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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ  
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THE POETRY AND THE SOCIAL VISION.

OF

F.R. SCOTT

by

Keith Richardson

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Ph. D.

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UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA  
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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation, "The Poetry and the Social Vision of F.R. Scott", offers a chronological and biographical examination of the poetry published by Scott between the mid 1920s and the early 1980s. The dissertation sets this poetry in the context of his maturing social perspective on Canada, which he has worked to help become a national model of cooperation for international man. The social vision of F.R. Scott covers the full range of social relationships, according to which the best of both the individual and the collectivity can be realized, in a mutually responsible manner. Yet, Scott's loyalty to the social whole potentially limits the freedom to be enjoyed by the individual, to whom Scott is no less loyal. The dissertation examines how in his political commitments and in his poems, F.R. Scott illustrates the continuing tension between the needs of the responsible and creative individual, and the needs of the potentially homogeneous society.

The dissertation consists of six chapters that illustrate chronologically the changing relationship between the published poetry and the social vision of F.R. Scott. This inter-relationship is informed by critical references to the private papers of Scott. These papers are now the property of the Public Archives of Canada and many of these papers remain unpublished.

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## INTRODUCTION

For over fifty years, as a poet, a professor of constitutional law, and a founding member of the socialist movement in Canada, Francis Reginald Scott has promoted ideals of social cooperation, responsibility, and service to mankind. Through his poetry, essays, teaching, and political commitments, F.R. Scott has influenced the evolution of modern Canada, always striving to create a democratic and cooperative national society that might serve as a model for international man. In pursuit of this national and universal model of cooperation, Scott has held before his artistic and political audiences the vision of a new social Eden. This vision of a new state of mutual responsibility and social equity in Canada has been informed by the Christian belief in resurrection and the organic cycle of the Canadian Northland, as well as by an artistic and socialist sense of order. Scott has consistently argued that mankind can realize this social Eden through rational social, economic, and cultural policies that will encourage individuals and groups to work together. With equal consistency, Scott has striven to impress upon the artist the need to infuse the creative intelligence with a socially-conscious, critical faculty.

Over the past six decades, Scott's literary, political, and constitutional publications have sparked widespread discussion in academic circles and the often angry attention of the established authorities. During these same decades, however, scholars have produced relatively few formal analyses of Scott's literary and political activities, and these analyses have been limited by their thematic approach or by a general focus on Scott's activities during a particular time period. Even so, there has been general agreement on the significance of the body of Scott's poetry, for it encapsulates and integrates the seemingly divergent elements of his legal, political, and literary interests. Yet, over the years scholars have moved from a simple, often aesthetic consideration of selected elements of Scott's poetry to a more general focus on his contribution to the nation-building process in Canada. To date, scholars have not offered a full examination of the body of Scott's poetry, a lack accentuated by the general conclusion that Scott stands as a unique figure in the social and cultural development of Canada. It is now time to undertake a comprehensive and detailed look at the span of Scott's poetic career, noting the principal influences on the evolution of this career and the political

context in which it has existed. One may then begin to understand the relationship between Scott's poetry and his motivating social vision, which moves him as socialist and artist to infuse the frequently disordered social landscape with an ordered beauty modelled on the regenerative landscape and the redemptive myths.

W.E. Collin offers the first significant study of Scott's poetry in the chapter "The Pilgrim of the Absolute" in his book The White Savannahs (1936). Collin addresses what he sees as the major influences on Scott's poetry and its principal characteristics. Noting only in passing that Scott's father, Canon F.G. Scott, was himself a poet, Collin suggests that the poet-critic A.J.M. Smith has influenced most profoundly the development of Scott's poetry, which Collin himself divides into two thematically distinct periods. The first poetic period covers 1925-29 and yields poems of metaphysical distress that focus on the landscape. The second poetic period covers 1930-35, when under the influence of socialist theory, Scott satirizes bourgeois philanthropy and snobbishness, and attacks the human misery brought by the Depression. In accepting the legitimacy of Scott's social subjects, Collin affirms

Scott's own sense of simultaneous artistic and political commitment. But in distinguishing as sharply as he does between Scott's metaphysical landscape poems and his social poems, Collin fosters a critical vision of Scott that does not easily allow for an essential unity to Scott's vision. During the 1930s and 1940s Scott's political activities accentuated the critical significance that Collin attached to the political element of Scott's poetry and critics began to question such politicized art.

