future beyond the war, in which "nous ne serons plus canadiens, ni britanniques, mais humains, tout simplement humains, si comme cela doivent s'appeler les habitants du monde" (p. 217). It is a transcendent experience in which the soldier, familiar with death, glimpses a different kind of life based on the solidarity of all mankind.

Within the circle of this shared vision, Noiraud's need for freedom seems even more intense than is Lanoue's, while his world-view is both more negative and more politicized. With an eye that tends to identify bureaucracy as the real enemy, Noiraud perceives the army as "la meilleure école de despotisme, partout dans le monde" (p. 208), and he hates both "le mal d'Europe . . . l'ambition impérialiste qui divise le continent" and the way in which "les peuples se dupent de cette idéologie cruelle" (p. 215). Instinctively he senses that the natural warrior and the "militaire" are worlds apart: "s'il est bon soldat, il est très mauvais militaire" (p. 205), which truism ironically underlies his own undoing.

As the war ends, Noiraud's nonconformity runs afoul of the spit-and-polish discipline and bureaucracy resurgent

in the Occupying Forces. Trapped into fraternization and a fist-fight by German civilians, he is rescued by his friend Frisé, only to find at his trial that Frisé's peacetime ambitions now prevent him from speaking the truth that would free Noiraud. As the old combat solidarity splinters into a fragmented world of selfishness and private interests, Frisé remains silent. Noiraud is sentenced to two years in prison and re-enters the "cinquième dimension" of hate.

Both of these Quebec novels propose that war opens the door to a unique solidarity which bureaucracy and selfishness destroy again in times of peace. The congruence of Les Canadiens errants and Neuf Jours de haine, which frequently makes them seem parts of a single extended story, emphasizes, by its absence in English-Canadian literature, the ambiguity of the English-Canadian vision which World War II did nothing to alleviate. Instead, as Joseph Levitt recalls in A Vision Beyond Reach, the war reinforced Quebec nationalism without reducing English Canada's uncertainties regarding the nation's destiny.<sup>29</sup> In fiction, as in everyday life, such a climate inhibits solidarity, and may so divide the protagonist that he is unable to commit himself fully to either tradition or change.

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29 Levitt, chapter VI: "Uncertain Canada."

The differences in the endings of McDougall's Execution and "The Firing Squad"<sup>30</sup> offer a striking example of this duality. In the short story, which presents the same central event, sacrificial victim and hero as the novel, Adam at the last moment refuses to give the final command to the firing party. He sacrifices his career, but saves his soul and, presumably, Jonesy's life. This categorical rejection of the bureaucratic establishment, an act worthy of Camus' "homme révolté" or Colin Wilson's Outsider, suddenly presents the hero as an Agent of Change. At the same time, it reveals, when placed beside the hero's conformity in Execution, the similarity of the divisions evident in the miles christianus and in Canada's divided mind.

Each of these divisive problems springs from a high moral ideal demanding repression of the natural impulse to autonomy and identity; and each, if continued, leads to severe inner conflict. The result is neither a hero lacking in moral fibre nor a miles christianus whose central battle is with his own strong passions, but a protagonist who seems unable to decide whether to follow his pledged loyalty or his natural needs. Brad Parker's courage in The Sixth of June, like John Adam's in Execution and Robert Ross's in

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<sup>30</sup> Colin McDougall, "The Firing Squad," in Northern Lights, ed. George E. Nelson (New York: Doubleday, 1960), pp. 259-73.

The Wars, is physical as well as moral, and strong. Blackie Valois, facing execution in A Handful of Rice, vows, "They'll see how a French-Canadian can die" (p. 276, emphasis added). All of these novels, however, bypass the dilemma of Canada's divided mind, and in doing so reveal its remarkable power. In each case, the sense of community which is achieved is international, as in the dedication of The Sixth of June,<sup>31</sup> or universal, as in the final victory of the prisoners in A Handful of Rice.<sup>32</sup> What is missing is a sense of what it means to be Canadian.

Even Turvey, a satire that could logically be excluded from a list of serious war novels, also presents, in its tragicomical ambiguity, the same sense of a hero unable to fulfill his destiny, the same absence of nation-centred myth that afflicts English-Canadian war novels generally. This problem, which is particularly evident in Canadian fiction, may be seen as a further complication in the descent of the

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31 Which reads: "There is a land blest with the heritage of knowing intimately her British kinsmen and her American neighbors and of loving and in a sense uniting both. The land is Canada, and it is to this precious heritage that I dedicate gratefully this book" (p. 5).

32 Where the starved prisoners are transformed into "golden warriors bearing their heroes in triumph over the field of battle!"--not as Canadians, but as "the upstart Man!--transported in the passion of his joy--screaming with unconquerable life--brazen, defiant, challenging!" (pp. 287-88).

post-epic hero, who is described by Wardroper as "a hero in unheroic circumstances."<sup>33</sup>

In The Vanishing Hero, Sean O'Faoláin points to the 1920s as the extreme point in a long process of disintegration in which the "conceptual Hero"--a "socially approved norm on the side of the long arm of the law, the Sûreté, the church, the kirk, the headmaster and the head of the family"<sup>34</sup>--is replaced by the "anti-Hero":

This personage is not a social creation. He is his own creation, that is, the author's personal creation. He is a much less neat and tidy concept, since he is always presented as groping, puzzled, cross, mocking, frustrated and isolated, manfully or blunderingly trying to establish his own personal, supra-social codes. . . . Whatever he is, weak or brave, brainy or bewildered, his one abiding characteristic is that, like his author-creator, he is never able to see any Pattern in life and rarely its Destination. 35

O'Faoláin's view of "a general, slowly developing fissuration in the main European tradition, which is to say the Christian tradition,"<sup>36</sup> illuminates both English and French warrior-heroes in Canadian fiction. As the epigraph to this

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<sup>33</sup> Wardroper, "The Epic Hero Superseded," in Concepts of the Hero, p. 215.

<sup>34</sup> O'Faoláin, p. 14.

<sup>35</sup> O'Faoláin, p. 16.

<sup>36</sup> O'Faoláin, p. 17.

chapter indicates, he sees this change as "an utter revolt" on the part of writers of the 1920s in which the Preserver of Tradition is replaced by two contrasting versions of the Agent of Change: Sebastian, the tortured martyr, and Spartacus, the rebel slave.<sup>37</sup>

Both O'Faoláin's theme and his exemplary figures reinforce the idea of a double tradition leading up to John Adam and Richard Lanoue: the first, of passive courage and staunchness in preserving a perfectionist ideal, with its potential for martyrdom;<sup>38</sup> the second, of active courage and daring in the pursuit of freedom, identity and a new way of life.<sup>39</sup> These two traditions, which, as Camus observes, constitute opposing world-views,<sup>40</sup> are neither produced by

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37 The contrast between these types is a major theme in Concepts of the Hero. See Bernard Huppé's "The Concept of the Hero in the Early Middle Ages," pp. 1-26, and Irving Zupnick's "Saint Sebastian: The Vicissitudes of the Hero as Martyr," pp. 239-67.

38 Karl Menninger, in Man Against Himself (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1966), points out how the unattainable ideals of the "good child" can lead to martyrdom (pp. 94-95) as well as to self-destruction, the responsibility for which is projected upon fate, enmity or circumstances (p. 7).

39 Christians, too, of course, sought a new way of life. The point here is that the pagan warrior saw the meaning of his life in this world, the Christian martyr saw his in the next.

40 Albert Camus, The Rebel (1951), trans. Anthony Bower (New York: Random House, 1956), p. 189.

nor limited to the context of war. They are two distinct cultural climates which produce different hero types. In English Canada, the miles christianus provides a model embodying and at the same time rationalizing the problem of the divided mind through a belief in God. However, as the Imperial Dream fades from Canadian literature and the sense of God is replaced by a sense of hostile destiny, the English-Canadian hero becomes one whose motto, to use O'Faoláin's expression, is not cogito ergo sum, but "I suffer, therefore I am."<sup>41</sup> In contrast, the Greek warrior model with his pagan philosophy liberates the coureur from religious orthodoxy, reinforces his sense of destiny and agrees that, whatever the cost, war's dangerous adventure is "digne d'un homme."

A retrospect of Canada's novels and novelists at mid-century shows them as having passed through three stages of growth. Having begun by imitating romantic models of the nineteenth century, they rejected the imported British hero and Quebec's "recettes de bonheur" and, going back to the deep past, found other models to satisfy their psychological and cultural needs. Yet it would be unrealistic to expect the hero types so sharply etched by war to persist through the extended period of radical change, experimentation,

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41 O'Faoláin, p. 7.

and confusion of the decades that followed. The post-war decline in Britain's power, the burgeoning of former colonies into new independent nations around the world, and the problems of living beside a super-power, the United States, all contributed to a shift in the Canadian outlook that placed new emphasis on the fictional hero as Agent of Change.

The development of the protagonist through this post-war period does not lend itself to separation into clearly defined stages. Of the many aspects of his change, two emerge as fairly distinct in their broad lines. The two chapters which follow consider the salient features in the changing face of the hero during what is roughly the same twenty-year span: Chapter IV deals with the testing of new heroes and the failure of old mythologies, chapter V with the ways in which the two cultures refashion mythologies to meet their changing needs.

## Chapter IV

### AXES AND SUICIDES

La littérature canadienne-anglaise, selon ses critiques, est tendue selon un axe horizontal: la relation homme-milieu ou homme-société. Pour la critique de langue française, l'axe de la littérature est, à l'inverse, vertical: il est donné par la relation homme-destin ou homme-absolu.

--Jean-Charles Falardeau,  
"Les deux littératures canadiennes"<sup>1</sup>

Traditions, those beliefs from the past that the present still cherishes and keeps alive, are indicators of permanence in the midst of change. People whose traditions are threatened by change often seek reassurance by turning to an earlier stage of the endangered tradition. But such a return to the past necessarily re-interprets and alters the very tradition it is intended to preserve. The early American Puritans, for example, frustrated in their dream of returning to a "renovated England" and feeling abandoned in the wilderness, found new meaning in a Biblical concept of the Promised Land; their pilgrimage they read as a migration to a new Eden, in "the purity of the 'wilderness

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1 Falardeau, Notre société et son roman, p. 58

condition',"<sup>2</sup> as Sacvan Bercovitch observes. Here was the basis of the American Adamite vision, in which

All of the Old Testament is an errand to the New and all of history after the Incarnation, an errand of Christ's Second Coming. It leads from promise to fulfilment . . . from the Old World to the New; from Israel in Canaan to New Israel in America; from Adam to Christ to the Second Adam of the Apocalypse. 3

Later Americans, dispossessed by revolution, turned to the past in a similar way, reassuring themselves with what was to become English Canada's vision of a United Empire, older, nobler and stronger than the United States. Much the same process seems to be at work in Execution and Les Canadiens errants, as the authors of these novels turn to the Middle Ages and ancient times for warrior analogues suited to the world-views and traditions they wish to present. In each case, the merging of old and new models reinterprets and subtly or bluntly alters the tradition.

In the cross-currents and confusions of post-war literature, the directions of these traditions and the characters of their heroes are increasingly difficult to get a fix on. Although "each age makes the pattern over again," in the words of Lionel Trilling (1953),<sup>4</sup> the process by

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2 Bercovitch, pp. 5, 12.

3 Bercovitch, p. 14.

4 Trilling, The Liberal Imagination, p. 179.

which this is done is seldom clear; and the course of Canadian fiction during "the period 1940-1960 is especially muddled," as W. J. Keith remarks. Certainly,

English-Canadian fiction in this period shows few signs of forming a coherent literary pattern. There is no sense of a national movement, or predominant themes and approaches, or an accepted novelistic technique, or even of a concerted attempt to express Canadian or mid-twentieth-century consciousness. 5

Nevertheless, this period did produce the first English-Canadian hero to reject colonialism and declare his allegiance to the vision of a fully autonomous Canada. In Quebec, it tested to the limit the hero's ability to endure the adverse conditions of existence.

Writing in 1958, Hugo McPherson identifies Hugh MacLennan's Barometer Rising<sup>6</sup> as a literary turning point:

If pioneers or engineers were about to cross the farthest frontiers of Canada's wilderness, Hugh MacLennan was to press boldly into the unknown country of the nation's consciousness. With a minimum of maps, he was to confront the tangle of his countrymen's experience, and to chart its limits, its major cross-currents of opinion and belief, its intellectual and emotional resources, and its relation to its near relatives, Britain 7 and the United States.

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5 W. J. Keith, "Novels in English 1940 to 1960," The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature, pp. 576, 573.

6 Hugh MacLennan, Barometer Rising (1941) (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1969).

7 Hugo McPherson, Introd., Barometer Rising, p. ix.

Central to MacLennan's vision is the need for a new protagonist, a Hero of Change dedicated to Canada's future and ready to challenge tradition and the status quo. In Barometer Rising, MacLennan transfers the patriotic fervor of the 1940s to just such a hero returning from the First World War, reversing the imperialist tradition (in which Canada was the land of exile and England was "home") and altering the direction of the English-Canadian myth by linking it with the ancient and universal myth of Odysseus. Like Homer's Odyssey, Barometer Rising is the story "of a people in the process of becoming aware of itself."<sup>8</sup> In this sense, MacLennan's novel marks a return to the past with the aim of creating a new Canadian world-view.

Neil Macrae is the Canadian Ulysses who returns incognito from overseas to reclaim and protect the family he left behind. His story is a dramatic mixture of tradition and change. Its climax, which coincides with the great Halifax explosion of 1917, evokes images of Ulysses' homecoming and battle in the Odyssey;<sup>9</sup> but its hero's vision is the promise of North America, "for which the traditions of the Old World could never compensate" (p. 4). Neil's

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<sup>8</sup> George Woodcock, Odysseus Ever Returning (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> Woodcock, p. 14.

struggle against his tyrannical uncle, Colonel Wain, is analogous to Canada's attempts to break the colonial chains that restrict her "unborn mightiness" (p. 79), and his yearning for a future in which Canada will control her own destiny is presented as a national dream. George Woodcock refers to this "imposed pattern" of nationalism as the most striking feature of MacLennan's work:

In Barometer Rising it is the leap into a sense of national identity which MacLennan sees emerging among Canadians during the first World War; in Two Solitudes (1945) it is the clash of English and French traditions; in The Precipice (1948) it is the impact of American social mores on the Canadian consciousness; in Each Man's Son (1951) it is the lingering power in Canada of the Calvinist conscience; in The Watch that Ends the Night (1959) . . . it is the dual influence --destructive and creative at once--of the social idealism of the Thirties. 10

Each of these novels features a hero whose autonomy and self-actualization are threatened by colonialism or the burden of his cultural past, and each presents a separate facet of the unrealized Canadian dream.

But the conflicts of these heroes belong to their author as well, for MacLennan himself is caught in a tug-of-war between his national dream and Canada's allegiance to the imperial past. In Barometer Rising this ambiguity weakens both the nationalist argument and Neil's effectiveness

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10 Woodcock, p. 13.

as a Hero of Change. Despite his working-class father and American education, Neil is a member of colonial Canada's élite. He is a university-trained officer whose speech confirms his gentility and whose "vigorous and democratic outlook"<sup>11</sup> is indeed "outlook" rather than "act." It is Penelope Wain who breaks tradition by becoming a ship designer and risks her reputation in bearing Neil's child out of wedlock. And it is Angus Murray who defies Wain, rallies Neil after the explosion, and saves Penny's sight. Throughout the entire novel Neil seems more acted on than acting. His salvation is the deus ex machina of a chance explosion, and his final vision more wishful non-sequitur than fiery prophecy:

Canada was still hesitant, still hamstrung by men with the mentality of Geoffrey Wain. But if there were enough Canadians like himself, half American and half English, then the day was inevitable when the halves would join and his country would become the central arch which united the new order (p. 218).

The sincerity of Neil's patriotism is never in doubt. Yet Barometer Rising conveys a sense of ambiguity rather than of unity, for the hero's ideal embraces both a dream of the future and adherence to a tradition incompatible with that dream.

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<sup>11</sup> McPherson, p. xxi.

This duality in MacLennan's fictional world often takes the form of opposing heroes, one passive, the other active, though sharing a common goal: Anathase Tallard and his son Paul in Two Solitudes, Dan Ainslie and Archie MacNeil in Each Man's Son, and George Stewart and Jerome Martell in The Watch That Ends the Night. A reading of these competing heroes in their sequence of appearance shows them becoming increasingly generalized as the conflict between father and son gradually shifts to a struggle between rational and irrational man, and finally to a clash between the light and dark sides of the human psyche, the central struggle of The Watch that Ends the Night.<sup>12</sup> This movement, as the last-mentioned novel clearly reveals, is not toward the national ideal of Neil Macrae, but in the opposite direction, toward a kind of moral universalism.

Jerome Martell, the dark, enigmatic "double" of The Watch, is almost--but not quite--the New Adam capable of altering a people's destiny. An orphan of the Canadian wilderness who returns from war a hero to expiate his guilt by healing others, he lacks the pristine innocence of the American Adam. But he is a voyager in the Adamite tradition, a combination of Lewis's "hero in space" and Homer's

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<sup>12</sup> Hugh MacLennan, The Watch that Ends the Night (New York: Scribner's, 1959).

returning wanderer, the "primitive, violent, but essentially good giant" who dominates the novel, as Woodcock reckons.<sup>13</sup> It is in his role as the mythic North American hero that Jerome promises most in terms of an altered Canadian future, and it is in this role that he disappoints: his giant potential fails to focus on Canada's need for a sense of national identity. He becomes, rather, a version of the American Western hero, dispensing local justice and then riding off into the sunset, a symbol effective in the United States but ill-suited to engage the Canadian complexity.

Jerome's unusual nature is partially revealed when he takes Catherine, whom the passive hero, George Stewart, dares not marry because of her ailing heart, and makes her his wife. But Jerome himself is attentive to a higher calling. He gives Catherine the child she longs for and inspires her with his own passion for life only to leave her for the Spanish war and later for World War II. After many rumours, he is listed among the dead.

George and Catherine marry, but their quiet lives are shattered when Jerome reappears, mutilated but unbroken by Nazi torture, and Catherine has a heart attack. As she lies near death after surgery, Jerome, symbolically returned from the dead and hence master of two worlds, silently wills

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13 Woodcock, p. 14.

her back to life and gives her up to George, who is astonished at Jerome's transfiguration:

His whole face seemed transparent. And in his eyes was an expression new and uncanny. They seemed to have seen everything, known everything, suffered everything. But what came out of them into me was light, not darkness. . . . and the murderous feeling went out, and I was not afraid any more (p. 361).

For George this is a moment of epiphany and atonement, as subsequent references to Jesus and resurrection confirm (p. 367). In mythic terms, it is the experience of rebirth achieved through the confrontation and fusion of opposites, as Erich Neumann explains:

The aim of the extraverted type of hero is action: he is the founder, leader and liberator whose deeds change the face of the world. The introverted type is the culture-bringer, the redeemer and savior who discovers the inner values, exalting them as knowledge and wisdom, as a law and a faith, a work to be accomplished and an example to be followed. The creative act of raising the buried treasure is common to both types of hero, and the prerequisite for this is union with the liberated captive. 14

In this case, the hero of action is the redeemer, his insight freeing the captive introvert to assert his rightful role as custodian of the treasure, that secret and precious knowledge of how to face the unanswerable question of death-in-life.

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14 Cited by Dorothy Norman in her The Hero: Myth/Image/Symbol (New York: World Publishing, 1969), p. 96.

"Each of us is everybody," says Jerome. "What you're afraid of isn't death at all. I think it's life" (p. 366). In Mircea Eliade's terms, Jerome is Primitive Man re-enacting "the myth of the eternal return"<sup>15</sup> and rescuing George from the treadmill of linear time by revealing the secret of a time that is constantly regenerated:

. . . even so the primitive, by conferring a cyclic direction upon time, annuls its irreversibility. Everything begins over again at its commencement every instant. The past is but a prefiguration of the future. No event is irreversible and no transformation is final. <sup>16</sup>

Within this constantly-regenerating mythical moment Death can have no dominion. Once aware of this truth, George can allow Catherine to "live her death" (p. 367) and himself to be reborn in the dark but shining city, "all of it glad and good" (p. 370).

None of MacLennan's other heroes achieves the mythic stature of Jerome Martell, nor does Jerome quite fit any of the established hero categories. Separated from the American Adam and the Canadian coureur by guilt, he pursues an ideal of atonement which, like the perfection of the Loyalist Dream, cannot be realized in the world of common day. The

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<sup>15</sup> Mircea Eliade, The Myth of the Eternal Return (1949), trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954).

<sup>16</sup> Eliade, p. 89.

result is not a national figure, but a universal moral hero, a protagonist dedicated not so much to Canada and Canadian traits as to mankind. In his aims and his dauntless belief that he is "going to make it," though, Jerome is also society's Outrider (p. 186). Like Leatherstocking and the cowboy heroes who ride through the myth of the American West, he is a wandering noble savage upholding the deeper values of a civilization that cannot accommodate him even as it depends on his protection against the forces of evil and the spiritual corrosion of cowardice. Each of these heroes, his victory won, rides away alone--to another "job out west--or maybe it's up north," as Jerome says (p. 368)--leaving society his hard-won secret of how to live in two worlds.<sup>17</sup>

MacLennan's contribution to the growth of the hero in Canadian fiction is substantial. Having burst the confines of the Loyalist Dream in Barometer Rising, he reveals in The Watch that Ends the Night the opposing elements of the divided mind, and points toward their reconciliation. His work alters the direction taken earlier by the English-Canadian hero, but at the cost of confirming his duality. The double figure of the hero, with his dynamic and often violent Agent of Change, recurs in Mordecai Richler's St. Urbain's Horseman (1966), Robert Kroetsch's The Studhorse

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17 Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, pp. 229 ff.

Man (1970, Robertson Davies' The Manticore (1972), and other novels, which continuity may serve as a reminder of English Canada's divided mind and of MacLennan's ability to open a door to the future while remaining curiously tied to the past. The successful merging of these opposites into a unified hero-figure remains debatable. And their separateness raises the question of whether they will ever be able to shake off their roles as players in a zero-sum game.

Post-war Quebec fiction, of course, may also be described as a literature of the divided mind. But here the basis of division, in contrast to that in English Canada, is a "crisis of values in Québec society,"<sup>18</sup> and the response to it is social criticism, whether expressed in the social realism of Roger Lemelin, the psychological-moral novels of Robert Charbonneau, the industrial conflicts of Gérard Bessette, the transformed traditional novels of Germaine Guèvremont, or the highly imaginative worlds of Marie-Claire Blais. All of these novelists and many others express dissatisfaction with the conditions of life, and imply, as does the author of Les Canadiens errants, that these conditions must be changed. Not surprisingly, this challenge is one that forces the hero to descend to the rock-bottom of despair

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18 Ben-Z. Shek, "Novels in French 1940 to 1959," The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature, p. 602.

before he can move upwards in the direction of social revolution. And it is this tortuous path that the student of the Quebec hero's growth must attempt to follow.

If English Canada's fiction at mid-century seems blest with expanding horizons, as Hugo McPherson suggests,<sup>19</sup> Quebec's heroes appear to turn increasingly inward upon themselves. They are victims, according to Falardeau's suggestion, of "une dépossession morale,"<sup>20</sup> one that denies them the faith of coureur and habitant heroes of the past, and renders them vulnerable to the ills of the secular city. For the protagonists of Gabrielle Roy and Roger Lemelin, the city in which they arise conditions their destinies:

Pour la première fois, le héros urbain est d'un quartier populaire et il est directement aux prises avec un conflit qui oppose des valeurs traditionnelles, celles de son espace d'origine, et des valeurs nouvelles: l'argent, la liberté, la conquête, l'amour, le succès, associées avec les quartiers favorisés et avec les sphères<sup>21</sup> supérieures de la société.

Both Jean Boucher, in Lemelin's Au Pied de la pente douce (1944), and Jean Lévesque, in Roy's Bonheur d'occasion (1945), fail to achieve their dreams; the first through the impatience and naiveté with which he openly renounces his

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19 McPherson, p. ix.

20 Falardeau, "l'Évolution du héros," p. 15.

21 Falardeau, "l'Évolution du héros," p. 18

neighbourhood because "Il veut accéder à la Haute-ville, symbole de richesse et de pouvoir politique et intellectuel", the second through conformity "aux exigences de la mobilité social qui le conduiront, pense-t-il, à ces sphères et aux beaux quartiers habités et possédés par les autres: les dominants, les étrangers, les anglais."<sup>22</sup> Their motives are virtually the same. More importantly, perhaps, these heroes also stand for society at large in what are essentially novels of social indignation. Since neither can function effectively as an Agent of Change, each foreshadows still deeper soul-searching and despair to come.

Nor is the urban environment alone at fault. Even beyond the corrupting city, in pastoral novels such as Germaine Guèvremont's Le Survenant (1945) and Marie Didace (1947), this trend is not reversed. Though a dying farm community is shocked into life when a prodigious itinerant worker (le Survenant)<sup>23</sup> stops at the Beauchemin farm, the ingrained prejudices of the community finally win out. Though he works cheerfully for no more than his keep, and crops and animals flourish at his touch, the "chance comer" is rejected. As he shoulders his pack to move on, the

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22 Falardeau, "l'Evolution du héros," p. 19.

23 Germaine Guèvremont, Le Survenant (Paris: Plon, 1945),

mythic message in his gesture is clear: a saviour has come and the community has been found wanting.

The reason for this is not hard to discover. The powerful, laughing 'Venant, who combines the daring and élan of the coureur with the generous, open character of Nature's nobleman, brings turbulence as well as life to tradition-bound "Chenal du Moine." The same virile spirit that wins over père Didace Beauchemin and Angéline, a crippled spinster, frightens Didace's daughter-in-law, Alphonsine, and her resentful husband, Amable. Displaced in his father's affections by the cheery newcomer, who brings the entire Beauchemin farm to life, Amable is delighted when 'Venant reveals the fatal flaw of the old voyageurs. In town he drinks to excess, gambles away the Beauchemin harvest money and is involved in a drunken brawl. But even this fall from grace cannot disillusion père Didace, who recognizes the old coureur qualities and secretly sees himself in the Survenant, "jusqu'en ses défauts."<sup>24</sup> As 'Venant explains in a sad, final clash of philosophies, the monotony of farm life--"piétonner toujours à la même place, pliés en deux sur vos terres de petite grandeur" (p. 205)--is not for him. His problem is not liquor, after all, but a spiritual addiction of a deeper and more lasting kind:

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24 Guèvremont, Le Survenant, p. 166.

Il était ivre, ivre de distances, ivre de départ.  
 Une fois de plus, l'inlassable pèlerin voyait  
 rutiler dans la coupe d'or le vin illusoire de  
 la route, des grands espaces, des horizons, des  
 lointains inconnus (p. 205).

One morning the Beauchemins awaken to find him gone. And it is 'Phonsine who expresses the closed society's innate fear of change:

Un vrai sauvage, quoi! Ces survenants-là sont  
 presque pas du monde. Ils arrivent tout  
 d'une ripousse. Ils repartent de même. C'est  
 pire que des chiens errants (p. 218).

'Venant's departure ushers in the spiritually arid world of Marie-Didace and the collapse of the Beauchemin fortunes, which not even père Didace's marriage to a vigorous spirited woman can save. His new wife, l'Acayenne, clashes with the younger Beauchemins until Amable angrily leaves home, never to return. As the farm and its inhabitants alike decline, the brief Indian Summer proves to be the last for père Didace. Soon after his death, l'Acayenne, aware of 'Phonsine's hatred, dies like a forsaken coureur, "Seule. Sans le prêtre. En pleine nuit" (p. 261), and the Beauchemin farm is saved only by a community effort. Tragically, no son remains to carry on the Beauchemin name. The final inheritor, cared for by Angéline, is the sickly girl, Marie-Didace.

To what degree does Guèvremont's wandering hero, with his duality of gentleman and coureur, represent or foreshadow the changes taking place in Quebec society during this period? J. S. Tassie sees le Survenant as both a promise and a threat, as well as an important symbol of Quebec culture, a shadowy figure of all that might have been had social norms not held the community in thrall. At the same time, proposes Tassie, he is a real temptation to any youthful hot-heads who might take his example seriously, and thus a figure of unsettling ambiguity, at once "la menace de l'instabilité jetée contre le statu quo sûr et solide d'une société fermée" and "le symbole de la libération future."<sup>25</sup>

The delay in making this liberation a reality puts in question, yet cannot entirely defeat, the questing hero's attempt to rescue society from its conservative rigidity and re-inspire it with virtues from a more vigorous past. Indeed, the duality of French Canada's myth is reflected in the way that his rescue fails and yet succeeds. In story terms, despite the Survenant's best efforts and boundless energy, "rien de bon n'en avait résulté pour la paroisse" (p. 183). Symbolically, and in historical perspective,

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25 J. S. Tassie, "La Société à travers le roman canadien-français," in Le Roman canadien-français (Montréal: Fides, 1977), III, 156.

however, his idealized figure repeatedly generates a positive, even shining world-view in others--in père Didace, for example, dreaming of his own youth, and in Angéline, as she prays for her "glorieux disparu" in the church of Sainte-Anne.

Ironically, it is crippled Angéline, condemned to live out her days in a backwater community, who understands the Survenant's eternal quest and the glory of his death, "les yeux au ciel, fier de repartir voir un dernier pays" (p. 281). Her crisis, like that of Maria Chapdelaine, is resolved in a wave of solidarity and apotheosis at whose centre shines the memory of the lost coureur.

In The Long Journey, Jack Warwick points to the Survenant as a "particularly striking example" of "a man close to nature" bringing health and vitality to a community which would otherwise gradually die from the ills of its own conservatism.<sup>26</sup> He identifies the coureur as the necessary self set against conventional society, constantly seeking the wholeness, vigour and freedom of the pays d'en haut, and thus maintaining a balance between freedom and order:

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26 Warwick, p. 119

The farmer needs the coureur de bois, and without the libertine the city would be a necropolis. Stagnation and corruption are felt to be the dangers of moral stability, and must be met with an audacity that can only exist in freedom. Without such audacity, religion, love and art become impotent. With it, on the other hand, come disorders which social organization seeks to avoid, and the pure libertine heads for self-destruction. This is the dilemma in which French-Canadian man is situated by his authors. . . . It is a dilemma which cannot be resolved, apparently, in theology or philosophy or politics, so the search for wholeness is projected into literature. 27

What Warwick suggests, citing the dilemma of what Martin Turnell has called "the French Dialogue between order and freedom," is that this dilemma and debate produce the coureur, "a rebel type in a legendary world strong enough to persist through successive literary and ideological fashions."<sup>28</sup>

Why, then, is a similar debate not generated in English Canada with equally dynamic results? The long-standing Loyalist aversion to radical debate suggests an answer. Even when MacLennan's most striking double hero does appear, for example, his deviant half, Jerome Martell, is denied the social approval that would make him representative of society. Indeed, there is little or no evidence that he is intended to win social approval.

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27 Warwick, p. 162.

28 Warwick, pp. 160, 163.

The difference in the directions these heroes recommend to their societies is great. One points toward altering or rejecting the conditions of life; the other toward adapting to these conditions by seeing them in a new light. As an indicator of things to come, the coureur seems to anticipate a hero of revolution; Martell to foreshadow a hero of fantasy.

Between these extremes, the mid-century English-Canadian novel presents a rebel hero unrelated to either view. He is a non-British product of more recent immigration who might be called "the ethnic hero." Free of the Loyalist problem of remaining British, the ethnic hero faces his own difficult problem of becoming Canadian; that is, of adjusting to and finding his place in a foreign culture that does not always welcome him. Though the author of the ethnic novel, his focus reduced from a circle of imperial proportions to that of a single ethnic group, may find his task more manageable, the hero's problems--coping with exile in an alien land, escaping from the ghetto, choosing between parental ties and new opportunities--remain intense. In his flight from the imprisoning past, the ethnic hero may step into his adventure at any one of these three stages which make up so much of the process of becoming Canadian. There is no guarantee, however, that he will not travel in a circle and end where he began, a stranger in a strange land.

Abraham, in Adele Wiseman's The Sacrifice (1956), is a tragic hero in the first stage, that of adjusting to the new culture. Displaced from his traditional European environment late in life, Abraham is too set in his ways ever to feel at home in Canada. Like A. M. Klein's Melech, in The Second Scroll (1951), he abandons God because of the atrocities he has seen and becomes a double victim, of pogroms and culture shock. Driven to murder and confined to an asylum, he nevertheless manages to send the outside world a final message of atonement and love.

Sandor Hunyadi, the hero of John Marlyn's Under the Ribs of Death (1957), begins his adventure at the second stage. Brought to Canada as a child, he grows up torn between the ghetto solidarity of his unassimilated elders and his own need for acceptance and success in the new land. Changing his name to Alex Hunter to enter the business world, he is crushed by the corruption of the culture he tries to join and redeemed at last by the human values of the ghetto he is attempting to flee.

Mordecai Richler's Noah Adler in Son of a Smaller Hero (1955)--whose name suggests an eagle and a chosen survivor of the flood--is an appropriate hero of the third, and most successful, stage. The grandson of an immigrant Jewish family in Montreal and at home in his native city,

he must choose between gratifying the wishes of his ghetto-bound parents or leaving them to fulfill his destiny. Like Sandor Hunyadi, he decides to break out of the ghetto.

Answering the call to adventure by entering the "feared and desired world of the Goyim," Noah sets out "to realize his true self in the freedom which he believes exists beyond the invisible walls."<sup>29</sup> He receives unexpected aid from a teacher, Theo Hall, and his wife Miriam, who take him into their home. Miriam is Noah's first conquest along a road of trials more complicated by the "mind-forged manacles" of the Jewish community than by anti-Semitism. When Noah's father dies in a fire from which he saves a box containing the Torah, the community decides to publicize him as a hero. But Noah, convinced that his father believed the box contained money, threatens to expose the affair as a sham unless the community backs down. His will prevails, but the community considers him an outsider, if not a traitor. For Noah, this deepest trial is also a revelation. He comes to feel that the real problems of good and evil, loyalty and self-interest, are always more subtle than they seem. Everything, from his failed romance with Miriam and his mother's questionable heart attacks to Nazi Germany's

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29 George Woodcock, Introd., Son of a Smaller Hero, by Mordecai Richler (1955) (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969), p. vii.

concentration camps, reveals humanity's sad gift for self-deception:

The Germans had told the truth when they said they hadn't known. They couldn't cope with knowing. Neither could the Goldenbergs. Their crimes varied in dimension, but not in quality. What was he to do? (p. 186).

In the end, aware that the cage in which the Adlers live, "with all its faults," has "justice and safety and a kind of felicity" (p. 201), Noah nevertheless leaves for Europe, determined to be "Somebody" and "a human being" (p. 203), refusing, despite his family ties, to be imprisoned by the past.

Son of a Smaller Hero bears the seeds of later heroes in Richler's fictional world. The street-wise Montreal youth in The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz (1959), the Inuit trickster of The Incomparable Atuk (1963) and the mysterious figure of archaic man in St. Urbain's Horseman (1971), are all aspects of the ethnic hero in the city. Yet neither they nor the heroes of Marlyn, Wiseman or Klein touch on the Canadian vision introduced by MacLennan in Barometer Rising. Rather, that vision seems to dwindle and disappear between the new, aggressive heroes of ethnicity and the genteel exile heroes who continue in Sinclair Ross's As for Me and My House (1941), Ernest Buckler's The Mountain and the Valley (1952) and Earle Birney's Down the Long Table (1955).

The over-all pattern is one of enrichment by diversification rather than of the deepening and growth of a traditional past.

In Quebec, on the other hand, ethnic and native heroes in novels such as Yves Thériault's Aaron (1954) and Ashini (1961) are warnings against assimilation and cultural decay, and thus suggest their kinship with the increasingly nationalistic coureur. The struggle for social justice and nationhood which they represent is by no means new, as earlier novels show. In Arsène Bessette's Le Débutant (1914), for example, a romantic hero with coureur qualities challenges a corrupt urban establishment, is defeated and retreats to the United States. In Les Demi-civilisés (1934), Harvey's similar defender of the people, similarly defeated, nevertheless remains to fight on. In Gérard Bessette's La Bagarre (1958), this struggle for reform, with its undercurrent of nationalism, is resumed, but with a realism that precludes easy solutions. Caught up in the complexities of urban life, the hero finds his vision clouded and his response to the call to adventure delayed by conflicting appeals, so that the novel presents not so much a rebel hero as "l'homme moyen" belatedly discovering his destiny.

La Bagarre<sup>30</sup> is the first Canadian novel to set the wilderness hero of Quebec<sup>31</sup> realistically against the evils of "the system" in the modern city. Its hero, Jules Lebeuf --a "colosse" in the Quebec lumberjack tradition, as his name suggests--is almost thirty years old. Successfully inoculated against "American life" by travel and work in the United States, he has drifted back to Montreal, where he lives with a waitress and, as the story opens, is attempting to work his way through university. Attending classes by day and sweeping out tramway cars at night, Lebeuf is a man of two worlds, and the tension between ambition and loyalty generated by these worlds draws him into the vortex of social struggle.

For this modern hero, however, the call to adventure does not ring out loud and clear. The significant novel Lebeuf dreams of writing is impeded by self-doubt, drinking bouts with an American friend, and quarrels with his mistress, Margot, who yearns for marriage and the bourgeois life Lebeuf hopes to avoid. Searching for a model to guide him, Lebeuf

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30 Gérard Bessette, La Bagarre (1958) (Montréal: Tisseyre, 1969).

31 Here, as elsewhere, I envisage the French-Canadian wilderness hero as an exemplary figure combining the more admirable qualities of coureur, bûcheron, raftsman and voyageur: honesty, simplicity, strength, size, courage, and fidelity.

is discouraged to find none in sight, as he tells his friend Weston over drinks at "La Bougrine," a tourist-trap ironically featuring Quebec logging-camp decor and waiters dressed as coureurs:

. . . le Français donne des poignées de main et retrousse des jupons; l'Anglais, les fesses serrées dans son smoking, contemple l'empire du haut de son monocle; l'Américain ingurgite des high-balls en tirant des coups de revolver; le Canadien, lui, ne fait rien (p. 14).

Lebeuf's Olympian view ignores the implications of his own Canadian birth. Proud of his "realistic" outlook and his worker's role, he is shocked when an effete homosexual, Augustin Sillery, calls him a "Socrate de cabaret" (p. 20). But it is Margot's impassioned accusation, "Tu passe ton temps à cracher su' les Canadiens. . . . T'en es pas ein, toi?" (p. 26), that forces him to see reality:

Margot n'avait pas tort, en somme. . . .  
--L'université d'un coté, les balayeurs de l'autre, entre les deux, toute une variété de classes sociales. . . . Superposés à tout ça, deux groupes ethniques de mentalité et de langue différentes. Lui, Lebeuf, appartenait à l'un de ces groupes. . . (p. 27).

With this perception, the hero's position as a detached observer of life becomes untenable.

Reluctantly, Jules begins his road of trials. He tries to extend the education of a co-worker's talented daughter, Gisèle, but her parents object to an "English" education. When Bouboule, an aging sweeper, is fired for

striking a bullying foreman, Lebeuf pleads his case, only to be offered Bouboule's reinstatement in return for his own acceptance of the foreman's position on a full-time basis. As if to force his hand, destiny brings the innocent Gisèle, a figure of Quebec's future, into the corrupt environment of "La Bougrine," and Lebeuf is compelled to rescue her in a brawl that illuminates the crossroads in his life:

Une croisée de chemins, c'était bien ça. Il lui fallait choisir: planter là la compagnie de transport, chercher un autre travail, quitter Montréal peut-être . . . ou bien devenir contremaître (p. 176).

Unwilling to desert his friends, Lebeuf accepts the company's offer and leaves university, changing the pattern of his life.

But Jules is not the only one whose plans tend to disintegrate. Weston, unable to complete his thesis on French Canada, returns to the United States. Sillery leaves for Africa; Gisèle for a parish school that offers her talents little scope. Jules and Margot are a step closer to marriage but, except for his commitment to the working class, they live in an equivocal world. As the novel ends, Lebeuf, lantern in hand, is making his rounds on the graveyard shift, alone in the darkness and rain.

It would not be difficult to read into this conclusion a note of defeat, if not despair. The novel, however,

focuses attention less on events than on Lebeuf's changing world-view as he progressively identifies those allegiances he earlier lacked the courage to perceive. Each widening of his perception is a measure of his increasing sense of responsibility--for Gisèle, Margot, Bouboule, his fellow workers, and finally for the society surrounding him:

Tout autour, invisible et souverain, comme un océan, il y avait Montréal avec son million et demi d'habitants, la métropole du Canada, sa ville. . . . "C'est ici que j'ai mes racines." Voilà sans doute pourquoi il était revenu. Parce qu'il faisait partie d'un petit groupe francophone perdu dans un coin de l'Amérique du Nord. . . (p. 176).

The growth of this vision and its power to counteract the novel's dark conclusion are evident in Lebeuf's commitment to Gisèle (" . . . elle veut se cultiver. Je dois l'aider." p. 177), in his tolerance of Augustin Sillery ("il fallait seulement l'accepter tel qu'il était . . ." p. 203) and in his final act of commitment to the workers' cause, which Bouboule rightly sees as reflecting a kinship of spirit deeper than ties of blood:

--T' as fait ça pour moué, Lebeuf! J'ai deux garçons que j'ai élevés icitte, dans c'te maison-icitte, pis que je vois jamais, pis toué, Lebeuf, t'as fait ça pour moué (p. 193).

Bouboule's statement is a landmark in the recognition of Quebec society's representative man. The hero who began as "l'homme moyen," confused and, at best, drifting toward his

destiny, is reborn as Camus' "homme révolté," rebelling not for himself alone, and not against a particular establishment, but "against the conditions of life"<sup>32</sup> on behalf of its victims. Though his rebellion is never explicit, each of his decisions to help his friends reflects Camus' words: "I rebel--therefore we exist."<sup>33</sup>

Lebeuf's mythic adventure, which is nothing if not a search for his identity and destiny, ends fittingly with his solitary (and solidary) commitment to a second adventure even wider in scope than the first. It is worth noting that Lebeuf reappears as a successful union leader in Bessette's Les Pédagogues (1962). But even in La Bagarre he achieves the essential first step of "total risk and dedication" in what Dorothy Norman calls a matter of the highest concern, "the possibility that a heroic vision may dawn within each of us, to be assimilated--beyond theory or intellectualization--into our everyday lives."<sup>34</sup> At the end of La Bagarre,

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32 Herbert Read, in his Introduction to Camus' The Rebel, describes this revolt as "no longer the revolt of the slave against the master, nor even the revolt of the poor against the rich; it is a metaphysical revolt, the revolt of men against the conditions of life, against creation itself. At the same time, it is an aspiration toward clarity and unity of thought--even, paradoxically, toward order" (n. pag.).

33 Camus, p. 22.

34 Norman, p. 7.

Lebeuf has become his own hero, sure of his identity and fully committed to his destiny. Though his head is bowed toward the earth, it is his earth, and however dark and rainswept the night, he remains the bearer of the light, close kin, in his unswerving dedication, to the lonely, revolutionary heroes of André Malraux.<sup>35</sup>

This movement of the hero on what Falardeau calls a vertical axis established by the relationship between man and his destiny, or man and the absolute, raises again the vital question of the directions in which Canada's fictional heroes advance. Are heroes in the two cultures restricted to development along separate and different literary axes, as the epigraph to this chapter suggests? Or, as some critics maintain, are these axes and their goals common to hero figures in English Canada and Quebec? The answer to this question has an important bearing on one's view of these heroes and the directions taken by the literatures they inhabit and seem to guide.