The Montreal poet and critic Louis Dudek embodies such a questioning of Scott's poetry in the article "F.R. Scott and the Modern Poets", published in Northern Review (1950-51). Affirming a dichotomy in Scott's poetry similar to the one noted by Collin, Dudek argues that Scott's poetry in general offers an enticing clarity and directness, which itself signals a frequently shallow poetic perspective that compares poorly to the allusive depth of T.S. Eliot. Although saluting Scott's satiric contribution to the overthrow of the patriotic, pantheistic, and religious values of the upper bourgeoisie, Dudek concludes that Scott has been entrapped by his socialist beliefs and has placed his poetic skill in an ideological strait-jacket.

Conceding the excellence of some of Scott's satiric poems, Dudek still insists that Scott's socialist satire is too explicit and self-limiting. Dudek himself prefers what he calls Scott's serious lyrics and their muted expression of individual experience, which illuminates the human condition. Where Collin in the 1930s sees Scott abandoning the landscape for the inspiration of the urban environment and socialism, Dudek focusses on Scott's later return to a poetic investigation of the ancient earth and the frozen Northland.

Gregory Schultz, in his M.A. thesis "The Periodical Poetry of A.J.M. Smith, F.R. Scott, Leo Kennedy, A.M. Klein, Dorothy Livesay: 1925-50" (1957), offers a brief analysis of Scott's poetry, an analysis that is limited by Schultz's focus only on Scott's periodical poetry in the period up to the 1950s. Schultz notes that World War I was followed by a period during which the poet expressed a deep sense of aimlessness, while the Depression provoked the poet into an explicit protest against the chaotic social environment. Schultz quite understandably places Scott in the second phase of protesting poetry, arguing that Scott turned not to the wasteland of Eliot but to the real world, which he saw needed to be changed. Schultz accepts Scott's social

satires as a legitimate manner in which to expose the social conditions that had to be changed. Noting that Scott's socialist perspective has provided, at least in part, some continuity with the social poetry of the 1950s, Schultz distances himself from Dudek's essentially critical assessment of Scott's poetry, particularly the social component.

In 1958, Desmond Pacey, too, embraced Scott as the man of action and the public poet. In the chapter "F.R. Scott" from Ten Canadian Poets, Pacey welcomes Scott's dedication to the development of a democratic national society, and his service to mankind, which Pacey sees as an extension of nineteenth century Anglican values, a clear reference to the influence of Canon F.G. Scott whom the critics had previously passed over as a positive influence. Pacey suggests that Scott's commitment to the national well-being sets Scott apart from the non-national cosmopolitanism of A.J.M. Smith and confirms his place in the native poetic tradition. Although Pacey accepts Smith as the principal agent in Scott's introduction to modernist poetry, he emphasizes that such later influences as the Depression, the League for Social Reconstruction, and the

Cooperative Commonwealth Federation nurtured Scott's inherent sense of social responsibility. Pacey also notes that Scott's contributions as an essayist and a professor of constitutional law have confirmed his role in the native tradition of nation-building. Looking back on the thirty years of Scott's poetry, Pacey offers an integrated explanation of Scott's diverse activities, suggesting that Scott pursues a complex order of beauty in both art and human relations. No longer content with the simple division of Scott's poetry into social and metaphysical groups, Pacey identifies a total of four poetic groups: descriptive poems, love poems, poems of social idealism, and social satire. Pacey concludes that the social satires are the most significant poems, for they combine Scott's social and literary interests, and synthesize both his sense of history and his sense of beauty.

Mindful of the critics' appreciation of the role played by A.J.M. Smith in the evolution of Scott's poetry, Seymour Adelman, in his M.A. thesis "Elements of Social Criticism in Canadian Poetry, with Emphasis on the Poetry of F.R. Scott and A.J.M. Smith" (1961), attempts a comparison of the two poets. Adelman comments briefly on the treatment

by the two poets of such elements as religion, love, war, politics, social injustice, materialism, the bourgeoisie, and culture. Adelman's cursory examination of the poets' work centres on what he interprets as Smith's essentially individual and inward vision, which he contrasts to Scott's essentially collective and socially-conscious perspective.