Both R. L. McDougall, in "The Dodo and the Cruising Auk,"<sup>36</sup> and J. S. Tassie, in "La Société à travers le roman

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<sup>35</sup> Norman's ideal, "the heroic vision assimilated into everyday life," is stirringly dramatized by Malraux in the heroes of La Voie Royale (1930) and Le Temps du mépris (1935) and their struggle for human dignity.

<sup>36</sup> Canadian Literature, No. 18 (Autumn 1963), 6-20.

canadien-français,"<sup>37</sup> challenge Falardeau's "rather drastic categorization of the French and English novels which restricts them to a single axis."<sup>38</sup> At the same time, both of these critics provide evidence supporting the Falardeau perspective. Tassie concludes that French-Canadian literature seems, "somme toute, plus verticale dans ses grandes lignes qu'horizontale," but adds "il apparait pourtant que la dimension horizontale s'est bien développée. . . ."<sup>39</sup> McDougall, agreeing with Falardeau "up to a point," nevertheless sees The Loved and the Lost (1951) and The Many Colored Coat (1960) as novels in which the 'vertical' is unquestionably the main dimension of the work,<sup>40</sup> on the grounds that Morley Callaghan is a novelist pre-eminently concerned with personal values and 'inscape'.<sup>41</sup> At this point, if 'inscape' and concern for personal values are taken as equivalent to a sense of destiny, the problem seems unresolved.

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37 In Le Roman canadien-français, III, 153-64.

38 As Eileen Sarkar points out in "The Concept of Freedom in English Canadian and French Canadian Novels of the 1950s," Diss. University of Ottawa 1977, p. 35.

39 Tassie, p. 164.

40 McDougall, p. 14.

41 McDougall, p. 13.

However, if assignment of a hero to the axis of "homme-destin" or "homme-société" depends on the world-view and actions of the hero, it must be noted that Callaghan's heroes never defy the absolute and are too genteel to spit in the eye of destiny. They are "innocents," as Larry McDonald points out, lacking "'awareness' . . . of the power of society to manipulate human nature to its own degraded materialist ends."<sup>42</sup> In much the same way, George Woodcock sees the central characters of three earlier Callaghan novels, Such is My Beloved (1934), They Shall Inherit the Earth (1935) and More Joy in Heaven (1937), not as anarchistic rebels, but as martyrs, who "wage their struggles not merely within their own hearts, but also externally, with the great amorphous being of a conscienceless society. . . ."<sup>43</sup> Whatever the nature of this external struggle, it seems entirely lacking in the open, clear-eyed defiance shown by Spartacus and Sebastian. Seen in relation to the Myth of the Hero, these Canadian protagonists are neither Agents of Change nor "hommes révoltés" in the Camus mode. As McDonald says:

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42 Larry McDonald, "The Civilized Ego and its Discontents: A New Approach to Callaghan," in The Callaghan Symposium, ed. Lorraine McMullen (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1980), p. 90.

43 George Woodcock, "Lost Eurydice: The Novels of Callaghan," in Morley Callaghan, ed. Brandon Conron (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1975), p. 98.

Their protest is self-generated and their struggles are self-directed. They belong to no collectivity. The course their rebellion takes is instinctive; they operate according to no specific program of reform. They merely live reformed lives and at best "touch" other individuals by their example, their challenging presence. 44

In brief, these heroes tend to "deviate from" rather than "rebel against" society; their responses to life--"stoicism, skepticism and guilty conscience"<sup>45</sup>--are those of the protagonist who does not openly rebel.

In his examination of the causes and results of "the fact that class is not a central issue in any significant part of our fiction,"<sup>46</sup> R. L. McDougall presents a forceful and illuminating argument:

I shall ask you [he says] to detect in our literature a climate of thought and feeling that is frigid and constrained. The air is cold; hostile forces threaten; hope is deferred. In this environment, man's stance is static, his mood introverted, his virtues stoic. 47

Lacking both the Adamite myth and the clash of powerful opposing ideas which generated "the characteristic debate or dialectic of American society," says McDougall, English-Canadian literature drew upon an ideal without an ideology

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44 McDonald, p. 89.

45 Camus, p. 141.

46 McDougall, p. 13.

47 McDougall, p. 7.

whose organizing principle and archetype were negative. The result was an equally negative set of representative images which have persisted to this day:

In our literature, heroic action remains possible but becomes so deeply tinged with futility that withdrawal becomes a more characteristic response than commitment. The representative images are those of denial and defeat rather than fulfilment and victory. 48

The picture that emerges is that of a hero and a society in which no growth-producing dialogue takes place.

McDougall's tracing of this problem to a persistent tradition of "polite letters" is a cogent reminder of the different courses dictated by fidelity in the two cultures. In English-Canada, the "garrison mentality" protecting God, Empire and Institutions from criticism blocked any challenge to these absolutes and precluded consideration of a separate Canadian destiny. Failure of the Loyalist Dream was rationalized by blaming geography, climate and an uncaring society --an activity clearly restricted to the axis of "homme-milieu." In Quebec, where British conquest contradicted the myth of French-Canadian destiny, resentment found its focus in a nationalism bound to the axis of "homme-destin." The attack of the québécois rebel-hero, therefore, was never on his society, but on a privileged group betraying that society.

These patterns have not disappeared. With a remarkable consistency among novels which criticize, English-Canadian novels attack society, but not "the system," while French-Canadian novels do the reverse.

Every mythic hero, of course, is involved in both a destiny and a milieu. Falardeau's "axes" are a useful metaphor identifying the focus, values and direction of the hero's world-view. On the "homme-destin" axis, the hero is a solidary Agent of Change who risks all by confronting the absolute and sometimes perishes, but does not repent. On the "homme-milieu" axis, on the other hand, the hero tends to be a solitary Preserver of Tradition, whose confrontation with the absolute leads to repentance and reconciliation. Both heroes struggle with society, one to qualify in it, the other to change it. The reward of the first is social acceptance or "atonement with the father";<sup>49</sup> that of the second is apotheosis, or the illumination that "restores the world."<sup>50</sup> To achieve his destiny, the Agent of Change must expose the doubleness of his world or milieu by descending

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49 Campbell, in The Hero with a Thousand Faces, points to the psychological basis of this condition. "Atonement (at-one-ment) consists in no more than the abandonment of the self-generated double monster--the dragon thought to be God (superego) and the dragon thought to be Sin (repressed id)." (p. 130).

50 Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, p. 246.

into its Underworld and returning with the illumination conferring mastery of the two worlds. In this sense, the Agent of Change may be said to pursue his destiny on a vertical axis and the Preserver of Tradition to seek his place in society on an axis appropriately termed horizontal.

Since the impulse to change is present in all societies, its significance in the English-Canadian novel lies not in its presence, but in the way this presence is ignored or rationalized. As The Watch that Ends the Night shows, "unCanadian activities" which violate the social code are relegated to a shadow-hero, who acts in the hero's place but does not represent Canadian morality. This "double" can act for, influence, or even save the hero without contaminating him with deviance. But the effect is to tranquillize the hero and disfranchise his deviant double as a figure tainted with the violence of the American frontier.

What emerges repeatedly from English-Canadian fiction is a Loyalist ideal of morality as persistent as the violent, individualistic hero who follows the American code of the West. Protagonists exemplifying these ideals are readily available. In 1959, the year of the ninth printing of Jack Schaefer's Shane,<sup>51</sup> the English-Canadian ideal of

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51 Jack Schaefer, Shane (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1949).

the moral hero again springs to life in Sheila Watson's The Double Hook,<sup>52</sup> a Western novel of sin, repentance and atonement that, in its rejection of the "code of the West," is Shane's antithesis.

As their adventures begin, the contrasting heroes of these novels may be usefully compared in parallel: Shane, riding alone into the dusty Wyoming town where his gunfighting past will be justified by a small boy's faith in the final shoot-out; James Potter, the hero of The Double Hook, guilty of matricide, seduction and gratuitous violence, deserting his community for "another life" that moves "at a different rhythm" (p. 91). But James is unprepared for the alienation that Shane's profession has taught him to accept. In the false-front café with Traff and his prostitutes, he shows neither Shane's compassion for life's unfortunates nor the pride that would have prevented Shane from being robbed without a showdown. Instead, James considers the money stolen from him by a prostitute "the price of his escape" (p. 109). But escape from what? Ironically, it is from the very freedom he so recently desired. Turning in this bleak and diminished universe, where "the flick of a girl's hand had freed James from freedom" (p. 121), he rides

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52 Sheila Watson, The Double Hook (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1959).

back to the settlement he deserted, where he finds that his sister Greta has committed suicide, and that Lenchen, the girl he seduced, is about to bear his child.

The directions chosen by the heroes are plain. Shane, outnumbered, rides forward to meet his destiny; Potter, overcome by the bleakness of the outside world, rides back to endure his fate:

He couldn't think of what he'd do. He would simply come back as he'd gone. He'd stand silent in their cry of hate. . . . Out of his corruption life had leaped and he'd stepped on it carelessly as a man steps on spring shoots (p. 127).

As each adventure ends, the axis of the hero's movement is maintained. Wounded but victorious, Shane reassures Bobby Starrett, the boy with whom he has kept faith, and rides off on his lonely road. But James, whose journey has proven nothing except his lack of self-sufficiency, has not reckoned on the Calvinist miracle of unmerited grace, which descends on him unbidden as he stands in the ashes of his home, burned by Greta in her suicide:

He felt as he stood with his eyes closed on the destruction of what his heart had wished destroyed that by some generous gesture he had been turned once more into the first pasture of things (p. 131).

So the cycle of sin, repentance and redemption is complete. As James rejoins the renewed community symbolized by Felix, his newborn son, the novel ends with the forces of Love and

Fear in a precarious equilibrium.

What creates the mystery and debate which animate The Double Hook is not so much the quest of its unheroic rebel manqué as the novel's world-view of a humanity at risk between two warring gods, Coyote, the Trickster and Indian god of Fear, and a Judeo-Christian God of Wrath "coming after you with a whip until you stand and face him in the end" (p. 77). And what has to be faced, the novel seems to imply, is not God in the conventional sense but the polarities of existence which, as Campbell offers, blind the ego, concealing God from human sight:

The pairs of opposites (being and not being, life and death, beauty and ugliness, good and evil, and all the other polarities that bind the faculties of hope and fear . . .) are the clashing rocks (Symplegades) that crush the traveller, but between which the heroes always pass. 53

Does James successfully pass between these clashing rocks, or is he merely lifted to salvation by the power of divine grace? Can James, in Campbell's terms, be seen as transcending life to understand how the "insane tragedies of this vast and ruthless cosmos are completely validated by the majesty of Being"?<sup>54</sup> Such optimism, which is possible through Christian faith, seems precluded by the God of Fear,

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53 Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, p. 89.

54 Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, p. 147.

who has the final word. "I have set his feet," says Coyote of newborn Felix, "on the sloping shoulders of the world" (p. 134), which conclusion leaves the contesting forces of Love and Fear in the curious frozen moment of a kind of "Mexican stand-off," the dilemma of the double hook.

If this stasis leaves the hero with no way to grow, it must also be conceded that, in his final situation, growth is not required. From the moment of his conversion, James's adventure shifts from the axis of "homme-destin" to that of "homme-milieu," and his goal from self-realization to community, a movement which, in this novel at least, does not appear to be reversible.

As the hero's adventure is crowned with the traditional Preserver's rewards of social status and acceptance, it is clear that The Double Hook is not only anti-Western, but anti-Adamite and anti-individualist in a way that harmonizes with the English-Canadian tradition. Stripping the landscape of all signs of national or regional identity, it surpasses The Watch that Ends the Night in presenting a denationalized hero against a backdrop of implacable if not hostile destiny. A century earlier it might have been read as the garrison's sombre warning to those tempted by the freedom and libertinism of the coureur.

To describe the period following World War II as a testing time for heroes is not to suggest that the tests or the heroes in the two cultures are the same. In Quebec, the post-war novel retains its traditional coureur and habitant values, but with changes in emphasis and intensity as it pursues the double path of romanticism and realism. On one hand, the realm of evil is increasingly probed in novels such as Marie-Claire Blais' La belle Bête (1959) and Anne Hébert's Kamouraska (1970), both of which are examined in Margot Northey's study of the gothic and grotesque in Canadian fiction.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, the religious impulse of the terroir myth does not disappear. It recurs, for example, in Yves Thériault's La Fille laide (1950) and in Gabrielle Roy's Alexandre Chenevert (1954). Both heroes find in God, or in the space left by his absence, the essentially friendly destiny of the pays d'en haut.<sup>56</sup>

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55 Margot Northey, The Haunted Wilderness: The Gothic and Grotesque in Canadian Fiction (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), chapters 9 and 7 respectively.

56 Thériault's La Fille laide and Watson's The Double Hook provide a useful basis for comparison of rural worlds ruled respectively by a God of Love and a God of Wrath. Both lead through socially unpunished murder to atonement, but in different ways. In the latter novel, the hero seems powerless in the hands of fate; in the former work he consciously decides his destiny and spares his son's life through a sense of compassion and responsibility. In Alexandre Chenevert, an absentee God is replaced by human solidarity and a vision of the remembered primeval forest.

These two sets of values, however, do not receive equal emphasis in the French-Canadian hero's confrontation of his destiny in post-war literature. A key factor in the evolution of the hero in the Quebec novel, as Falardeau points out, is the extent to which moral dispossession and the loss of exemplary models force the hero downward into a world of alienation and suicidal despair:

C'est dans l'oeuvre d'André Langevin que le héros romanesque urbain apparaît pour la première fois sans aucun modèle et que, par la même, il atteint l'extrême limite de la solitude, la plus grande détresse et le plus absolu dénouement. Pour autant, cette oeuvre marque une étape capitale, peut-être la plus révélatrice dans l'histoire du roman contemporain. 57

The same hero, subject to differences in name and form, moves through Langevin's L'évadé de la nuit (1951) Poussière sur la ville (1953) and Le Temps des hommes (1956). In each case he is an orphan, lacking in identity and virility, "dominé par une toute-puissante fatalité qui l'accable, le paralyse ou le détruit." Denied both a sustaining past and a future that might offer hope, the alienated hero is condemned to a present in which the monstrous enigma of the suffering of children contradicts all justice "et fait que la naissance soit déjà la mort." In this impossible world, Falardeau adds, "la vie commence dans un cercueil."<sup>58</sup>

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57 Falardeau, "L'évolution du héros," p. 20.

58 Falardeau, "L'évolution du héros," p. 20

This sombre vision of existence dominates Quebec fiction of the fifties. Though the rural scene retains some of its coureur values, neither the optimistic vigour of Yves Thériault's Le Dompteur d'ours (1951) nor the familial warmth of Gabrielle Roy's La petite Poule d'eau (1950) and Rue Deschambault (1955) can prevail against the general alienation and despair. The heroes driven to suicide in Robert Elie's La Fin des songes (1950), Langevin's L'évadé de la nuit and Marie-Claire Blais' La belle Bête are at one with the thanatopsis of André Giroux's Le Gouffre a toujours soif (1953), the relentless naturalism of Jean Simard's Mon Fils pourtant heureux (1956) and the spiritual isolation of Jean Filiatrault's Le Refuge impossible (1957).

What, then, is the relationship of this dark night of the soul to the development of the fictional hero in Quebec? How can such a defeatist impulse as self-destruction point in the direction of revolution? To move toward an answer to these questions requires consideration of the world-view of Quebec's suicidal heroes and also of the uses to which their authors put the device of suicide.

Charles Glicksberg links the theme of self-destruction in literature in general to the decline of Western civilization. Though he grants the hero who ends his own life a certain dignity and even "a spirit of greatness as he

prepares his own doom,"<sup>59</sup> Glicksberg's initial view, that "A vital culture . . . may create tragedy but never suicidal art,"<sup>60</sup> implies little future for the fictional hero in Quebec. M. G. Hesse, in examining the theme of suicide in the French-Canadian novel since 1945, takes a different view. While recognizing the suicidally-alienated hero as an international phenomenon, Hesse sees Quebec's self-destructive protagonists as the artist's cry of warning to society, and concludes on a more hopeful note:

. . . there are signs that the unprecedented prevalence of suicide in the French-Canadian novel since 1945 promises a favorable future, since it indicates a widespread search for identity which is necessitated by French Canada's metamorphosis. Meditation on death is paradoxically a quest for a fuller life.<sup>61</sup>

This view, implying a dynamic relation between the fictional hero and society,<sup>62</sup> reinforces Falardeau's theory of axes.

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59 Charles I Glicksberg, "To Be or not to Be: The Literature of Suicide," Queens Quarterly, LXVII (Autumn 1960), 386.

60 Glicksberg, p. 384.

61 M. G. Hesse, "The Theme of Suicide in the French-Canadian Novel since 1945," Mosaic, V (Summer 1972), 134.

62 As Hesse points out in the same work, "In view of the social implications of suicide, it is not surprising that as a forerunner to the 'Quiet Revolution' the number of novels dealing with suicides rose sharply in the late fifties" (p. 122).

Metamorphosis, identity and the quest for a fuller life all characterize the axis (and value system) of "homme-destin" which leads the hero from imitation through rejection and inner conflict to maturity. Here, as both Glicksberg<sup>63</sup> and Hesse would agree, even the hero's suicide may take on positive values.

In Hesse's view, the protagonist who commits suicide rather than allow society to block the realization of his superior values is acting against conditions which compromise his integrity and could abolish the meaning of life. In addition, by his criticism of society, the author presents the suicide not as an anti-hero but as "potentially superior" individual. "He is a victim of himself and of society precisely because his idealism has come into conflict with reality."<sup>64</sup>

Seen in this light, the hero's suicide is two-edged. Its negative value as an act of despair is counterbalanced by its positive force as a declaration that life as it should be lived is worthy of the highest sacrifice. Perhaps its major significance, however, lies in the author's symbolic suicide, which indicates a crise de conscience in society

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63 Glicksberg, p. 386.

64 Hesse, p. 122.

and acts as a demand for social change. Glicksberg agrees with this principle, since a novel in which the hero, representing society, kills himself as a final rejection of the conditions of life, is, in Glicksberg's terms, "no longer "suicidal art" but "tragedy."<sup>65</sup> True despair, as Camus affirms, does not express itself in writing, for "a literature of despair is a contradiction in terms."<sup>66</sup>

The presence of the rebel-suicide in Quebec fiction<sup>67</sup> is hardly more striking than his absence from the scene in English Canada. Suicide is rare in English-Canadian fiction. Though it may be the resort of minor characters-- a spouse (Morley Callaghan, An Autumn Penitent, 1929), a sister (Sheila Watson, The Double Hook, 1959), a business associate (Callaghan, The Many Colored Coat, 1960) or a parent (Timothy Findley, Famous Last Words, 1981)--it is an act the hero himself may not commit, though he may consider

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65 Glicksberg makes the point that "literary suicide is tragic only when it is rooted in a metaphysical or 'principled' rejection of life. That this needs to be reasoned out. . . . It is the internal 'logic' that counts, the battle the protagonist fights within, the motives that finally prompt him to say no to life" (p. 387).

66 Camus, p. 263.

67 Hesse states that "in a comprehensive study of the theme of death since 1945 some 180 works would merit references, of which approximately 35 deal with the problem of suicide" (p. 120).

it, as in D. M. Clark's Inside Shadows (1973). The suicides in Grove's The Yoke of Life (1930) and the unpublished version of Fruits of the Earth are rare and only partial exceptions to the prevailing code, which strongly resisted the denunciation of life as the "morally-approved system" implied by suicide. The focus of suicide in English-Canadian fiction--in Sheila Watson's The Double Hook and Sinclair Ross's "The Painted Door," for example--seems to be on the betrayal of one individual by another, and on the guilt to be borne by the betraying survivor. Even when broad social guilt may be inferred, suicide here does not reflect, as it so often does in Quebec literature, a total condemnation of the conditions of life, with its silent scream for reform. On those rare occasions when it does occur, suicide in English-Canadian fiction is linked with the axis (and value system) of "homme-milieu," which focuses on the hero's situation, as opposed to the "homme-destin" axis, which focuses on his position.

In each case, heroes and authors tend to confirm Falardeau's axial theory--in Quebec by performing and hence symbolically sharing in what Glicksberg calls the "metaphysical or 'principled' rejection of life"; in English Canada by abstaining from and implying disapproval of the same act. When the politicized Québécois hero "confronts

his furies"<sup>68</sup> in the Underworld, he has descended to levels of despair from which he cannot always return. Not until La Bagarre (1958), however, does this earlier descent appear clearly as a necessary and logical event in the hero's development.

English-Canadian critics in this period, untouched by the shock waves of Paul-Emile Borduas' Refus Global<sup>69</sup> and Jean-Paul Desbiens' Les Insolences du frère Untel (1960), reacted to the absence of a national literature in a quieter way. But their plea for novels of debate and analysis went unanswered. Neither Desmond Pacey's demand for literary treatment of "the festering sores of our social body, as well as its areas of healthy tissue,"<sup>70</sup> nor Leon Edel's identification of "national pallor" as the characteristic

<sup>68</sup> Rollo May, in Love and Will (New York: Dell, 1974), using the Furies of Aeschylus' Oresteia as an analogue for a psychological dilemma faced by modern man, says: "if we repress the daimonic, we shall find these powers returning to 'sicken' us; whereas, if we let them stay, we shall have to struggle to a new level of consciousness in order to integrate them and not be overwhelmed by impersonal power" (p. 174).

<sup>69</sup> "In the intellectual sphere," says Ben-Z Shek in The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature, "a capital event was the publication in 1948 of the manifesto REFUS GLOBAL, which had a lasting effect on cultural effervescence" (p. 602). See also Michèle Lalonde, "The Mitre and the Tuque," in Contemporary Quebec Criticism, p. 83.