Jane Martin, in her M.A. thesis "F.R. Scott" (1966), continues the analysis of Scott as an essentially public man, exploring the humanistic basis of his thought and action. Martin emphasizes that this humanism has made Scott acutely aware not only of the oneness and dignity of man, but also of the need to balance the individual against the collectivity, a powerful tension that tempers his strong socialist, collectivist leaning. In the three chapters of her thesis, Martin focusses on the themes and the elements of Scott's poetry, the purest and most intense expression of his ideas, which she divides into the following four groups: social satires, serious poems, love poems, and nature poems. Martin advises against making too sharp a distinction between the various poems, for in her opinion all express his artistic and political search for Eden.

A.J.M. Smith himself in "F.R. Scott and Some of his Poems", published in Canadian Literature (1967), accepts Scott-the-poet as the man of action, but perhaps more to his own poetic taste, Smith focusses on selected themes and techniques in Scott's non-satiric poems, or as Smith calls them, the profound lyrics. Noting Scott's ability to speak on behalf of man, to blend poetically physical being and mind, and to meld science and faith, Smith praises Scott's adept use of biological and geological time, in order to achieve a retrospective and prophetic perspective on man. Although reluctant to dwell on Scott's social poems, Smith cannot ignore the humanistic commitment which they embody, which leads him to assert that in his poetry generally, Scott displays a profound sense of responsibility and an inescapable sincerity.

Peter Stevens, in his Ph.D. dissertation "The Development of Canadian Poetry Between the Wars and Its Reflection of Social Awareness" (1968), offers a landmark survey of the poetry in Canada between World Wars I and II. He examines in particular the artistic influences on the poets of this period, as well as their social and political context. With specific regard to Scott, Stevens emphasizes

the catalytic poetic influence of A.J.M. Smith, but goes on to argue that in his poetry Scott has developed a unique and unified critical perspective toward life in general.

Stevens emphasizes the local and committed character of Scott's artistic vision which has led him to address local subjects in his poetry and to adapt other poetic influences to his own critical purposes. Stevens identifies in Scott's poetry an enduring tension between what he sees as Scott's poetic interest in both the ephemeral and the absolute, a tension that is sustained by Scott's commitment to humanism rationalism.

The attempt to place Scott in a cultural context took a different turn in the 1970s, as scholars began to look more directly at his political background. Anne Moreau, in her M.A. thesis "La Vie Politique de F.R. Scott: 1930-39" (1977), restricts herself to an analysis of Scott's political, constitutional, and essayist activities during the 1930s; which she presents as the seminal period in Scott's development. In the first of two chapters, Moreau traces Scott's involvement with the League for Social Reconstruction and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, his relations with historian Frank Underhill and socialist

J.S. Woodsworth, as well as Scott's attempts to establish the C.C.F. in Quebec. In her second chapter, Moreau illustrates the British roots of Scott's socialism and his sense of Canada as a North American nation, and links them to the poetic expression of social consciousness during the 1930s. Terrence Campbell, too, in his M.A. thesis "The Social and Political Thought of F.R. Scott" (1977), cites Scott as a major cultural figure, but focusses more narrowly on Scott's democratic, humanistic, and pragmatic contribution to the growth of the socialist movement in Canada. This contribution notwithstanding, Campbell suggests that Scott's greatest contribution to the nation-building process lies in his interest in constitutional thought, foreign affairs, and civil liberties. But where Moreau cites the 1930s as the seminal period in defining Scott's humanistic and artistic commitments, Campbell argues that Scott's indignant socialism and centralized federalism have not evolved beyond the 1930s, limiting his actual contribution to modern Canada.

Sandra Djwa, in her article "'A New Soil and a Sharp Sun', The Landscape of a Modern Canadian Poetry" published in Modernist Studies (1977), illustrates how the growth of modern poetry in Canada coincided with the upsurge of a new political and cultural nationalism during the 1920s, suggesting that Scott represents a general process of psychic exploration through which Canadians have made the landscape their own. Djwa continues her discussion of Scott's general contribution to the nation-building process in her article "F.R. Scott" published in Canadian Poetry, (1979), arguing that his poetry constitutes his greatest achievement and beginning a biographical look at the context of his poetry. But the most telling discussion of Scott's contribution to the creation of modern Canada has been offered by Eileen Janzen, in her Ph.D. dissertation, "~~The~~ Development of Democratic Socialist Ideas in English Canada within the Context of an Emerging Canadian Political Consciousness" (1980). In her treatment of Scott's socialist origins and activities Janzen emphasizes the significance of his poetic vocation, for she believes that in his allusions, metaphors, and images Scott illuminates his inherent political vision. Janzen justly portrays Scott's poetic vocation as his bridge to the modern world, a vocation imbued with both a moral and an artistic imperative to serve man.