<sup>70</sup> Desmond Pacey, "The Novel in Canada," Queens Quarterly, LII (Autumn 1945), 325.

mark of Canadian writing<sup>71</sup> evoked a positive response.

"The most striking thing about our criticism," Pacey noted in 1950, "is that there is so little of it."<sup>72</sup> And, "it would be fruitful to ask," added Arthur Phelps in the same year, "how this literature and this society interact and condition and reveal one another."<sup>73</sup>

An answer to Phelps' question would have revealed a culturally fragmented Canada beset with new problems and remote from the unity of the Loyalist ideal. Neither critics nor authors, however, were prepared to address these new complexities or able to escape the yearning for a national vision rooted in the past. Not only did Québécois and federalist ideals of nationhood differ, but the initial wave of post-war sentiment in each literature belied the powerful undertow that finally prevailed. In English-Canada, Hugh MacLennan's promising hero of Barometer Rising (1941) was fragmented in The Watch that Ends the Night (1959) and defeated in Return of the Sphinx (1967). In Quebec, the

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71 Cited in Ralph Gustafson's "New York Letter," Northern Review, I. (1945), 20.

72 Desmond Pacey, "Literary Criticism in Canada," University of Toronto Quarterly, XIX (January 1950), 113.

73 Arthur Phelps, "Canadian Literature and Canadian Society," Northern Review, III. (April-May 1950), 25.

despairing note of André Giroux's Le Gouffre a toujours soir (1953) and many other novels was replaced by the revolutionary vision of La Bagarre (1958).

Though it would be difficult to point to any single novel as effectively demolishing the old world-view, by the end of the sixties it was clear that in both cultures the old mythologies no longer sufficed.

## Chapter V

### REMODELLING MYTHOLOGIES

Nations, like individuals, are likely to be neurotic, and Canada's history and location have conspired to qualify her for a pretty high place on the neurotic list. . . . The causes of the neurosis must be faced, admitted and described, they must be lifted out of the dark of the mind and made visible. Within a society, it is the function and duty of the artists to do this, and when we look back in history we find that most great art has emerged from the agony of this self-healing process.

--Hugh MacLennan,  
"Our Neurosis is Relevant"<sup>1</sup>

Heroes, as we have seen, are not only preservers of tradition. They are the products and catalysts of a continuous process by which society remodels inherited myths to meet its changing needs. The rate of this remodelling may vary. But whether it is perceived as a slow, unconscious democratization of the hero across millennia,<sup>2</sup> the swift, conscious creation of a new "Revolutionary Man,"<sup>3</sup> or a modern

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1 Hugh MacLennan, "After 300 Years, Our Neurosis is Relevant" (1961), in The Artist in Canadian Literature, ed. Lionel Wilson (Toronto: MacMillan, 1976), pp. 37, 38.

2 See Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (1957) (New York: Atheneum, 1967).

3 As in the U.S.S.R. after the formation of the state-controlled Union of Soviet Writers in 1934.

"Flux abounding"<sup>4</sup> in which the hero threatens to disappear, the process is continuous. It is an ongoing response to a society's hopes and fears.

In the early stages of a literature, this response may be quite unconscious. It is doubtful, for example, that the author of La Terre paternelle or The Seats of the Mighty consciously aimed at altering a people's mythology. In Canadian fiction of the 1960s, however, this response crystallizes into a strong and conscious break with forms and expressions of the past, an activity leading in time to consideration of a new Canadian myth. The result, as critics have noted, is the "most remarkable body of Quebec literature to date,"<sup>5</sup> and a "boundary between the old and the new in [English-] Canadian fiction."<sup>6</sup> Alienation, dispossession, and dehumanization--products of an increasingly technological and uncaring society--drive the hero into uncharted worlds of antinomianism, eroticism, violence and paradox which "alternent comme les facettes d'un kaléidoscope."<sup>7</sup>

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4 The phrase Paul West applies to Modernism in general in The Modern Novel (London: Hutchinson, 1963), p. 14, aptly describes Canadian literature in the sixties.

5 Shouldice, p. 9.

6 Sam Solecki, "Novels in English 1960 to 1982," The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature, p. 577.

7 Falardeau, "l'Evolution du héros," p. 22.

In this increasingly solipsistic universe, the protagonist, whether as rebel, Doppelganger, primitive man, driven artist or awakening woman, is engaged in a relentless search--"for identity, a father, a husband, a substitute for God, or reasons to go on living"<sup>8</sup>--and at times almost disappears in the complexity of the novel-as-work-of-art. The axes of "homme-milieu" and "homme-destin" survive; but exemplary hero models are transformed (often into their opposites) and "lines of force"<sup>9</sup> from the past are altered by new literary vectors consciously aimed at reshaping Canadian mythologies. It is the aim of this chapter to assess the effect of these factors on the development of the fictional hero and to consider the ways in which the two cultures refashion mythologies to meet their changing needs.

In both cultures the bridge into the sixties is populated with deviant heroes in conflict with society, rejecting ethnicity (Yves Thériault, Aaron [1954]), capitalism

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8 Falardeau's comments on the Quebec hero of the sixties, "l'Evolution du héros," p. 22, apply equally to English-Canadian protagonists, as subsequent examples in this chapter show.

9 Jeanne Lapointe, "Quelques apports positifs de notre littérature d'imagination," Cité Libre, I (October 1954), 17-36, sees a variety of factors, including the psychological make-up of the hero, as "lines of force" enabling her to categorize the contemporary novel. In the sixties particularly, novels as well as works of criticism may be seen as vectors affecting the over-all re-shaping of literature.

(Earle Birney, Down the Long Table (1955)), bureaucracy (R. J. Childerhose, Splash One Tiger and Gérard Bessette, Les Pédagogues (1961)), the social system (Hubert Aquin, Prochain épisode (1965)), civilization (Douglas Le Pan, The Deserter (1964)) and humankind (Marie-Claire Blais, La belle Bête (1968)). Each of these lines of advance retains the essential thread of its cultural tradition. Of the English-Canadian novels examined in the following pages, all but one present heroes who, in the end, seek at-one-ment with society. And all bear out the warning against deviation implicit in the Loyalist Dream. Quebec protagonists, on the other hand, tend to follow diverse paths opened by the continuing dialogue of freedom-versus-order.

Beyond these cultural boundaries, the search for a "wholeness" to transcend the fragmenting effect of modern technology is subtext, and often pretext, for many novels of the sixties. In R. J. Childerhose's Splash One Tiger and Gérard Bessette's Les Pédagogues, for example, what Jacques Ellul calls la technique<sup>10</sup> links two otherwise widely separated heroes: an atavistic fighter-pilot locked in to the conformity of the jet age and a free-thinking

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<sup>10</sup> Jacques Ellul, The Technological Society, trans. John Wilkinson (New York: Random House, 1964), pp. 395, 405, 412. Originally published as La Technique ou l'enjeu du siècle (Librairie Armand Colin, 1954).

professor enmeshed in the stultifying bureaucracy of an école pédagogique.

Childerhose's Splash One Tiger<sup>11</sup> introduces a hero new to English-Canadian fiction, a coureur type who is not a "double" and who is at home in the world of technology while opposing the bureaucracy that governs it. For Flight Lieutenant "Buzz"<sup>12</sup> Saunders, DFC, the intricate agency of high technology that thrusts Canadian jets across Europe in NATO war-games provides an exhilarating way of life. As warrior, Saunders has all the right stuff. He is the medieval knight on a modern Pegasus piercing the cloud cover at mach one, magnanimous to defeated foes, chivalrous to women, and demanding excellence of himself and the young pilots he is training for war.

But the sleek jets that streak skyward from Soellingen are not all that have changed since Saunders' free-wheeling Battle of Britain days and the excitement of World War II. Rising technology has generated new complications of speed, air-space, and international diplomacy governed by

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11 R. J. Childerhose, Splash One Tiger (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1961).

12 Saunders' nickname and personality both evoke the memory of Canadian fighter-pilot Buzz Beurling, whose extraordinary career in World War II and death in Rome are described by Brian Nolan in Hero (Markham: Penguin, 1982).

complex rules--and a new breed of career officers who enforce the rules to the letter. Frustrated by over-zealous bureaucrats, Buzz faces the dilemma of Noiraud in Neuf Jours de haine: "S'il est bon soldat, il est très mauvais militaire."<sup>13</sup>

The resulting drama is neither a myth of individual growth, nor of tribal initiation, but a clash of these two, represented by Buzz and officious Squadron Leader Lynch, as the axes of "homme-destin" and "homme-milieu" intersect. True to his warrior code, Saunders exposes the cowardice of one of his charges, befriends an ex-Luftwaffe pilot down in his luck, and risks life and career by breaking regulations to find Lynch, lost in the overcast, and guide him home. As Lynch touches down safely, however, he loses a wing tank, which explodes against the F-86 guiding him in, and Buzz dies, a victim of the system he could neither abandon nor transcend.

Despite his coureur qualities, Buzz is not a rebel in Camus' sense of the word, but an anachronistic Preserver of the warrior ideal. An archaic hero in a technological world, he remains faithful to the system that frustrates and finally destroys him. In death he is a reminder of English Canada's heroes of sacrifice. Since his vision of

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13 Richard, Neuf Jours de haine, p. 205.

the world does not include a future, Buzz cannot be the Out-rider of society that Lanoue is in Les Canadiens errants and Noiraud is in Neuf Jours de haine. Nevertheless, his coureur and warrior ideals, his steadfastness, and Lynch's final tribute as he dies--"He's a fighter pilot. And he doesn't always take orders." (p. 287)--clearly place him on the axis of "homme-destin."

Consciously or otherwise, the author of Splash One Tiger dramatizes Ellul's thesis that technology is not just systems and machines, but a state of mind, a cancerous conformism that places means above ends, destroying individualism through the "massification" of society.<sup>14</sup> A striking example of this conformism appears in Gérard Bessette's Les Pédagogues<sup>15</sup> when Sarto Pellerin, a free-thinking teacher, confronts Cyril Arbour, Director of the Ecole Pédagogique and puppet of the Minister of Education. Although the technology here is not military but academic, the clash, once again, is between individualism and conformism. Kept in power by career-hungry subordinates such as John Sloper (a congenital "yes-man") and Hubert Siguin (a psychologist who

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14 Ellul, pp. 332 ff.

15 Gérard Bessette, Les Pédagogues (Montréal: Le Cercle du Livre de France, 1961)

falsifies his research data), Arbour is more than a match for Sarto and his friend Paul Marcotte. As colleagues look on in sympathetic impotence or cynical unconcern, the worst fears of Sarto's wife, Georgiana, are realized. Sarto is the last to learn of his dismissal (arranged by Arbour) and is saved only by an offer of employment from Jules Lebeuf, the hero of La Bagarre and now a union leader. In a symbolic fusion of workers and intellectuals, Sarto subsequently joins the Quebec labour movement. Aglow with revolutionary fervor and too many whiskeys, he confronts Arbour at an academic dinner, denounces him publicly as "un salaud et un goujat" and leads Georgiana out into the moonlight and danger of a new life. "Ne t'inquiète pas," he reassures her as they are about to descend the stairs. "La lutte vient tout juste de s'ouvrir. Ce n'est que le commencement" (p. 309).

Like Lebeuf and Pellerin, the Quebec hero must seek his destiny in the freedom-versus-order conflict waged at street level, whether it leads to revolution (Ethel et le Terroriste<sup>16</sup>), a nightmare of indecision (Prochain épisode), the rejection of society (La belle Bête) or a new synthesizing vision that renders society more tolerable (Salut

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16 Claude Jasmin, Ethel et le Terroriste (Montréal: Librairie Déom, 1965).

Galarneau!<sup>17</sup>). The English-Canadian hero, however, can never forget his subordination to "the general good." Having deviated, he may be re-absorbed by society through divine grace (The Double Hook), die a sacrificial death (Splash One Tiger), voluntarily return to punishment (The Deserter) or be caught and punished unrepentant, as in Breaking Smith's Quarter Horse.<sup>18</sup> For the deviant without revolutionary options, as for the exile, atonement with society becomes a dominant factor, though by no means the only one at play.

In both cultures, the darkening world-view in which man seems unable to take charge of his destiny turns heroes into anti-heroes and evokes archaic surrogates to achieve the passive hero's secret or expressed desires.<sup>19</sup> Although the Doppelganger or "double" may appear in the role of supportive anima (as in Les Demi-civilisés and As for Me and

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17 Jacques Godbout, Salut Galarneau! (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1967).

18 Paul St. Pierre, Breaking Smith's Quarter Horse (Toronto: Ryerson, 1966).

19 In a critical work in harmony with the theme of Sean O'Faolain's The Vanishing Hero, Edmund Fuller's Man in Modern Fiction (1949) (New York: Random House, 1958) examines a similar movement affecting post-war fiction in the United States. In Fuller's view the American movement represents an abrogation of moral judgment on the part of heroes and their authors.

My House, for example), he is more often a competitor arising out of the hero's or anti-hero's own mind. Dick Harrison points to the ubiquity and importance of these surrogates in discussing Robert Kroetsch's The Studhorse Man:

Demeter and Hazard are like the paired characters which appear again and again in Canadian fiction. In Hugh MacLennan's The Watch that Ends the Night, George Stewart is the historian, Jerome Martell the mythic hero; in Leonard Cohen's Beautiful Losers, "I" is the historian, "F" the man of myths; in Robertson Davies' Fifth Business, Dunstan Ramsay is the historian, Boy Staunton the liver of myths. In every case these paired or split characters are engaged in a very complex action involving shared identity and love of the same woman which cannot be examined here, but the frequency of their appearance suggests that Canadians' particular kind of schizophrenia stems from a disparity between the historical and mythic shapes given to their experience. 20

All of these works suggest the compensatory role of the English-Canadian Doppelganger, a substitute hero embracing life to the full and exercising his droit de seigneur over the hero's traditional prize, a beautiful woman whose role is subordinate to the hero's and whose destiny is variable. She may perish (Beautiful Losers), be returned to the passive hero as a gift (The Watch that Ends the Night), offer herself belatedly to the hero (Fifth Business) or be won back by the hero after the Doppelganger's death, as in

Kroetsch's first novel, But We are Exiles.<sup>21</sup>

The nature and recurrence of these doubles are suggestive of their likely source, the suppression of archaic urges by the strictures of the Loyalist Dream. If this is the case, it is understandable that they do not emerge from such literary models as Melville's Pierre, with its revelation of the tragic "ambiguity of idealistic absolutism,"<sup>22</sup> or Twain's "Mysterious Stranger," with its mechanistic universe.<sup>23</sup> Such ambiguity and fatalistic necessity would have undercut the very foundation of that dream. The English-Canadian double, almost invariably male, and, with the exception of Mordecai Richler's St. Urbain's Horseman,<sup>24</sup> a symbol of individual rather than collective freedom, provides the daring and machismo lacking in the hero himself. Consequently, the increase in the sexuality and violence of the double in the sixties and seventies is not so much an indication of heroism or growth as a reiteration of the axiom that violence is the result of un-lived life.

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21 Robert Kroetsch, But We are Exiles (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965).

22 See Newton Arvin, Herman Melville (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1950), p. 219.

23 Mark Twain, "The Mysterious Stranger," in Great Short Works of Mark Twain, ed. Justin Kaplan (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 366.

24 Mordecai Richler, St. Urbain's Horseman (1966) (Toronto: Bantam, 1972).

This axiom, of course, holds true in any culture. But behind the paired figures in Quebec fiction looms the trauma of 1763, for which the long-standing dialogue of freedom and order seeks an answer. As it intensifies in the sixties and seventies, this inner conflict re-shapes heroes and their shadow selves. Where the double in André Langevin's Poussière sur la ville (1953), for example, was a female fauve, the doubles in Anne Hébert's Kamouraska (1970) and Les Enfants du sabbat (1975) are female demons, obsessed with violence in the service of power. In Hubert Aquin's Prochain épisode (1965), while his revolutionary double roams the world, the imprisoned writer-hero turns la patrie into a further double of the woman he loves--a "baroque exploration of the Doppelganger theme"<sup>25</sup> which is continued in Aquin's Trou de mémoire (1968) and receives a fantastic technological twist in Jacques Godbout's Les Têtes à Papineau (1981).

All of these novels reflect a common, if sometimes camouflaged, concern for the collective destiny of Quebec society. Consequently, their doubles cannot ride off into the West, as Martell does in The Watch that Ends the Night

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<sup>25</sup> Louis Lasnier, "Novels in French 1960 to 1982," The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature, p. 608.

(1959), nor can their heroes resolve their collective problems as Peter Guy does his individual problem in But We Are Exiles (1965). Instead, they must probe the premises of the coureur/habitant tradition and battle their Furies to a reconciliation compatible with their double needs. In this sense, they are not merely rebels, but Outriders, exploring the limits of the society with which they seem to be at war.

It is this politicizing of the hero, the use of the protagonist to represent society, that characterizes later "doubling" in Quebec, giving rise to the impression that, in French Canada, hero and double represent a conflict between two rival societies, whereas in English Canada they represent a conflict between society and the individual.<sup>26</sup> This impression is reinforced in an area closely related to literary "doubling," the adventure of the hero-as-primitive, or the novel of archaic man. Here it may be useful to compare the heroes of Paul St. Pierre's Breaking Smith's Quarter Horse (1966) and Rudy Wiebe's The Temptations of Big Bear (1973) with their counterparts in Yves Thériault's Ashini

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26 In their final form these conflicts usher in a further stage in the development of the hero. This stage, in which the double hero, born of contradictions and ambiguities, is seen as a means of their reconciliation in such novels as Beautiful Losers and Trou de mémoire, will be dealt with in chapter VI.

(1961) and his Inuit trilogy, Agaguk (1951), Tayaout fils d'Agaguk (1971) and Agoak l'héritage d'Agaguk (1975).

In their analysis of the primitive hero in the Quebec novel, the authors of Le Roman canadien-français du vingtième siècle (1966) stress both his elemental qualities and the "homme-destin" axis of his adventure:

C'est le drame de l'individu qui se réserve la gouverne de son destin, ne composant plus qu'avec ses propres forces, son intelligence et sa compréhension originale de l'existence. Pour atteindre à ses fins, le héros doit vaincre le hasard, détruire les obstacles surgissants, jusqu'à l'absolu d'une mort, pressentie et acceptée, non comme une défaite, mais comme un dépassement, une victoire ultime sur le sort. 27

Beside this epic figure, Paul St. Pierre's protagonist in Breaking Smith's Quarter Horse seems at first the ultimate anti-hero, a "poor white" among equally impoverished Indians, whose disappearance, as his author admits, would not alter Canada's destiny "by the breadth of one hair" (p. 6). But Smith is a vision of archaic man. Taciturn as an Indian, fiercely independent, inured to pain and convinced, even in misfortune, that "all is well" (p. 163), he is a primitive hero manqué whose adventure delimits the territory of the English-Canadian primitive.

At issue in Breaking Smith's Quarter Horse are the fates of Gabriel Jimmyboy, an Indian who has killed a man

and takes refuge in Smith's sod hut, and Old Antoine, who tries to help Jimmyboy after he is betrayed to the police, and is jailed in turn. Even more important is the struggle between Smith's desire to remain uninvolved and his instinct for justice and loyalty. As circumstances slowly draw him into town in Jimmybody's defence, he finds that civilization offers little scope for the spontaneity or mistakes of archaic man. At Jimmyboy's trial, Smith physically attacks the lying court interpreter who betrayed Jimmyboy and draws two months in jail. His sentence is lightened to outdoor wood-cutting only when he capitulates and addresses the judge as "my lord."

As the trial ends, Jimmyboy is acquitted and Antoine goes free; but his words to the court sum up an era which ended even before his time: "All the old chiefs have been killed by the white savages," (p. 135) and "now we, all of us peoples, got to go the white man's way" (p. 317) As for Smith:

All his penitence had been wasted. Had he remained stubborn to the end, he might have kept the satisfaction of knowing that he'd told the rest of the world that Smith didn't give a damn for it. Instead he had crawled, and he had gained nothing . . . (p. 157).

Ironically, Smith is aware that he has betrayed the instincts of archaic man.

Breaking Smith's Quarter Horse, though it captures neither the highly romanticized world of Fred Bodsworth's The Strange One (1959) nor the moral vision of Rudy Wiebe's The Temptations of Big Bear (1973), seems closer than either to the primitive spirit. Yet all three novels end on a note of atonement which separates them from Thériault's Indian and Inuit heroes, whose simple and fiercely independent temperaments make them prototypes of the primitive hero described by Robidoux and Renaud. Agaguk's rejection of unacceptable conditions of life, though it means an isolated existence in the Arctic wastes, is as total and uncompromising as that of Ashini, the Indian chief who commits suicide to shame the white leaders who refuse to meet with him. In Tayaout and Agoak the destruction begun by advancing technology comes full circle. Yet, as Robidoux and Renaud observe, no challenge of man or nature is refused by the primitive hero. Even the idea of death is anticipated and accepted, not as a defeat, but as an ultimate victory over fate.

In a sense, both Big Bear in The Temptations and Riel in The Scorched-Wood People (1977) may be said to anticipate and accept the idea of death. Yet their final destinies are not victories over fate, but defeats. Nothing about Big Bear approaches the mythic adventure of the classic warrior, while everything in The Temptations

bespeaks the psychomachia of the miles christianus. W. J. Keith, who cites other critics' observations of Big Bear's "Biblical" rather than "Indian speech" and his pacifism, which "seems more native to Wiebe's Mennonite world than to Big Bear's Cree,"<sup>28</sup> adds a further important point: "he is continually passive rather than active. He resists signing the treaty and he refuses to commit his followers to Riel and the Métis," which abstentions make him, in Keith's view, "not so much a hero . . . as a sacrificial victim."<sup>29</sup>

An even stronger contrast appears when primitive heroes such as Ashini and Big Bear are placed side by side and compared in terms of action, literary axis and world-view:

## ASHINI

Aging chief and lone survivor of his people, humiliated by white power, focuses attention on his position and his destiny.

His integrity is sustained by past examples until, motivated by pride, he acts.

## BIG BEAR

Aging chief of a starving people, humiliated by white power, focuses attention on his situation and his milieu.

His integrity is eroded by present doubts until, motivated by pity, he fails to act.

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28 W. J. Keith, Epic Fiction: The Art of Rudy Wiebe (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1981), p. 77.

29 Keith, Epic Fiction, p. 76.

Hanging himself as a final reproach to the powerful, Ashini turns his death into a moral victory

Attempting to compromise with the powerful, Big Bear's final plea for pity marks his total defeat.

On this basis Ashini falls naturally into place beside the classic warriors of Les Canadiens errants and Neuf Jours de haine, while Big Bear is assigned by his author the role of the miles christianus exemplified in McDougall's Execution. This ancient clash between Christian humility and warrior pride creates a special problem in The Scorched-Wood People, where Wiebe attempts a resolution by assigning religious vision to Riel and the burden of warrior guilt to Dumont. The effect, not surprisingly, is to split the epic hero in two, turning Riel into a St. Sebastian and Dumont into a Canadian Spartacus.

A similar disparity in the stance to life appears in novels dealing with the hero as artist. In Hugh Hood's White Figure, White Ground (1964), for example, the quest of a genteel artist-hero for the highest and purest light brings him the reward of a New York exhibition; yet his final decision is to compromise with the demands of society. In Gabrielle Roy's La Montagne secrète (1961), on the other hand, an artist-coureur who portrays settlers and trappers in the wilderness stumbles on a mysterious mountain symbolizing the mythical "Sacred Mountain . . . at the center of

the world."<sup>30</sup> This hidden mountain becomes his obsessive ideal. Though his travels bring him no closer to his secret goal of fully expressing his dream and he dies without fame, the unwavering vision of his quest confirms the "homme-destin" relation.

Across both literatures in this period, ambiguous and alienated heroes fail to complete the mythic cycle that would win them and their societies a sense of direction and purpose in life. In this they are representative of a civilization disillusioned and at odds with itself, not because myth has failed--there are even instances of escape into myth<sup>31</sup>--but because the congruity of myth and social reality has been lost and cannot be regained until either the myth or the reality is changed. Two novels which exemplify this situation are Douglas Le Pan's The Deserter (1964) and Hubert Aquin's Prochain épisode (1965).

The Deserter introduces a hero and a milieu as denationalized as those of The Double Hook and probes the

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30 According to Eliade, "The Sacred Mountain--where heaven and earth meet--is situated at the center of the world. Every temple or palace--and, by extension every sacred city or royal residence--is a Sacred Mountain, thus becoming a center. . . . regarded as the meeting point of heaven, earth, and hell" (p. 12).

31 For example, Gwendolyn MacEwen's Julian the Magician (1963) and Marie-Claire Blais' La belle Bête (1968).

yearnings of archaic man more deeply than Breaking Smith's Quarter Horse. Rusty, a Sergeant decorated for bravery in an unidentified war and later reduced to the ranks for saving a comrade's life against orders, awakens in an unnamed post-war society to a deep conviction of "the blindness," if not the fundamental evil, of the state" he serves.<sup>32</sup> His desertion, which forces him into a vice-ridden, lawless underworld, is also a search for conditions acceptable to his archaic self, a world ensuring freedom "for everyone there to blaze in his own way" (p. 190). Rusty's primitive yet civilized ideal, however, is contaminated with the need for a degree of order civilization itself cannot provide. It is an "order that doesn't rest on police" (p. 53) but on the higher moral law of a cosmos in which "paradise exists" because "it must" (p. 163). Such an ideal corresponds closely to the distant and perfect moral law that Loyalists saw as sustaining the Imperial Dream. But Rusty's attempt to fuse Adamite and Imperial myths into a new combination of freedom and order does not succeed, largely because Rusty himself is torn between conflicting desires. When Dragon, a criminal "free spirit," says "I deserted because I'm a stag and I run as I will," Rusty can only reply, "I wish I

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32 F. W. Watt, Introd., The Deserter, by Douglas Le Pan (1964) (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), p. ix.

could be so simple" (p. 162). Instead, he is a man of two worlds.

Caught between the values of his conformist friend Mark and those of the animalistic Dragon, Rusty is not a unifier, but a self-styled "double agent of light and darkness" (p. 192) in a morality play of an anonymous hero in a nameless place. F. W. Watt provides this perspective on action and scene in The Deserter:

The hero, the people he encounters, the things he does, the places in which we see him, are to be recognized not for what is unique and specifically identifiable, but for what is universally true about them. . . . [which] explains, too, the deliberately symbolic nature of the action, that almost universal of myths, in which the hero deserts the community to descend into the underworld, experiences initiations and ordeals, and returns with new understanding to the upper world. 33

But the "understanding" Rusty brings back is not the mythic hero's mastery of two worlds. Rather, it is an awareness of their incompatibility and a reiteration of the Loyalist warning against deviation. Though his descent into the underworld brings him into contact with freedom of spirit, nimble defiance, friendship, self-sacrifice and love, as Watt observes, these experiences, lacking a unifying pattern, are flotsam; they provide no controlling influence on the moral

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33 Watt, Introd., The Deserter, p. viii.

chaos of the underworld. With the death of his friend Steve, Rusty's sense of honour deserts his divided personality and he quietly surrenders to the authorities. "Some men can live happily as animals," he concludes. "I can't" (p. 189). His final act of surrender recognizes not so much the necessity of his high ideal as the impossibility of its achievement.

If The Deserter applies the logic of debate to a decision it later reverses, Prochain épisode applies the logic of dream to a problem eternally eluding its pursuer, for whom past, present and future melt and merge, like his multiple selves, in a confusing series of distorting mirrors. Literary technique, however, is but one of the factors differentiating these novels. More important, from the perspective of the hero's development, is his goal during the course of his adventure. In The Deserter, the hero strives to change his life by deviating from society's rules but ends by choosing the status quo; in Prochain épisode, he intends to transform society and ends by choosing revolution as his means. These predispositions of coureur and Loyalist, to rebellion and to law and order, respectively, reappear in novels dealing with armed insurrection, such as Claude Jasmin's Ethel et le terroriste (1964) and Bruce Powe's Killing Ground (1968), published under the pseudonym of Ellis Portal.

In Ethel et le terroriste the focus is not on the hero's act of revolutionary violence, but on his resulting psychomachia, symbolizing, as Jasmin explains, the "acute examination of conscience which seized French Canada in the spring of 1963."<sup>34</sup> Powe's novel of civil war, reaching for a more encompassing nationalism, tends to re-shape the hero by altering his origins, freeing him from both the English-Canadian and Quebec traditions. In Killing Ground, as federal troops clash with separatist rebels, the danger of a partitioned Canada is resolved when the opponents must unite to repel invasion from the United States. Colonel Alex Hlynka, the hero and a seasoned professional soldier of Ukrainian descent, is clearly the non-partisan defender of Canadian stability in this clash of cultures as well as the protector of his nation from outside threats. A further step in the search for a broadly representative Canadian hero is taken in Richard Rohmer's Exxoneration (1974), where Colonel Pierre de Gaspé, a Québécois serving an English-Canadian Prime Minister, leads Canadian forces in the successful repulsion of American invaders. But the recurring theme of a threatening United States does not disperse the vision of a "higher law" and the yearning for moral universalism in novels of the sixties, whether the novel ends in

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<sup>34</sup> Claude Jasmin, preface to Ethel and the Terrorist, trans. David S. Walker (Montreal: Harvest House, 1974) p. 9.

stalemate and defeated dreams, as in Hugh MacLennan's Return of the Sphinx (1967), or in continuing struggle, as in David Stein's Scratch One Dreamer (1967).

All of these novels may be seen as contributing to that often unconscious refashioning of mythologies which is one of the functions of literature. Within the profusion and diversity of fiction in the sixties and seventies, however, one aspect of the novel in particular, the emergence of Woman-as-hero, reflects a strong sense of conscious re-mythologizing and adds new dimensions and values to the development of the protagonist. Though Woman-as-hero is by no means an invention of the sixties in Canada,<sup>35</sup> it is during this period, extending into the seventies, that women novelists liberate the female protagonist to find her authentic self, pursue her own adventure in a modern setting and achieve a new sense of identity. No longer the "heroine" of tradition, dependent on the approval of a fulfilling male, she is herself the "hero," the central significant character in the novel, her fate of consequence to society.

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<sup>35</sup> For example, Frances Brooke's History of Emily Montague (1769) and Laure Conan's Angéline de Montbrun (1881) both present women protagonists. In the subsequent evolution of Woman-as-hero, Maria Chapdelaine (1914) is a major influence on French-Canadian literature, while Marta Ostenso's Wild Geese (1925) presents a strong, liberation-minded woman as hero at a time when the Sunshine School of Canadian fiction is in the ascendant.

Dramatically, moreover, Woman-as-hero has the advantage of all her disadvantages. Compared with male protagonists, the female hero's struggle, from childhood to old age, is rendered more difficult by custom, stereotypical thinking and social inertia. In Margaret Laurence's The Stone Angel (1964) and Claire Martin's Dans un gant de fer (1965), for example, childhood and adolescence are ruled by an iron-fisted father insensitive to his children's needs and convinced, like Campbell's symbolic ogre, Holdfast, that in his domain nothing must change.<sup>36</sup> For the women heroes in both of these novels, the only possible escape from this social cage is marriage.

Yet marriage, too, may be a prison, as hero-wives discover in Margaret Laurence's The Stone Angel (1961), The Fire-Dwellers (1969) and The Diviners (1974), in Louise Maheux-Forcier's Amadou (1963), Marie-Claire Blais' l'Insoumise (1966), and Margaret Atwood's Lady Oracle (1976) and Life Before Man (1979). Outside of marriage, moreover, lurk other enslavements, as Rachel Cameron, caring for her invalid

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<sup>36</sup> "For the mythological hero is the champion not of things become but of things becoming," says Campbell in The Hero with a Thousand Faces; "the dragon to be slain by him is precisely the monster of the status quo: Holdfast, the keeper of the past. . . . He is Holdfast not because he keeps the past, but because he keeps. . . . Briefly: the ogre-tyrant is the champion of the prodigious fact, the hero the champion of creative life" (p. 337).

mother, finds in Laurence's A Jest of God (1966). For the heroes of Laurence's The Diviners and Claire Martin's Doux-amer (1967) the challenge is to break out of this prison of assigned roles and prove themselves as professional and creative persons in a male-dominated world. For the heroes of Marian Engel's No Clouds of Glory (1968) and Maheux-Forcier's l'Île joyeuse (1964), that enterprise takes the form of a search for, and a defence of, the archaic self; in Margaret Atwood's Surfacing (1972), as in Anne Hébert's Kamouraska (1970) and Les Enfants du sabbat (1975) the hero descends into the underworld in search of power.

All of these quests transcend regional and cultural boundaries. As a result, female heroes share a unanimity of aims and values surpassing that of their male counterparts. The image presented is that of womankind, a figure universal rather than national, driven by an intense need for autonomy and determined to achieve the full dimension of her womanhood. Equally striking, ironically enough, is the degree to which these women heroes reflect the cultural differences already displayed by male protagonists. Thus Hagar, in The Stone Angel, repeats the spiritual exile of earlier English-Canadian heroes, a pilgrimage that recurs with variations in Laurence's The Diviners (1974) and A Jest of God (1966) and in Margaret Atwood's The Edible Woman (1969) and Surfacing

(1972). In contrast, Claire and her sisters, in Claire Martin's Dans un gant de fer (1965), unite against their father's tyranny, reaffirming the solidarity and love that inform the family tradition in Quebec. This ideal, which finds fulfillment in Martin's La Joue droite (1966) and Doux-amer (1967), also provides the positive side of the psychomachia in Anne Hébert's Kamouraska and the steady, if distant, beacon of hope in Maheux-Forcier's l'Île joyeuse and Amadou.

Liberated woman in the twentieth century is characterized increasingly by her vision of herself and her world. Yet she cannot fully escape the influence of those traditions that produce her surrounding culture. Morag Gunn in The Diviners and Gabrielle Lubin in Doux-amer exemplify this dual process. Both begin poor, lonely and unsure of themselves, experience disastrous marriages and, through vision and determination, succeed as novelists in a professional world of men. The attitudes and values each brings to her adventure, however, are evidence of two distinct cultural traditions.

In The Diviners,<sup>37</sup> Morag Gunn weaves her legendary ancestors and childhood memories into a myth of personal identity. Tales of Scottish exiles who followed the skirl

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37 Margaret Laurence, The Diviners (1974) (Toronto: Bantam, 1975).

of Gunn's pipes to the New World prefigure the wanderings of Morag, Jules Tonnerre (the Métis folk-singer she loves) and their daughter "Pique." Morag's quest, which takes her across Canada and as far as Scotland, is a story of repeated partings in a world of dubious communication<sup>38</sup> where isolated individuals in a caste-conscious society find God, at best, an absentee landlord. Even the gift of "divining," as Morag discovers through Royland, whose dowsing is the physical analogue to her spiritual search, is one that may be "finally withdrawn" by the Giver, and bestowed on someone else (p. 452). In a climate of courage-in-exile that may occur anywhere and anytime, Morag's personal quest yet retains something of nationalism. In Scotland, within a few miles of Sutherland, the birthplace of her ancestors, she discovers that she no longer feels a need to go there. The tug-of-war between past and present ends. Her vision clear at last, she sees her ancestral highlands and her lover McRaith (nomen est omen) as ghosts of the past.

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38 Interviewed by Graeme Gibson, in Eleven Canadian Novelists (Toronto: Anansi, 1973), Laurence states: "I would hope that with my own fiction, if anything came across at all under the surface, it would be something to this effect --that human beings are capable of great communication and love and very often fall very short of this" (p. 190).

"It's a deep land here, all right," Morag says. "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" (p. 390).

Morag's Canadian roots are deepened as she returns to Canada to settle in an old farmhouse and continue writing, while Pique--a symbolic confluence of cultures, like the hero of Les Demi-civilisés--sets off to learn more about her Métis forebears. As the novel closes, Morag turns back alone into the house "to write the remaining private and fictional words" of her double myth (p. 453). This vision of a tough, self-reliant and compassionate woman who has found herself, of her partner Jules Tonnerre and of the mythical Manawaka that is their spiritual home, is a major step forward in patriating the Canadian hero.

Claire Martin, conscious of her established Canadian roots, presents a retrospective novel of a different kind. Unrelated to history, geography or collective identity, Doux-amer<sup>39</sup> is a drama of sexual freedom in which traditional roles are reversed. Its hero, Gabrielle, claims the "time-honoured actions and privileges reserved for men," while

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39 Claire Martin, Doux-amer (Ottawa: Le Cercle du Livre de France, 1967).

the male protagonist plays the role of an unnamed narrator who edits his memories of their life together while awaiting her return. He is the "faithful, devoted" other, his happiness largely dependent on the outcome of the hero's adventure.<sup>40</sup>

Gabrielle, "cette femme dont j'ai crée la carrière de mes mains, de mon coeur, de ma volonté" (p. 7), is the novice writer the narrator guides through her first novel and makes his mistress, unaware of her profound need to be her own person. When, after a decade of literary success, Gabrielle abandons "ce trop long amour" for an opportunistic writer ten years her junior, the narrator is desolate. But two more years must pass before he recognizes himself in Gabrielle's latest manuscript and understands why she left him:

Tu m'as étourdie d'amour, mais tu m'as ravi tout le reste. Ce succès que j'attendais depuis si longtemps, à cause de toi je ne l'ai pas senti, je n'en ai pas joui. . . . Tout ce que j'avais escompté, cet orgueil qui m'attendait, cette marque qui m'aurait distingué des autres, tu as paru, tu as mis ta main sur moi, tu as posé sur moi ton regard de petit mâle vainqueur et cela a été balayé (p. 65).

The novel becomes a debate between the sexes in which the narrator discovers the true character of Gabrielle through

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40 Nicole Bourbonnais, "Claire Martin," The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature, p. 521.

her manuscripts, which he continues to publish. The truth of that character is not so simple, however. During the ill-starred marriage in which she is repeatedly betrayed by her husband, Gabrielle returns briefly to the narrator to extract a strange pledge and reveal a more permanent bond:

Promets-moi de ne jamais chercher à recommencer [she says]. Je ne t'en veux pas, tu le vois. Mais il faut me comprendre. Tu es mon seul ami, mon seul camarade. Si je n'avais pas cette camaraderie, je ne sais pas ce que je deviendrais (p. 121).

Even her husband's death fails to reunite them. In her next novel, Gabrielle reveals the details of their lost love in terms that imply her lover of earlier years is dead. "Tout est dit," the narrator concludes in ending his tale. "Je peut écrire 'Fin'." But his conclusion is premature. Gabrielle writes him, asking to return, "parce qu'avec toi il n'y a ni combat, ni victoire, ni défaite. . . . Toi seul peut me redonner la paix" (p. 165). And the narrator, who, if not entirely a Patient Griselda, has been faithful to Gabrielle "in his fashion," considers and accepts.

In Le Roman canadien-français, Claire Martin reveals the source of the values governing Doux-amer: her distaste for the overdone virility and femininity created by novelists but rare in daily life, where so-called male traits--egotism, dominance of career ambition over love, and Don

Juanism--occur in women, just as weakness, childishness, tenderness and fidelity are found in men. Differences between the sexes, she concludes, are less clear-cut than one might think. "Des hommes trop faibles et des femmes trop fortes pour prendre place dans les cadres qu'on leur destine, il y en a des multitudes."<sup>41</sup>

Although Laurence avoids stereotypical exaggeration by making Morag and Jules Tonnerre both strong, her heroes tend to be deviants and exiles from, rather than exemplary rebels against, the existing social system. Separating Morag and Jules from the faithful narrator and coureur woman of Doux-amer is a difference of philosophy as well as style. Here, for example, is the narrator's reply to Gabrielle's request to return:

Il ne s'agit pas de triompher, Gabrielle. Il s'agit d'évaluer ce qui nous reste, de faire l'inventaire de nos biens, de s'agripper au peu qu'il y a et de refermer les bras. . . . Voici un peu de paix, des travaux qui se rejoignent, une grande habitude, l'un de l'autre, un remède à l'esseulement, de l'indulgence, de la fraternité. . . . Mais oui, reviens, Gabrielle. Pourquoi pas? (p. 165).

What is the difference, then, between these two women heroes who are also Agents of Change? Primarily, it is the warmer tone and the willingness to negotiate of Gabrielle, and the

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41 Claire Martin, "Témoignages des romanciers canadiens-français," in Le Roman canadien-français, III, 388.

dialogue between different sets of values in Quebec which is so encouraging to growth in individuals and in society.

"Women in novels written by women have a healthy tendency to be heroes rather than heroines," as Jenni Calder observes.<sup>42</sup> Particularly in the role of rebel and Outrider, challenging and extending the limits of society's rules, Woman-as-hero tends to assume the so-called male traits, either in toto or in combination with her own. This tendency toward the virago and the androgyne appears in the fiction of Marian Engel and Louise Maheux-Forcier. Engel's confrontational heroes openly reject hypocrisy and Calvinist inhibitions to probe new realms of physical and spiritual experience. Sarah Porlock, the hero of No Clouds of Glory (1968), for example, abandons her career as a university professor to live abroad, free of Canadian chauvinism and conventional dullness. "Why," she argues, "should Eldon McBreen's rumbustious balls give him an initiative that I lack?"<sup>43</sup> Passing through Montreal, however, she is captivated by its revolutionary atmosphere and decides to remain. "What takes the real guts," she concludes, "is not to go away, but to start again" (p. 180).

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42 Calder, p. 195.

43 Marian Engel, No Clouds of Glory (Don Mills: Longman's, 1968), p. 31.

Subsequent Engel novels reveal women who are Agents of Change in two further Adamite fresh starts. In Bear (1977), a city-wearied woman turns from the hypocrisy of urban life to reintegrate her divided self through a new perception of her natural animality in the wilderness. In The Glassy Sea (1978), a sensitive young woman experiences religious and secular worlds in turn and finds her deepest need is not for "eternity" but for the reality of human relationships "here and now."<sup>44</sup> All three women challenge society's prejudices on the axis of "femme-destin." In Sarah's "fresh start," Lou's "self-awareness" and Marguerite's "grace," the author suggests, lie secrets which could change society. But the resistance of the milieu to change is great; and there is no apparent avenue by which the hero's experience can be transferred from individual to group. Attitudes to men remain adversarial as women protagonists compete against men rather than attempting to bridge the gap in understanding by dialogue and negotiation.

In comparison, Maheux-Forcier's universe is more passionate, more androgynous and less polarized in male-female terms. Where Engel's heroes discard or outgrow their childhood visions, Maheux-Forcier's women find ways

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<sup>44</sup> Marian Engel, The Glassy Sea (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978), p. 143.

of preserving them. Nathalie, the artist-hero of Amadou (1963), is driven to murder, while Isabelle retains the golden vision of l'Ile joyeuse (1964) as a private pays d'en haut, and the hero of Une Forêt pour Zoe (1969) finds in dialogue with the Isis-double of her childhood a formula for growth. All of these heroes seem to love more passionately and see men less adversarially than do their English-Canadian counterparts. Consequently, their quest for selfhood is less a political revolution than a revolution of the heart. Although "toutes ne vont pas aussi loin dans l'érotisme que la Nathalie d'Amadou ou l'Isabelle de l'Ile joyeuse," it is clear that "toutes affirment l'amour," as Falardeau observes.<sup>45</sup> If, in the end, both appear to pursue the same goal of a more fulfilling human love, it must be added that their approaches differ. While Engel's heroes struggle to overcome the prejudices of society in search of love, Maheux-Forcier's heroes explore new dimensions and frontiers of love in order to overcome these prejudices.

A similar distinction between the axes of "femme-milieu" and "femme-destin" separates the gothic worlds of Margaret Atwood's Surfacing (1972) and Anne Hébert's Kamouraska (1970). Gothicism, in so far as it represents the

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45 Falardeau, "l'Evolution du héros," p. 23.

clash of man's irrational, passionate nature with the demands of society, emphasizes the disparity between the world-view of the hero and that of his or her society. Consequently, it is a measure of the reciprocal threat between man and the world he has created, to which modern gothicism adds the advantage of revealing fears hidden from society until they are made plain through the artist's creativity. In The Haunted Wilderness, Margot Northey points to the presence and function of these factors in Canadian fiction and in the work of Atwood and Hébert:

This sense of a double menace from both society and 'natural man' is, as we have seen in Wacousta and Le Chercheur de trésors, a repeated characteristic of Canadian gothicism. In most of the nineteenth-century gothic romances, certain individuals represent by behaviour or attitude one or another of the conflicting sides. Thus in Wacousta Colonel de Haldimar represents civilization and Wacousta is the irrational or natural man; in Le Chercheur de trésors Saint-Céran represents civilized rational society whereas Amand represents primitive life. In Kamouraska, however, the double menace becomes internalized, so that within the psyche there are conflicting forces. 46

Clearly there are also conflicting forces within the hero of Surfacing.<sup>47</sup> But the struggle in Kamouraska is between the traditional habitant and coureur impulses, while the hero

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46 Northey, p. 56.

47 Margaret Atwood, Surfacing (1972) (Markham: McClelland and Stewart, 1977).

of Surfacing is engaged--or believes she is engaged--in the traditional zero-sum game of Loyalist morality. The difference is primarily one of "axis," as Northey's chapter titles suggest<sup>48</sup> and the adventures and world views of the heroes reveal.

Summoned from the city to a northern lake in search of her missing father, Atwood's unidentified "I," a perennial victim of modern society, undergoes a psychic "moulting" process in which her archaic self, responding to the wilderness, rejects the society represented by her three companions and liberates her from her imprisoning past. Her adventure takes place on two levels. At the conscious or social level, she takes on the role of the traditional male hero, excelling in leadership and forest skills, protecting her submissive friend Anna and going beyond the norm to surpass the egocentric machismo of her lover Joe, to his embarrassment and ultimate defeat. At the subconscious or mythic level, her descent into the lake becomes a rebirth, while her retreat to the forest evokes the "cosmic power" which threatens her sanity but reintegrates and restores her

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48 In differentiating between the "Psychological Gothic" and the "Sociological Gothic," Northey notes that while the latter term may seem a paradox, "a sufficient number of twentieth-century Canadian novels seem to present this paradoxical mixture to justify a special category" in her analysis (p. 62).

sense of selfhood.<sup>49</sup> This power seems the only antidote to the "disease" of American technology "spreading up from the south" (p. 7) as well as the hero's only defence against the society she must ultimately rejoin, this time determined to "refuse to be a victim" (p. 291).

In contrast with this primitive resurgence of a traumatized personality, Kamouraska presents the dilemma of a soul possessed, in whom rational and demonic elements are indigenous and inextricably combined.<sup>50</sup> The perverse seed of the "vraie sauvageonne" (p. 53), which drives Elisabeth to pursue and marry the brutish Antoine Tassy, comes to tragic maturity in her passion for Dr. Nelson, whom she incites to murder her husband only to find that she is still a prisoner of her culture. Combining, and yet torn between, the extreme impulses in her personality, Elisabeth may be seen as a symbol of Quebec's duality. Unlike the hero of Surfacing, she has no inbred fear of the United States. But in the end her American lover cannot cure her ills. A now familiar pattern appears in which the world-view of the hero

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49 Carol Christ, in "Margaret Atwood: The Surfacing of Women's Spiritual Quest and Vision," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, II (Winter 1976), refers to this experience as a "social quest" (in which an alienated protagonist seeks integration into a human community) but distinctive in that it is "the self's journey in relation to cosmic power or powers" (25).

50 Anne Hébert, Kamouraska (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1970).

reflects a continuing concern of her society, so that the reader is presented with two representative but distinctly different protagonists. In Kamouraska the hero is a witch trapped in the person of a bourgeoisie but determined to fulfill her chosen destiny; in Surfacing she is a virago seeking to conquer--and at the same time to rejoin and be part of--her milieu.

Throughout the 1960s and the next decade, women heroes reveal, but do not always resolve, the problems of Canadians in the modern world. In English Canada the rise of Woman-as-hero coincides with the disintegration of the family in fiction. The theme of "family" in anglophone novels may be traced from the notion of a family of "Little Englands" in Kirby and Parker and the concept of humanity as "God's children" in Connor and Callaghan to the break-up of family ties in later fiction. The disintegration evident in the families of F. P. Grove becomes complete collapse in Timothy Findley's The Last of the Crazy People (1967), Percy Janes' House of Hate (1970) and Matt Cohen's The Disinherited (1974). Viewed in its descent from a shining dream of Empire to the English-Canadian view of family-as-trap,<sup>51</sup> this myth

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<sup>51</sup> Atwood suggests in Survival that "If in England the family is a mansion you live in, and if in America it's a skin you shed, then in Canada it's a trap in which you're caught" (p. 131).

may be seen as a colonial rainbow with no pot of gold at its end, a failed vision that does much to explain the English-Canadian novel's obsessive concern with genealogies. Robert Kroetsch's description of these recurring genealogies as "narratives of a discontent with a history that lied to us, violated us, erased us even,"<sup>52</sup> is an apt subjective rendering of the sense of unlived life that a rigid and unyielding "Loyalist Response" in North America was bound to produce. Its effect is to present the pioneer not as builder, but as victim.

Despite these alienating conditions, Woman-as-hero has an important positive impact on the growth of the novel and its changing protagonist. All of these women heroes are in rebellion against the conditions of life. In novels such as The Stone Angel and The Glassy Sea they confront the rigid pride and moral conditioning which they see as reasons for their earlier failure; in other works they explore ways of changing the situation: the recognition of duality in Bear and Surfacing, the "fresh start" in A Jest of God, The Edible Woman and No Clouds of Glory. Thus, although she is unable to stem the tide of disintegration surrounding her, Woman-as-hero provides a countervailing

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<sup>52</sup> Robert Kroetsch, "Beyond Nationalism: A Prologue," Mosaic, XIV (Spring 1981), vi.

force against unquestioning conformity and points forward to avenues of change.

If Quebec's women heroes seem to challenge life more passionately along the axis of "femme-destin," it is worth noting that they move on a favouring tide of social change alive with the clash and fusion of strong opposing ideas.<sup>53</sup> As a result of this ambience, communication within and between the sexes in Quebec novels is often less obstructed than it is in English-Canadian fiction. Claire Martin's sisters in Dans un gant de fer (1965), for example, present a united front to the world, unlike their counterparts in Marian Engel's No Clouds of Glory (1968). "My sisters and I are atavistically inclined to stick together when it does us any good," says Engel's hero. "Otherwise, we are a hopeless crew of misfits, like most families" (p. 35). Further differences abound. In English-Canadian fiction it would be difficult to find a match for the understanding between Robert and Nathalie in Amadou, the reciprocal love in Doux-amer, or the open forum on male-female relations and Isabelle's passionate response to sexual initiation in l'Ile

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53 One of the most hotly-argued debates of the sixties was over the use of joual in literature. See Gérald Godin, "Le joual et nous," Parti pris, II (janvier 1965), 1824, and "Le joual politique," Parti pris, II (mars 1965), 57-59; also, André Brochu, "D'un faux dilemme," Parti pris, II (avril 1965), 58-59.

joyeuse. Moreover, despite an atmosphere of violence and political upheaval, the Quebec sense of family unity endures and is a vital factor in such novels as André Major's Le Cabochon (1964), Jacques Godbout's Salut Galarneau! (1967) and Roch Carrier's Il n'y a pas de pays sans grandpère (1979).

Perhaps the most important contribution of female protagonists to the development of the hero (male or female) is a new emphasis on the hero's responsibility for his destiny and a renewed confrontation between reality and myth. In this changing atmosphere tradition is consistently being challenged. And in both cultures the rise of Woman-as-hero coincides with a conscious and deliberate attempt to reconcile myth and reality by reassessing and changing the myths of the past.

Two authors who provide an opportunity to compare approaches to this change are Robert Kroetsch and Roch Carrier. For Kroetsch, colonialism is the greatest threat to Canadian literature. "Demythologizing" is therefore the cure for a culture unhealthily absorbing the myth of the American frontier before it has rid itself of the inhibiting myth of Imperial Britain. Dick Harrison makes the point:

As we can see from The Words of My Roaring and The Studhorse Man, Kroetsch is very conscious of the need to dispel both of these forms of false or misleading order which have been imposed upon the West. Before he can hope to find the appropriate mythical patterns which will make the experience of the prairie past intelligible, he must first de-mythologize the West. 54

This, in fact, is what Kroetsch sees already happening in Canadian fiction: his contemporaries, Davies, Atwood, Wiebe, Harlow and Godfrey, "resolve the paradox" of non-identity by "demythologizing the systems that threaten to define them."<sup>55</sup> This view tends to redefine "identity" itself, as Kroetsch observes:

It is possible that the old obsessive notion of identity, of ego, is itself a spent fiction, that these new writers are discovering something essential not only to Canadians but to the world they would uncreate. Whatever the case, they dare the ultimate contra-diction: they uncreate themselves into existence. 56

Although Kroetsch's argument focuses on "a myth of the West," its principle, as he suggests, may be applied to English-Canadian literature as a whole. Other novelists in English Canada tend to "uncreate themselves into existence" in a

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54 Harrison, Unnamed Country, p. 208.

55 Robert Kroetsch, "Unhiding the Hidden," Journal of Canadian Fiction, III, No. 3 (1974), 43.

56 Kroetsch, "Unhiding the Hidden," p. 45.

similar paradoxical way.<sup>57</sup> Novel after novel ends in a crucial negative decision--not to be an outlaw (The Deserter), not to leave the field of battle (No Clouds of Glory), not to amputate one's authentic feelings (Bear), not to be a victim (Surfacing; A Jest of God), not to be afraid of life (The Watch that Ends the Night)--leaving the hero still untested against the perils of the adventure he or she has only now decided to accept.

It is true, of course, that "accepting the call" is the first step on the road to identity. But this curtain which repeatedly falls before the adventure begins is surely a reminder that the mythic cycle--and not its deconstruction--creates identity. In literature as in life the excision or deflation of a working myth may simply fragment rather than unify the personality, leaving rational and irrational selves irreparably divided.<sup>58</sup> This is the condition of Kroetsch's double hero in The Studhorse Man (1970). Unlike

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57 Leonard Cohen's Beautiful Losers (1966), perhaps the most striking example of this process, is examined in chapter VI.

58 Something of this kind takes place in Thériault's Tayaout fils d'Agaguk (Montréal: les Editions de l'Actuelle, 1971). Tayaout believes "Les dieux ont mis l'âme du phoque dans le pierre" (p. 71) and his carving is a religious act of liberation linked to his Inuit identity. The introduction of the white man's "mass production" of carvings destroys Tayaout's sense of identity and results in patricide.

George and Jerome in The Watch that Ends the Night, Demeter and Hazard Lepage cannot begin to share the mythic unity that would create identity. Nor can they find it individually, for Demeter is a passive, imprisoned observer, while Hazard, a symbol of the invading American culture, must be deflated by ridicule, as Harrison indicates:

Hazard, the questing hero, the champion of the Old West, the agent of virility, might be expected to resemble a Hollywood Western hero, but he is neither strong nor handsome; he fights neither fairly nor well, and his most heroic wound is a charge of buckshot in the arse. He is never in control of his destiny; he is continually seduced by women, and he is finally 59 killed by his own horse.

Demythologizing presents specific impediments to maturation which the English-Canadian hero does not escape.

One such danger, that the destruction of myth may trigger explosive reactionary violence, is realized in Leonard Cohen's Beautiful Losers (1966), Timothy Findley's The Last of the Crazy People (1967), Robert Harlow's Scann (1967) and Graeme Gibson's Communion (1979). All of these novels describe the irrational leap from the frustration of meaningless life to the violence of rape, castration or murder.

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59 Harrison, Unnamed Country, p. 207.

Another danger, that of permanent division, is exemplified by the Demeter/Hazard figure in The Studhorse Man. Here, even if Hazard did not die a violent death, it would be impossible to reassemble these two halves into a complete hero-figure. Demeter's fate is akin to that of the mythic hero who refuses to answer the call to adventure. As Joseph Campbell points out:

Refusal of the summons converts the adventure into its negative. . . . the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved. . . . All he can do is create new problems for himself and await the gradual approach of his disintegration. 60

Thus, in English-Canadian fiction at least, the deconstruction of myths creates neither new myths nor a particularly receptive ground for their creation.

In comparison, the demythologizing that takes place in Quebec's "Quiet Revolution" appears simple and direct. One reason for this is the pervasiveness of change, which, as Jacques Cotnam explains, is manifest "à tous les niveaux de la vie québécoise et sur tous les plans, notamment sur le plan artistique et littéraire,"<sup>61</sup> and whose unchanging

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60 Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, p. 59.

61 Jacques Cotnam, "Le roman québécois à l'heure de la Révolution tranquille," in Le Roman canadien-français, III, 266.

axis is a powerful, though not always articulate, belief in la patrie and its destiny.

Such change is closer to remodelling than to deconstruction. In this sense, the Quebec process might more aptly be called "remythologizing," since it is part of a deliberate and shared social reformation in which literature and criticism play major roles:

La parole, pour nous [affirm the editors of Parti pris], a une fonction démystificatrice; elle nous servira a créer une vérité qui atteint et transforme à la fois la réalité de notre société. 62

Different opinions as to the nature of that reality, plus a pervasive desire for change, stimulate rather than inhibit further dialogue in a transformation that has many causes. Quebec's is "une littérature en ébullition."<sup>63</sup> There are frontal attacks on the conditions of life in André Major's Le Cabochon and Jacques Renaud's Le Cassé (both published in 1964); there is the ferment of joual or proletarian slang in many novels, including Jean Marcel's Le Joual de Troie (1973) and Marie-Claire Blais' Un Joualonnais sa joualonie (1975); and there are the pyrotechnics of a language including and going beyond joual, as in Réjean Ducharme's L'Avalée des

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62 Robert Major, Parti pris: idéologies et littérature (Ville LaSalle: Hurtubise HMH, 1979), p. 3.

63 Gérard Bessette, Une Littérature en ébullition (Montréal: Editions du Jour, 1968).

avalés (1966). All of these, like the novels which make up Roch Carrier's "trilogie de l'âge sombre," may be seen as lines of force which alter and renew the Quebec mythos in a way that contrasts with "demythologizing" in English Canada.

Jeannette Urbas aptly describes Carrier's trilogy as a "telescoping of themes" which dramatizes Quebec life while revealing the errors of the past:

La Guerre, Yes Sir! (1968), set in a village, reveals the narrowness and insularity of rural life as well as the English-French antagonism. Floralie, Where are You? (1969) exposes hypocritical and repressive attitudes with regard to sex and religion and Is It the Sun, Philibert? (1970) depicts the move to the city with its attendant alienation and dispossession.

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Carrier's aim is not to deflate foreign heroes who threaten to fill the vacuum created by "an ideal without an ideology," but to remodel the world-view of Quebec society and change the system by exposing relations between the errors of the past and the inhumanities of the present. With Carrier, as with other Quebec novelists, the system, not the hero, is under fire. Despite the darkness of the modern scene, sustaining threads from the past are retained--for example, the family solidarity and the coureur spirit in Le Cabochon and Il n'y a pas de pays sans grand-père. Like Quebec fiction

in general, these works affirm the worth of the common man. Furthermore, while there is continuing condemnation of the social system,<sup>65</sup> there is also the determination to achieve a reunion of reality and myth, as Galarneau, the hot-dog king, affirms.<sup>66</sup>

Based on the principle "montrer c'est changer,"<sup>67</sup> Quebec novels and criticism in the sixties become "une littérature révolutionnaire"; their aim, "la création de l'homme québécois."<sup>68</sup> As often as not, the language of fiction is the once-despised joual--but a joual transformed, like the blackness of the Negro, into a rallying cry for revolution.<sup>69</sup> In his justification of joual, cited by Robert Major, André Brochu illuminates the difference between de-mythologizing and re-mythologizing:

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65 Almost invariably, such condemnation is made on behalf of the common man, as may be seen in many novels, from Jacques Renaud's Le Cassé (1964) to Marie-Claire Blais' Le Sourd dans la ville (1979).

66 "Je sais bien que de deux choses l'une: ou tu vis, ou tu écris," says the hero of Godbout's Salut Galarneau! (1967). "Moi je veux vécrire. L'avantage, quand tu vécris, c'est que c'est toi le patron . . . tu te laisses mourir de faim ou tu te payes de mots, mais c'est voulu" (p. 154).

67 Major, p. 79.

68 Major, p. 96.

69 Major, p. 273.

La révolution est essentiellement une récupération, une conversion de la tradition; elle n'est pas créé ex nihilo comme le lapin du magicien; elle est la tradition reprise, métamorphosée en elle-même, mais affectée en sa totalité d'une signe positif. Ce qui n'était qu'un long, qu'un insupportable échec devient soudain la condition 70 nécessaire de la réussite.

Perhaps the most important element in what Robert Major calls "la gestation d'une nouvelle société, bourrelée de contradictions, et qui éclate de toutes parts,"<sup>71</sup> is the continuing dialogue of cultural growth--a dialogue that enables literature to go through rather than around its darkness, and the hero to confront rather than to evade his furies, in contrast to the inhibiting monologue of a zero-sum game.

In both cultures, however, attempts to remythologize the past reveal a hero in crisis, facing two equally difficult, if not impossible, tasks. The first is to achieve "decolonization," so that his society's identity and autonomy may be fully realized. The second is to counteract in some way the technological flood giving rise to the alienation and despair of postmodern literature.

Tracking the hero in this apocalyptic world which represents the final stage in his cycle of growth requires

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70 Major, p. 5.

71 Major, p. 5.

a shift in point of view. Transformed by authorial manipulation into a quarry to be hunted, a puzzle to be solved, or a decoy that may vanish at any moment, the protagonist is variously a figure of illusion, delusion, collusion and elusion, whose habitat is the novel-as-game. But, whether he is illusion or reality, hero or anti-hero, advancing or in flight, he remains a "hero of the end of things." It is to this shape-shifting representative of the postmodern world, his predicament and adventure, that we now turn.

## Chapter VI

### HEROES OF APOCALYPSE

Il est certain que ce Jeu a ses dangers.  
C'est justement pour cela que nous l'aimons.  
. . . Mais tu ne devras jamais oublier ce  
que je t'ai dit si souvent: nous sommes  
faits pour reconnaître avec précision les  
antinomies, tout d'abord en leur qualité  
d'antinomies, mais ensuite en tant que  
pôles d'une unité. Il en est également  
ainsi du Jeu des Perles de Verre.

--Hermann Hesse,  
Le Jeu des Perles de Verre<sup>1</sup>

"But if it had gone on," says Sarah Porlock, hero  
and self-styled bastard of Engel's No Clouds of Glory (1968),  
"if everything had stayed the same? Apocalypse."<sup>2</sup>

Sarah's words capture the drift and spirit of our  
time. Her premonition of global catastrophe evokes a world  
foreseen by Zamyatin, Hesse and Orwell before mid-century  
and more recently presented as our own in novels by Burgess,  
Burroughs, Raspail, Pynchon, Barth and others. Frank Ker-  
mode sees in this sense of an ending a cathartic mode of  
contemplating one's own death, an "Apocalypse, which ends,  
transforms and is concordant" with the history, revelation

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1 Hermann Hesse, Le Jeu des Perles de Verre (1943),  
trans. Jacques Martin (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1955), p. 86.

2 Engel, No Clouds of Glory, p. 4.

and figurae that precede it.<sup>3</sup> In Frank McConnell's more evolutionary view, a "post-apocalyptic" counter-vision is already at work, attempting to locate, "within the very center of the contemporary wasteland, mythologies of psychic survival and social, political health."<sup>4</sup> Both views deal with the antinomies of death and birth.

To borrow McConnell's terms, the apocalypse referred to in the title of this chapter is

. . . in the historical scheme, that of World War II and its aftermath and, in the imaginative scheme, that of the whole corrosive tradition of self-consciousness, imaginative despair and terminal isolation of the single self which is our visionary inheritance from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. 5

This "corrosive tradition," the subject of analyses in many disciplines,<sup>6</sup> leads directly to visions and heroes of apocalypse. "Modernism does not suddenly cease so that Post-modernism may begin," writes Ihab Hassan; "they now coexist"

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3 Frank Kermode, The Sense of an Ending (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 5.

4 Frank D. McConnell, Four Postwar American Novelists (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. xii.

5 McConnell, p. xi.

6 See, in addition to Jaspers' Man in the Modern Age and Ellul's The Technological Society, Alvin Toffler's Future Shock (New York: Random House, 1970) and The Third Wave (New York: William Morrow, 1980) as well as P. A. Sorokin's The Crisis of Our Age (New York: Dutton, 1941).

with the pressures of Modernism intensifying until, in a condition that identifies Postmodernism, "we no longer know what response is adequate to our reality."<sup>7</sup> At this point of disintegration, where neither philosophy nor myth provides a coherent and meaningful framework for human experience and where existence itself seems threatened, the apocalyptic world-view appears, and with it the hero-as-game, a literary device which functions like the "defence mechanism" of psychology. Both the hero-as-game and his milieu, the novel-as-game, suggest the Freudian compromise by which man long ago "conceded the fact of death, even his own death, but denied it the significance of annihilation."<sup>8</sup> In addition, Freud points to the game of immortality readers play when they identify with a hero who dies:

In the realm of fiction we discover that plurality of lives for which we crave. We die in the person of a given hero, yet we survive him, and are ready to die again with the next hero just as safely. 9

So the dreamer threatened with death awakens, the children

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7 Ihab Habib Hassan, Paracriticisms: seven speculations of the times (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), pp. 47, 53.

8 Sigmund Freud, "Thoughts on War and Death" (1925), trans. Joan Riviere, in On Creativity and the Unconscious, ed. Benjamin Nelson (New York: Harper, 1958), p. 228.

9 Freud, "Thoughts on War and Death", p. 225.

laugh as the ghost story ends, and the reader closes the apocalyptic novel, knowing it was all "just a game."

This perspective throws some light on the odysseys in perplexity charted by Leonard Cohen's Beautiful Losers<sup>10</sup> and Hubert Aquin's Prochain épisode (1965). Reduced to victims of circumstance in an embattled and vertiginous universe, the heroes in these novels struggle to impose meaning on the confusing and fugitive impressions of their experience, hoping for some kind of post-apocalyptic renaissance.<sup>11</sup> How these divided protagonists seeking wholeness and unity attempt to realize their purpose is a measure as well of the distance that separates them.

In the bewildering discontinuity of Beautiful Losers, a novel which Margot Northey sees as a movement towards "the mystical grotesque,"<sup>12</sup> the hero-figure is understandably difficult to define. Is he 'I,' the unnamed, frustrated historian in search of sainthood, fulfillment and love? Is he 'F,' the deranged Jewish French-Canadian revolutionary

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10 Leonard Cohen, Beautiful Losers (1966) (Toronto: Bantam, 1967).

11 A rebirth that, in its attempt "to give a new formulation of the universal and the particular, and of the relation between them," is akin to Ernst Cassirer's view of the central thrust of the Renaissance in The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. viii.

12 Northey, p. 101.

and guru who guides 'I' by correspondence from a mental institution? Or is he the nameless old hermit of the epilogue, "reported for molesting small boys," who returns to the city and is changed into a Ray Charles movie? Perhaps he is all three, as Northey seems to suggest:

It is possible to see this final 'saintly' figure as the embodiment of new possibility, the 'if' of an integrated personality resulting from the unification of 'I' and 'F.' Accordingly, 'I' is not really a character, but symbolic of the ego or rational side of the psyche, and 'F' represents the world of the id. Indeed, all of the characters may be seen as fantasy figures, rather than actual human beings. 13

Such a surrealist "hero as trinity" is appropriate both to the scene of apocalyptic disintegration in which he appears and to the unfolding pattern of Beautiful Losers, in which the personae of this trinity are sequentially revealed through the novel's three books.

In Book One, 'I,' the historian and victim of linear time, descends to new levels of experience testing his ability not to win but to lose his identity by learning to love appearances, connect nothing, and accept the universe. To do this he must confront the darkest aspects of his own nature. But, despite his ability to "salute" his "monstrosity" (p. 80), he is unable to transcend his awareness of

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13 Northey, p. 102.

the excremental side of life and remains obsessed with his isolation. Even Isis, the Goddess of Regeneration, who visits him as various women, brings him only tantalizing glimpses of the rebirth he seeks. To compound his torment, no one but his enigmatic mentor 'F' can decide when 'I' has passed a test, for only 'F' possesses the saving vision of the world.

Book Two presents this vision as a magical insight capable of transforming good and evil so that they are no longer "diamonds amongst all the shit," but "all diamond" (p. 10). The inhibitors of this insight are technology and science. To avoid corruption by the world's scientific systems, 'F''s anti-system is linked not to logic and success but to unreason and painful failure. As 'F' points out, the underlying spirit of this vision is not that of the pioneer but that of the martyr, incarnate as neo-priest of a sexualized universe, whose pathway to fulfillment is to "fuck a saint" (p. 15). "God is alive," chants 'F,' invoking the apocalyptic change from historical to cyclic time: "Magic is afoot. . . and flesh itself is Magic dancing on a clock, and time itself the Magic Length of God" (pp. 197 ff). In the end, it is the magic of the number three which reconciles

the contradictions in 'F''s paradoxical vision.<sup>14</sup>

"Book Three: An Epilogue in the Third Person," presents and represents the solution of the conflict imposed by the dualism of 'I' and 'F' and symbolizes their spiritual synthesis. The old hermit, a tree-dweller like 'I' and 'F,' returns to the city, and before an astounded crowd at the Systems Theatre achieves a mystical anamorphosis. At "the point of Clear Light" where "the future streams through . . . going both ways" (p. 305), he enters the eternal moment and is transformed into a movie, that is, into the stuff of dreams. This escape from linear into cyclic time may be seen readily enough as an elevation to sainthood made possible through the power of the number three, "the harmonic product of the action of unity upon duality."<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, to the reader who remembers Cohen's vision of man as "Orphan" burnt and victimized "in a corner of the sky" (p. 238), he may seem to disappear into a black hole in the universe, from which neither he, nor any message from him to humanity, can emerge.

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14 As J. E. Cirlot points out in A Dictionary of Symbols, trans. Jack Sage (New York: Philosophical Library, 1962), "Three symbolizes spiritual synthesis, and is the formula for the creation of each of the worlds. It represents the solution of the conflict posed by dualism" and "is associated with the concepts of heaven and the Trinity" (p. 222).

15 Cirlot, p. 222.

Cohen's disintegrating hero and his rejection of interpretative systems provide an effective device for luring the reader, through his own unresolved dualities, into participation in the novel-as-game, a strategy also present in Prochain épisode. But it is clear that what Sandra Djwa calls his "disintegrative vision"<sup>16</sup> restricts Cohen's success to the genre of Black Humour and blocks his stated aim, to break through the destructive forces of apocalypse with a countervailing metaphor of rebirth.<sup>17</sup> Within 'F''s solipsistic world, faith in appearances precludes myth, just as the decision to "connect nothing" denies allegiances. And the universe, once accepted in 'F''s terms, rejects debate in a way that William Johnsen finds typical of the Post-modern sensibility:

Contemporaries reject Modernist use of metaphor, history and myth to support a totalitarian obsession with order, by embracing the freedom of disorder. Their interest in contingency and disorder reveals their attempt to become truly new, to escape what the structuralists see as the common element of all thought: structure, order, and myth. 18

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16 Sandra Djwa, "Leonard Cohen: Black Romantic," Canadian Literature, No. 34 (Autumn 1967), 41.

17 Northey cites Cohen's own statement that Beautiful Losers was "a life and death effort" to get himself out of the hole of depression (p. 101).

18 William A. Johnsen, "Toward a Redefinition of Modernism," Boundary 2, II (Spring 1974), 543.

Like Kroetsch, Cohen seems to seek wholeness through surgery, an excision of unhealthy or inhibiting factors in the hope that what is left will be healthy and whole.

The enterprise and its hope are doubtful, however. That an incantation, however lyrical, can magically change "shit into diamonds" or bridge the extremes implicit in the hero's apocalyptic need to "fuck a saint," is a proposition that tends more to baffle than convince, particularly in the absence of sustaining myth, cultural debate and encompassing metaphor. One recalls, by contrast, the effective functioning of the organic life-out-of-death metaphor in Whitman's Leaves of Grass,<sup>19</sup> and of the order-and-freedom debate underlying Anythony Burgess' A Clockwork Orange (1962) and many Quebec novels. But the dynamic of Beautiful Losers is not that of powerful opposing ideas in debate; it arises from the tension between black laughter, which palliates despair, and despair itself, which motivates the life-denying flight from identity. The result, in a sense, is a new hero, but

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19 See Mark Van Doren's Walt Whitman (New York: Viking, 1945), for examples such as:

Behold this compost! Behold it well!  
 Perhaps every mite has once form'd part  
     of a sick person--Yet behold!  
 The grass of spring covers the prairies,  
 The resurrection of the wheat appears  
     with pale visage out of its graves (p. 191).

a hero "more sado-masochistic than mystic,"<sup>20</sup> whose failures make him the apt representative of a failed society. The point is underscored by Linda Hutcheon: "in the broader scope of the novel, Canadian history is patterned on the process of victimizer turned victim" and "the identity of the nation is thus inextricably bound to that of the man."<sup>21</sup> A return to savagery follows, a kind of evolution-in-reverse in which the hero's final disappearance draws the reader into the ego-id conflict he leaves behind.

Both Cohen and Aquin present the hero as a double figure questing after integrity in an irrational discontinuous universe that is poetic and grotesque. But the difference between the belief that the hero cannot influence his destiny and the conviction that he can and does influence it is great. It is this difference that establishes as Prochain épisode's goal the identity and responsibility that Beautiful Losers rejects.<sup>22</sup>

By this time, moreover, it should be clear that the debate in Quebec literature is not merely a debate, but a

20 Northey, p. 106.

21 Linda Hutcheon, "Beautiful Losers: All the Polarities," in The Canadian Novel in the Twentieth Century, ed. Malcolm Ross (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), p. 301.

22 See Gabrielle Poulin, Romans du pays, 1968-1979 (Montréal: Bellarmin, 1980): "Dans Prochain épisode il s'agissait tout autant d'identité nationale, collective, que d'identité personnelle" (p. 196).

growth-producing dialogue in which coureur and habitant elements influence and alter each other as part of a continuing process. To repeat Trilling's words, "it is nothing if not a dialectic." Consequently, given the bizarre but dialectical and identity-seeking adventure of its hero, Prochain épisode may be seen as adding a further category to Northey's Haunted Wilderness, that of the dialectical grotesque.

In Hubert Aquin, agent double, Patricia Smart presents the dialectical opposition of art and history as fundamental to Aquin's work:

L'image clé de l'oeuvre . . . est celle de deux frères-ennemis ou doubles-adversaires, moitiés d'une même totalité qui aspirent à se rejoindre, mais dont l'union est rendue impossible par les circonstances historiques. Ces personnages-doubles représentent la structure dialectique de la réalité, et symbolisent, selon le contexte où ils apparaissent et selon la perspective qu'on adopte, la tension qui existe entre l'art et l'histoire, l'universel et le particulier. l'abstrait et le concret, l'imaginaire et la réalité 23 des faits scientifiques.

Though union of these opposing absolutes is clearly impossible, Smart suggests, they nevertheless open the way to new syntheses "au sein du relatif" and offer, through the dialectical spirit of baroque art, an esthetic that is both

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23 Patricia Smart, Hubert Aquin, agent double: la dialectique de l'art et du pays dans "Prochain épisode" et "Trou de mémoire" (Montréal: les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1973), p. 8.

autonomous and revolutionary.<sup>24</sup> This is the baroque spirit which governs the multiple heroes and doubles of Aquin's work.

In Prochain épisode<sup>25</sup> the narrator, imprisoned as a suspected terrorist, combats suicidal despair by writing a spy novel whose revolutionary hero opposes and compensates for his creator's enforced passivity. But the distinction between the hero racing across the Alps and his immobilized creator, condemned to "le dessous des surfaces" (p. 8), is lost in the narrator's disturbed mind, where baroque masks and memories of revolution mingle confusedly in a "chute spiralée dans une fosse immobile" in which "tout fuit ici sauf moi" (p. 48).

Conceptually, Aquin's "dialectique vertigineuse" may be seen as a series of opposing absolutes--history and art, colonizer and colonist, enemy and friend, nation and individual, death and life--which act as the twin foci of an ellipse around which his vision moves, varying the angle, the distance, and hence the interpretation of these focal ideas at each point of the elliptical circumference. At one

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24 Smart, pp. 9, 12.

25 Hubert Aquin, Prochain épisode (Ottawa: Le Cercle du Livre de France, 1965).

point history may be dimmed by distance, or blocked from view by art, or vice versa; again, the focal idea of enemy may be obscured by that of friend, or the reverse. At times death may seem more dominant or more desirable than life. The important element is the observer's perspective and his consciousness of both foci of the ellipse.

This is not to suggest that the dominant mood of Prochain épisode is one of contemplation, to the exclusion of pursuit. Quite the contrary. In the aqueous half-light of Aquin's world, narrator and hero merge as one, as pursuer and pursued, tracking a mysterious enemy of the revolution, H. de Heutz, through a maze of false trails and discontinuities of person, place and time. Inspired by Byron, Mazzini, Bakunin and other revolutionaries of the past, the hero finally captures his elusive quarry only to have him revealed as his own double and a reflection of the artistic side of the narrator.<sup>26</sup> The narrator's lost love (like his country, she must be re-won by revolution) is a golden-haired woman suspiciously similar to K, the hero's beloved, who may be in league with the enemy. In each case, the positive fabric of myth is unravelled by the dialectical interplay of illusion and reality until, as Smart observes, "avec la trahison

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26 Aquin, Prochain épisode, p. 51.

possible de K, s'écroule le dernier absolu du narrateur."<sup>27</sup> Just as he hero cannot bring himself to kill his "frère-ennemi" (p. 139), the narrator cannot, except in his imagination, find the "ellipse" unifying history and love (p. 97). Each of these characters finally rejects his doubts in order to serve the revolution. But the irony of their plight is clear: both remain trapped in the world of art, whose form and coherence, as Smart points out, contradict the putative denouement:

La solution de ce dilemme appartient finalement à l'histoire, non pas à l'art: le caractère vraiment révolutionnaire du roman d'Aquin est de nous en faire prendre connaissance. Plutôt que d'offrir une solution compensatoire, il renvoie le lecteur au réel avec une nouvelle conscience de son propre rôle dans le dépassement du vertige collectif et dans la prise en main de l'histoire. 28

Thus the real target of Aquin's "esthétique réunificatrice" is not the fictional hero or double, but the reader, just as its real impact lies in the reader's recognition that the final decision rests not with the author or hero of the novel, but with himself.

Both Prochain épisode and Beautiful Losers mark a new stage in the development of the hero in which he is no longer a model, exemplary or otherwise, but a decoy, luring

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27 Smart, p. 55.

28 Smart, p. 64.

the reader into the hazards of the novel-as-game. But the first, like Hesse's Le Jeu des Perles de Verre, is a game identifying matched antinomies and demonstrating that they are two sides of a unity. The reader's participation in that game promotes his growth, even in the event of a private failure to realize such a unity. The second, given the disparity between unmatched antinomies and the average reader's reluctance to relinquish his identity, is an entertainment, but not a playable game.

This difference in the games being played, which may be summed up in the word "responsibility," is further revealed in the distance between the fictional worlds of Aquin and Kroetsch, both of whom are concerned with the rejection of the Old Order and a creation of the New. Kroetsch's Gone Indian (1973) is a Canadian deconstruction of the American myth of the frontier<sup>29</sup> in the same way that his Badlands (1975), to use Russell Brown's phrase, "is a deliberate inversion of Twain's Huckleberry Finn."<sup>30</sup> Aquin's Trou de mémoire (1968), on the other hand, taking the next logical

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29 Using as epigraph a sentence from F. J. Turner's "The significance of the Frontier in American History," Gone Indian (Toronto: New Press, 1973) emphasizes frontier "unrestraint" while ignoring Jackson's theory of cyclic renewal.

30 The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature, p. 419.

step beyond Prochain épisode, attempts to rescue French Canada from its prison in "l'espace-temps ambigu du colonialisme." The aim here is to move not only into but through apocalypse:

Plus qu'une simple représentation du cercle vicieux de cet espace-temps, Trou de mémoire est une tentative d'en sortir. Composé d'un double mouvement destructeur et créateur, il est à la fois un meurtre et un accouchement, un passage violent de la mort à la résurrection. 31

The movement in this novel is one of circularity resulting in vertigo. Reader and hero feel caught in a whirlpool of conflicting impressions of illusion and reality. Following the "chute spiralée dans une fosse immobile" of Prochain épisode, the Aquinian hero of Trou de mémoire chooses to be "dans la révolution permanente . . . qui peut se comparer à la rotation terrestre."<sup>32</sup> This movement of circularity and vertigo continues in Aquin's later novels. L'Antiphonaire (1969) "amplifies and extends the discordia concors of relativity in the dark mirror of Trou de mémoire," while Neige noire (1974) "is itself 'une giration vertigineuse'."<sup>33</sup>

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31 Smart, p. 66.

32 Aquin, Trou de mémoire (Montréal: Le Cercle du Livre de France, 1968), p. 58.

33 Camille La Bossière, "Hubert Aquin's Revolutionary Commedia Dell'arte of Hell: A Baroque Impasse," Mosaic, XI (Spring, 1978), 122.

All of these works reflect a structural pattern quite different from Kroetsch's head-on meetings of polarities conceived as "equally matched opposites."<sup>34</sup> And, since form follows function, these patterns in each case reflect what the hero can or cannot do. Rosemary Sullivan cites Kroetsch's structural pattern for ordering chaos and explains it as a paradigm that takes the form of the double hook:

The total ambiguity that is so essentially Canadian: be it in terms of two solitudes, the bush garden, Jungian opposites, or the raw and cooked binary structures of Levi-Straus. Behind the multiplying theories of Canadian literature is always the pattern of equally matched opposites:

Coyote	:	God
Self	:	Community
Energy	:	Stasis

The balance, whatever the specifics, is always so equal that one wonders how paradigm can possibly issue into story. 35

--Or, in the protagonist's terms, how the hero can possibly seize and shape his destiny.

The difficulty, then, is not in the beginning but in the end of this pattern, which is stasis, the result of seeing the old polarities not dialectically, but through an

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34 Rosemary Sullivan, "The Fascinating Place Between: The Fiction of Robert Kroetsch," Mosaic, XI (Spring 1978), 166.

35 Sullivan, p. 167.

irony "leading to a total paralysis of will."<sup>36</sup> This is what happens when Demeter, the sterile narrator, takes over the hazardous world of The Studhorse Man, and when women uncreate the male myths of courage and adventure in Badlands:

The seduction of structure as architecture and geometry rather than as meaning can lead to the actual work becoming a caged-in exposition of conceptions in terms of logic. . . . Mythology must be personalized. Continuities are established not in terms of archetypes but of individuals because the novel (charges of archaism to the contrary) is engaged in the creation of 37 persons.

Sullivan's warning of the need to maintain a sense of biological connection is to the point. What impends is not the realization of Kroetsch's commitment to creating the "story" of his place, but the disappearance of the hero into the novel-as-game, which is in itself a kind of death. And even if the hero remains alive, his is an utter impotence.

In What the Crow Said,<sup>38</sup> the most apocalyptic of Kroetsch's novels, the hero survives but is powerless. Liebhaber, a symbol of unregenerate man, having lived through plagues, hailstorms and flood in a world that is "a scab and a carbuncle. A bucket of medicated puke. A horse turd

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36 Sullivan, p. 171.

37 Sullivan, p. 176.

38 Robert Kroetsch, What the Crow Said (Don Mills: General Publishing, 1978).

everlastingly falling" (p. 123) is last seen "horny to die," wildly firing a cannon loaded with fertilizing queen bees in a final war against the sky (p. 216). This attempt to escape from identity-denying stasis into self-destruction is surely the frustrated hero's ultimate reaction against hostile destiny.

Equally apocalyptic, but fully in harmony with the zeitgeist of her culture, Bérénice Einberg, the pubescent identity-seeking hero of Réjean Ducharme's l'Avalée des avalés,<sup>39</sup> dedicates herself to eternal revolt against adulthood, a world she must swallow before it swallows her. "Qui que vous soyez, ô maîtres," she vows, "autant que vous soyez, mortels comme divins, je m'insurge contre vous, je vous crache désinvoltement à la figure" (p. 174)--a demonic non-serviam which takes her deep into a private world of narcissistic isolation and ends with her deliberate sacrifice of her friend's life to preserve her own. Even though she foresees her inevitable damnation, Bérénice will neither capitulate nor compromise; her private refus global carries her far beyond mere rejection of the social system to a total rebellion against the way things are. In this she is

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<sup>39</sup> Réjean Ducharme, l'Avalée des avalés (Paris: Gallimard, 1966).

as striking an example of utter revolt as Liebhaver is of frustration with his hostile destiny.<sup>40</sup>

Even when apocalypse in its fire-and-brimstone sense does not impend, the tense postmodern atmosphere evokes apocalyptic heroes attempting to create at least a window looking towards integration or spiritual salvation. Each of these varied responses is articulated within the hero's cultural context, and none meets with success. For example, the hero of Leo Simpson's Arkwright (1971) is a preserver of human values running from a Juggernaut of technology closely resembling English Canada's notion of hostile destiny. "Throwing oneself under the wheels does not stop it," he warns, "you grease the axles with your blood."<sup>41</sup> Marie-Claire Blais' Le Sourd dans la ville (1979), also a window on the uncaring society produced by technology, becomes a silent scream for social change. Violence and homosexuality, which seem to increase with proximity to apocalypse, are also

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40 D. J. Bond's "The Search for Identity in the Novels of Réjean Ducharme," Mosaic, IX (Winter 1975-76), 31-44, points out that Ducharme's main characters are children who show "the child's uncompromising clarity of vision, his refusal of masks and comfortable assumptions" (p. 32). Thus, they are in sharp contrast with the questioning but amenable child hero of W. O. Mitchell's Who Has Seen the Wind (1947) (Toronto: MacMillan, 1972).

41 Leo Simpson, Arkwright (Toronto: MacMillan, 1971), p. 96.

culturally influenced. In Robert Collins' Tolerable Levels of Violence (1983), the hero defends the English ideal that a man's home is his castle against a disintegrating and depraved society; in Victor-Levy Beaulieu's Un Rêve québécois (1972), violence explodes from the vision of la patrie as a woman betraying and betrayed. The homosexual hero of Scott Symon's Place d'Armes (1978) yearns for a lost British paternalistic superiority combined with a habitant acquiescence, while the homosexual hero of Robert Lalonde's Le dernier Été des Indiens (1982) turns to his Indian cousins and a coureur dream of the pays d'en haut.

Of the making of escape routes from annihilation there appears to be no end. Discountenanced and hemmed-in by circumstances, the hero sensing apocalypse may turn to magic, "magic realism," or religion. The tendency marks many novels, including Robertson Davies' Deptford trilogy, in which questions of guilt and sainthood in Fifth Business (1970) lead through psychoanalysis in The Manticore (1972) to magic and illusion in World of Wonders (1975). While the English-Canadian psyche manages to remain in analysis to the last in Davies' trilogy, novels such as Gwendolyn MacEwen's Julian the Magician (1963) and King of Egypt, King of Dreams (1971), like Susan Kerslake's Middlewatch (1976), seek a hero outside of nationality and time.

In MacEwen's cosmic Limbo, Julian the Magician presents the traditional "mystic quest to see divine and human nature as indissolubly united yet distinct," in which "Julian himself symbolizes the union of antinomies"<sup>42</sup> and dies--not necessarily as Christ--upon a cross. Similarly, King of Egypt, King of Dreams is the story of Akhenaton, a royal "victim of opposing forces" who, as a child, imagined a demon "in his head, fighting to be born."<sup>43</sup> He, too, spends his life in a vain search for the magical coniunctio oppositorum, the quest which the enterprise of "magic realism" attempts to bring to a more successful end.

Keith Maillard describes magic realism as a kind of post-realist fiction identifiable by three characteristics: "realistic conventions of fiction," the "magic of the genre" and a spirit of fabulation that, when "something tremendously important must be said," finds "a way to say it."<sup>44</sup> In these terms, successful magic realism is a stylistic tour-de-force.

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42 Frank Davey, Surviving the Paraphrase: Eleven Essays in Canadian Literature (Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1983), p.48.

43 Jan Bartley, Invocations: The Poetry and Prose of Gwendolyn MacEwen (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), p. 25.

44 Keith Maillard, "Middlewatch as Magic Realism," Canadian Literature, No. 92 (Spring 1982), 14.

Confronted by a mixture of realistic fact and absurd fantasy, the reader is persuaded of their compatibility by the "magic" of the genre and accepts the suggestion that reality and meaning are there. Such an aesthetic, however, contributes little to the growth of a sense of cultural identity. The belief, for example, that the hero of Kerlake's Middlewatch "can attain the discipline he needs to dominate the world only by destroying things in himself,"<sup>45</sup> like the belief that "destruction of the Canadian past paradoxically creates the possibility of a future,"<sup>46</sup> neither creates nor leads into a dialogue of growth. Instead, it joins attempts by Kroetsch, Wiebe, Harlow, Godfrey and other Magic Realists to "resolve the paradox" of non-identity by "demythologizing the systems that threaten to define them,"<sup>47</sup> and leads, at best, to heroes of fantasy.

That is not to suggest that fantasy as a genre inhibits the emergence of a representative hero in any culture. Jacques Benoit's Jos Carbone (1967), for example, has been

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45 Maillard, p. 15.

46 Davey cites the title story of MacEwen's Noman (1972), in which versions of Siva and Kali are presented as "contemporary iconoclasts and innovators whose destruction of the Canadian past paradoxically creates the possibility of a future" (p. 56).

47 Kroetsch, "Unhiding the Hidden," p. 43.

described by Gaston Miron as "une écriture concise, vive, efficace jusqu'au réalisme du détail et de la notation poétique,"<sup>48</sup> and by Louis Lanier as "a sort of post-apocalyptic vision" in which "action, surrealism, violence, cruelty, and death replace psychological reflection."<sup>49</sup> The magic realism of this novel in no way conceals the characters' cultural roots.

The story of Jos Carbone has great simplicity. In the heart of a timeless forest, two couples live a childlike primitive life, Jos (a habitant figure) and Myrtie in a log cabin, their friends Pique and Germaine underground. The harmony of their lives is upset by a coureur figure, Pierrot, whose arrival initiates a drama of rivalries and passion in which all prove themselves ready to kill to preserve what they value most. In this territorial and sexual struggle, Pique is murdered by Pierrot, who is killed in turn by Germaine before she disappears forever. Jos, the Habitant, and Myrtie live on alone in the ambiguous forest, which resembles a dangerous pays d'en haut.

The progress of Benoit's hero is in a direction and to a purpose quite the contrary of MacEwen's. While the

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48 A critique appended to Jos Carbone, p. 126.

49 Louis Lasnier, "Novels in French 1960 to 1982," The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature, p. 613.

supra-national élitist hero Julian aspires to the secret of a distant "higher law" in harmony with the English-Canadian ideal, Carbone, a hero of the common man, descends to savagery in conflict with his coureur double, exploring his own and his culture's darkest allegiances.<sup>50</sup> Thus, as Benoit's symbolic frères-ennemis clash in a battle between freedom and order, MacEwen's polarities tend to merge in the controlling metaphor of Christ.

Both Julian the Magician and Jos Carbone raise thorny questions regarding the future of the hero and of mankind. Can a skeptical age be persuaded that spiritual salvation is possible? If so, how is this to be done? And what vision, if any, seems to offer a genuine potential for rebirth? These are the fundamental questions of Rudy Wiebe's The Blue Mountains of China (1970), "a hermeneutical reinterpretation of the archetypal family history,"<sup>51</sup> and Jacques Ferron's Cotnoir

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50 Benoit's Jos Carbone (Québec: Stanké, 1980), includes as an appendix the following commentary by André Major: "L'univers de Jos Carbone est québécois, et profondément, car ces êtres étranges qui vivent sous terre ou au coeur de la forêt, incarnent des mythes qui sont particuliers au Québec. Se sont des êtres cruels, et qui le sont pour sauver ce à quoi ils tiennent le plus, leur intégrité et puis aussi leur simple paix, leur jouissance quotidienne" p. 125).

51 David L. Jeffrey, "Biblical Hermeneutic and Family History in Contemporary Canadian Fiction: Wiebe and Laurence," Mosaic, XI (Spring 1978), 100.

(1970), the post-mortem examination of a physician's spiritual life. The authors' handling of the novel-as-game in these instances reflects the difference of perspective in their reading of the Christian vision.

To control his wide-ranging odyssey and to win over readers who do not share his faith, Wiebe presents the wandering Mennonites of The Blue Mountains as a collective hero. He deploys the elements of his novel-as-game to draw the reader into his diffuse hero's travails. As Ina Ferris explains, the deliberately fragmentary form of the novel and the absence of the final integrative vision Wiebe's exiles seek "engages the reader in his own struggle in a narrative wilderness."<sup>52</sup> Wiebe's authorial problem is to alter the reader's perspective from linear to cyclic time. He does so by "jolting shifts" in person, place and time which deny "the possibility of an authentic, integrative vision" and which "undercut the sense of time as history."<sup>53</sup> In doing this, Wiebe is neither seeking a simple mimesis of the uncertain modern world nor writing a self-conscious novel: his effort, rather, is to involve the reader "in the process of sense-making."<sup>54</sup>

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52 Ina Ferris, "Religious Vision and Fictional Form: Rudy Wiebe's The Blue Mountains of China," Mosaic, XI (Spring 1978), 79.

53 Ferris, p. 81.

54 Ferris, p. 82.

Like the reader of Julian the Magician, the reader of The Blue Mountains must fill in the gaps until his need for an integrative vision is satisfied. Once adjusted to this new perspective, however, he may find the author's explicit solution damaging to his hard-won vision. This is what Ferris concludes from the "striking reversal of method and perception as Wiebe brings his novel to a resolution, pointing explicitly to the way."<sup>55</sup> The impact of this fixed pattern on the reader attuned to the image of "the hero as numinous presence" is to destroy the magic of the genre, and with it the reader's belief in the novel-as-game.

Ferron's Cotnoir does not dispense with the exemplary pattern, but reverses the order of presentation, expanding from the mundane world of its individual hero to the idea of an unproselytizing presence with hero-creating powers. The effect is a gradual unveiling, in the midst of a hypocritical and meretricious society, of the religious values sustaining the alcoholic hero's dedication to the working class. If novels of antinomies are debates in which powerful ideas are challenged by their opposites,<sup>56</sup> the order as

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55 Ferris, p. 83.

56 A point of gamesmanship and philosophy given radical form by the imaginative hero of Réjean Ducharme's Le Nez qui voque (Paris: Gallimard, 1967). "Plus une idée est forte," says Mille Milles, "plus l'idée contraire est forte. . . . C'est la loi des contraires" (p. 94).

well as the manner of presentation may decide which antinomy has the final word. In The Blue Mountains of China, the early emphasis on universal love, as much as the attempt to create a collective hero, lends advantages of position and weight to the antinomies of alienation and hostile destiny that crowd the novel's end. The final image is one of dogged human persistence rather than a glimpse of God.

Cotnoir, its physician hero already deceased as the novel opens, reverses this order of good and evil, emphasizing the hypocrisy of a society that ignores or mistreats the weak and poor and buries its dead with a farce. Religious convictions and secular practice collide. Ferron's book illustrates in its very make-up the way to a cure: repeated discontinuities serve to reduce the distance between linear time and eternity, a work assisted by the symbolic agency of Mme. Cotnoir and, above all, Emmanuel or "God with us,"<sup>57</sup> and literally represented in the good doctor's acts of charity.<sup>58</sup> Against the dark background of society, Cotnoir's countervailing love stands forth with increasing brightness and the narrator's last view of Emmanuel becomes a glimpse of God.

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57 See Urbas, p. 127.

58 Cotnoir, hampered by the exploiters at the lowest level, struggles to ease the lives of workers at the next level, reporting each evening to Mme. Cotnoir, whose grand cahier hints at a still higher spiritual world.

In both novels, apart from strategies of the novel-as-game, familiar traditional patterns re-emerge. In The Blue Mountains, a collective hero suffers exile for loyalty to a higher law in a distant place. In Cotnoir, a pioneer whose equally challenging ideal is rooted in the here-and-now, confronts social problems created by the system.

But what of the rebirth latent in the notion of apocalypse, the phoenix renaissance for which the optimistic reader waits? Despite the potential of his double heritage, the hero of the 1980s has not burst forth in fresh beginnings, though here and there he shows the willingness to start. In Quebec, Jean-Yves Soucy's Un Dieu chasseur (1976) creates a universal metaphor out of the habitant/coureur duality, Jacques Godbout's Les Têtes à Papineau (1980) warns of the danger in sacrificing that duality, and Alain Chevrete's Le Premier homme, published in the same year, reveals the difficulties of renaissance in an all-too-human world. In English Canada the pessimism of Hugh MacLennan's Voices in Time (1980) and the gloom of Timothy Findley's Famous Last Words (1981) are countered in a peculiar way by Jack Hodgins' The Invention of the World (1977) and The Resurrection of Joseph Bourne (1979). Hodgins' lusty West Coast heroes, whose commitment is to a world invented by imagination, seem to take a step beyond the

universalism of The Double Hook and The Watch that Ends the Night. They are the carefree antithesis of Quebec's héros engagé. But the hero as a model for rebirth does not yet dominate the apocalyptic vision.

Instead, two retrospective novels of the seventies, Robert Harlow's Scann and Adré Langevin's L'Elan d'Amérique, hint at a new future by presenting an America in which neither coureur nor pioneer can live. Both are novels of "the end of things." In Scann<sup>59</sup> this is evident in the reversal of the death-into-rebirth Easter cycle<sup>60</sup> and by the opposition between the utterly unheroic Scann and the pioneer figures he resurrects to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of his town. As he writes, ostensibly about Linden, but in fact about his own failures and fantasies, Scann's journal becomes a search for myths in a labyrinthian Canada once pioneered by prodigies, now owned by "winners who choose to be losers" (p. 242), people who have lost control over their destinies and personal lives.

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59 Robert Harlow, Scann (1972) (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977).

60 In his Introduction to Scann, Robert Diotte points to the Easter cycle as a structural base for the novel, adding: "There is irony, however: he [Harlow] presents us with the birth of David Thrain on the first day of the cycle and the possible death of Mary Ann . . . on the final day; the Easter context reversed" (p. iv).

Two newsworthy pioneers, trapper Linden and settler Thrain, one suggesting natural man, the other a symbol of conquering technology, emerge from Linden's history. Though Thrain dominates, their roles suggest a doubleness--perhaps the fatal flaw--in Scann's ideal pioneer, who becomes morally "less worthy" from generation to generation, with each advance of the technological frontier. The final stage in this decline is Scann himself, an irresponsible dreamer in a world he cannot control. Trapped between his voyeuristic vision of freedom and the absolute control exacted by technology, fearful that perhaps he himself has "fabricated Apocalypse," he yearns for an escape from entropy, some "vague proof of the accident of a beginning; a denial of Apocalypse, and even in the end, perhaps a refutation of the end" (p. 273).

What Scann achieves through his dark inverted Easter, however, is a change in his world-view. Though his vision of an incomprehensible and uncontrollable universe persists, he breaks Thrain's hold on him by discovering that between his archaic and civilized selves there exist unifying responsibilities. Perhaps he means a responsibility to unite these selves. In the end--so Scann affirms--"The near edge of the future is just visible . . . ." (p. 295).

The antithesis of Scann, and hence a figure close to his pioneer ideal, is the doomed hero of André Langevin's L'Elan d'Amérique,<sup>61</sup> a coureur whose dream is not to conquer the land, but to possess it. His beloved pays d'en haut shrunk to the forest reserves of an American paper company, Antoine is an anachronism, like the novel's great moose, last of his kind and symbol of a more innocent America, who is hunted from the air in the dwindling forest.

Claire Peabody, the wife of Antoine's employer, is the femme-pays object of the hero's desire,<sup>62</sup> a revolutionary figure who also appears in Prochain épisode, Un Rêve québécois and other novels of this period. Descended from a French-Canadian grandmother who became Americanized, and isolated in her husband's luxurious wilderness home, Claire turns to Antoine as "l'autre," her other self, "Né de la forêt, de la nuit, de la rage hurlante des loups" (p. 26), to release her from her self-alienation. In an Aquinesque

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61 André Langevin, L'Elan d'Amérique (Ottawa: Le Cercle du Livre de France, 1972).

62 A symbolic figure Gabrielle Poulin describes in Romans du pays as combining in the hero's mind "ce pays fuyant qu'il désire et ne peut s'approprier et la femme infidèle mais toujours attirante, non pas la mère de ses enfants, mais la compagne de ses plaisirs; non pas un possession tranquille, mais, comme en témoigne particulièrement le roman québécois de 1972, un mirage toujours évanouis et toujours renaissant" (p. 47).

October, they are drawn together "dans une ultime lumière qui vibrait ainsi qu'un adieu silencieux entre mer et ciel" (p. 15). But their meeting as lovers in search of their archaic selves and a country to call their own is too late. Both have become chattels of the spoilers, the new technological "élan d'Amérique" that kills everything it touches. The great moose is shot and decapitated by American hunters, and his head loaded into a company seaplane to become a wall trophy at the Peabody lodge. High over the water, however, realizing that her life has made her one of the spoilers, Claire pushes the severed head from the plane and leaps after it to her death. Antoine, denied possession of his femme-pays, leaves for Ungava, vanishing into a deeper but equally doomed pays d'en haut.

Scann and L'Élan d'Amérique aptly close the sagas of two hero-figures extending through Canadian literature, the first obsessed with conquering the land, the second with possessing it, and both as inheritors of a world neither can endure. Though both are casualties of advancing Western technology, Scann and Antoine are not frères-ennemis in dialogue on common cultural ground, but representatives of two distinct Canadian traditions. Consequently, not even apocalypse can fuse them into a single hero of national stature and scope. As heroes of "the end of things" they spell the

difference between the splintered reflections of a vision that failed and a vision fulfilled that has had its day and must now become part of the past.

But here, as both novels show, man's resistance to death and his denial of the end of things make themselves felt. For Scann, who glimpses at least "the near edge of the future," and for Antoine, dreaming "que l'original, en réalité, s'appelait l'élan d'Amérique,"<sup>63</sup> the future, though threatening, is not completely closed. Around them, in this dark atmosphere of endings, emerge other heroes intent on new beginnings. In Acadia, the exiles of Antonine Maillet's Pélagie-la-charette (1979), with their cartloads of the past, bump their way back to their homeland and a fresh start. In Newfoundland, Neil Godwin, the young hero of William Rowe's Clapp's Rock (1983), turns his back on an international career to win a better life for outport fishermen. These and earlier Heroes of Change--Lebeuf, Galarneau, Jerome Martell and Morag Gunn, for example--as well as new protagonists emerging year by year, are evidence of the Canadian hero's continuing evolution. Not "evolution" in the strict scientific sense of "cause and effect," but rather in the sense that authors choose their literary ancestors in order to

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63 Langevin, p. 239.

create their heroes. In this sense, says Frank Davey, "the writer chooses among influences and traditions rather than being passively formed by them"--a process of election that "is more important to an understanding of literature than the influence or tradition itself."<sup>64</sup>

In a literature privileging discontinuity in a civilization very much in transition, the hero's links with his culture are at least as important as his need for identity and a new integrative vision of life. While there is ample evidence of diversity in the commitments of Canada's fictional heroes, those commitments manifest themselves within two major cultural trends. One trend, a defence against assimilation, has created a hero of "national" dimensions whose roots are firmly planted in Quebec; the other, seeking a hero free of foreign domination, has not yet linked Canadian roots with a growth-producing dialectic. Both trends are away from, rather than toward, an encompassing figure fully representative of Canada.

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64 Davey, p. 6.

## CONCLUSION

Whatever attractions a centralist vision may offer as an answer to the tensions of cultural diversity, the dualism of Canadian literature is clear. Canada has found no hero-figure to match the American Adam or Australia's "Wild Colonial Boy," the animating spirits of two national literatures. Despite his stature and vitality, Quebec's coureur is not part of English Canada's myth, and the Mountie, once proudly representative of English Canada, has no place in the myth of Quebec. Throughout the history of the novel in Canada, the evolution of the hero has been governed chiefly by three factors: the québécois determination to repossess la patrie; the English-Canadian dilemma between imperial and national loyalties; and the culture-shock affecting immigrants for whom Canada is an alien land. In each of these cases, "becoming Canadian" has meant learning to live with the doubleness described in Mason Wade's Canadian Dualism / La Dualité canadienne (1960).

This dualism has not meant an absence of pattern in literature, nor a lack of growth on the part of the hero. In each of the founding cultures, the development of the fictional hero marks a distinct, identifiable response by his society to changing circumstances and new needs. Far from blurring the separate outlines of these responses, time

and the hero's changing world-view emphasize the unity and continuity of their opposing patterns.

In the English-Canadian novel, Loyalist sentiment crystallizes early around the aristocratic exile, a hero of fidelity, moral perfectionism and suffering whose spiritual home lies far across the sea. As this figure rides through the dream of empire that flowers in one century only to fade away in the next, climate and geography increasingly seem to represent an implacable fate, forcing his adventure onto the axis of "homme-milieu" and his vision of life into the psychomachia of the miles christianus. In the same way that fidelity to the imperial monologue leads to a zero-sum game inhibiting the hero's growth, the denial of an identity rooted in a native land (to which Laurence's The Diviners is a rare exception) leads to a hero of negation, to explosions of sex and violence reflecting un-lived life, and to attempts to remodel the Canadian myth by deconstructing the past. In the end, the English-Canadian hero is moral rather than political, supra-national rather than Canadian, and unsure of who he is.

In the Quebec novel, patriotic sentiment begins and persists in the duality of the habitant/coureur, a democratic pioneer figure whose internal dialogue, linked to political issues affecting la patrie, increasingly favours rebellion,

confrontation, and the hero's growth. Fostering the hero's sense of exile in his own country, history and politics guide his adventure onto the axis of "homme-destin," and his world view, under the pressure of war, becomes that of the classic warrior of ancient Greece. Though post-war literature in Quebec is marked by explosions of sex and violence, these are linked to the idea of revolution and accompanied by attempts to remodel mythology by understanding rather than by destroying the past. The Quebec hero who emerges from the Quiet Revolution may be uncertain of what he will do, but he is sure of what he is: a québécois involved in a vision of French Canada's destiny.

As they pass through the stages of growth which reinforce their differences and individual unity, these protagonists strongly suggest a continuing process by which authors create heroes in response to a particular culture's changing hopes and fears. Even in the whirlwind of apocalypse, where models and prototypes tend to disappear, they leave behind them different responses to "the end of things" and divergent visions of continuity in the post-apocalyptic world--all of which points to the conclusion that Canada lacks both a national hero and a national sensibility.

Neither the notion of a "new hero" born of the two cultures nor the idea of a mainstream of shared concerns will stand close examination. Rather, what emerges from fiction in each of these cultures is an awareness of the other culture as a "double" to be feared, at least until it is better understood. Today's apocalyptic novels open the way for, yet fail to encourage, that wider sensibility from which a more encompassing Canadian metaphor might arise. The absence of a common vision is a further reason for continuing reviews of the relations between literatures and their cultures in a complex, confusing age.

Dualism in nations and literatures need not be an entirely negative force. Though prejudice and defence mechanisms may impede intercultural communication, the presence of two cultures maturing side by side in a common political framework can also be the source of creative tension, of fresh dialogue, and of mutually beneficial comparative studies in many fields. In literature, such comparisons do more than reveal different paths of evolution, the impact of culture on the hero, or the hazards of deconstructing the past. They are a way, as well, of apprehending our identity.

Blodgett's sound advice, that we should abstain from judging these literatures from the imagined ground of

a united Canada, can be followed without the danger of "finding one's self lost." Within a critical framework of time- and culture-transcending hero-figures, Canada's literatures may be readily identified, analyzed, and usefully compared, not only with each other, but also with the literatures of other nations.

The present apocalyptic mood, in which the hero vanishes and no birds sing, is neither epidemic nor the permanent condition of Canadian fiction. A continuous flow of shape-shifting hero-images, overt or camouflaged, is part of the novelist's activity, in which societies and their conflicts are dreamed, transfigured and transcended. Though today's dialogue between the two Canadas is predominantly political, fiction has the power to transform this dialectic into a more cultural, more fluid, and more imaginative form, one that may yet produce the encompassing vision emblematic of a unified Canadian nation.

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