This dissertation, "The Poetry and the Social Vision of F.R. Scott", presents a chronological study of Scott's published poetry between the mid 1920s and 1983, in the context of his evolving social perspective on Canada, which he has worked to help develop into a national model of cooperation for international man. Scott's social vision covers the full range of human, social relations whereby the best of the individual and the collectivity are to be realized, in a mutually responsible manner. Clearly, Scott's loyalty to the social has large implications for the free action of the individual, to whom Scott is no less loyal. Thus, Scott has committed himself to live out and to illustrate in his poems the continuing tension created by the subjugation of the indomitable, responsible creative intelligence to the potentially homogeneous needs of the larger social unit. The dissertation is divided into six chapters which illustrate chronologically the changing relationship between Scott's published poetry and his social vision. This inter-relationship is informed by critical references to Scott's private papers, which are now the property of the Public Archives of Canada. Many of these papers remain unpublished.

Chapter I, "The Early Years, 1899-1923", illustrates the impact on F.R. Scott of the conservative family and social landscape of Quebec City, as well as the impact of the historical and seasonal landscape that surrounds Quebec City. This chapter addresses the particular influence of Scott's father, Canon F.G. Scott, a minor poet of the Confederation school.

Chapter II, "The Montreal Years, 1923-29", examines the poems published by Scott in The McGill Fortnightly Review and The Canadian Mercury. This chapter documents Scott's gradual movement away from ethereal poetic landscapes and his increasing engagement with more realistic landscapes, specifically the Laurentian landscape. Chapter II illustrates how against this majestic Northern landscape and its ceaseless cycle, Scott began to measure the proportion of man, much as he would later measure the individual against the collectivity. This chapter also places Scott's growing awareness of the troubled social landscape in the context of his own eventual choice of a socially responsible vocation, teaching.

Chapter III, "The Depression Years, 1930-39", examines those poems published by Scott in The Canadian Forum and New Provinces (1936). This chapter sets the poems of the period in the context of Scott's participation in the educational League for Social Reconstruction, the socialist Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, and the neutralist campaign for Canadian independence from the military adventures of the British Empire.

Chapter IV, "The War Years and Beyond, 1940-49", focusses on Scott's first independent selection of poems, Overture (1945). This chapter examines Scott's war-time crisis of faith in himself and mankind, as well as Scott's refound hope for mankind in the post-war era, itself symbolized by the elusive northern horizon. Chapter IV also illustrates how Scott's new hope for the co-operative potential of mankind found expression in a variety of comparably new national cultural initiatives in the later part of the 1940s.

Chapter V, "The Middle Years, 1950-62", focusses primarily on Events and Signals (1954) and The Eye of the Needle (1957). The chapter places these volumes in the context of Scott's deepening interest in French Canada, his

sojourn in Asia, the replacement of the C.C.F. by the New Democratic Party, as well as Scott's continuing dissatisfaction with the Canadian social landscape. Chapter V also gives consideration to The Blasted Pine (1957) and St Denys Garneau - Anne Hébert (1962).

Chapter VI, "The Later Years, 1962-82", concludes the dissertation with an examination of Signature (1964), Selected Poems (1966), Trouvailles (1967), The Dance is One (1973), and Collected Poems (1981). This chapter traces Scott's retirement from the partisan social landscape of Canada and his careful preparation of a series of retrospective and summary volumes. Chapter VI also shows how at a time of profound personal reflection, Scott has remained alert to the future of Confederation, displaying a vitality entirely consistent with his earliest poetic and political challenges to the established social and cultural order in Canada.

CHAPTER I

THE EARLY YEARS, 1899-1923

Born in the province of Quebec at the turn of the century, Francis Reginald Scott helps to bridge the social history of Canada before World War I, and the social history of Canada after World War I. The integrated, organic nature of his poetic vision, his political values, and his constitutional plans suggest an essential continuity between the nineteenth-century man and the twentieth-century man. F.R. Scott has been one of the makers of modern history, letters, and laws in Canada, but he has also maintained a belief in a natural and divine social order characterized by mutual responsibility on the part of each citizen. Scott is a firm advocate of the improvement of the economic condition of the common man, in order that he may fully realize his responsible individual nature. Similarly, Scott has argued for the recognition of collective cultural and economic rights that will end exploitation in Canada. Even so, Scott insists that as society changes in acceptance of these new collective rights, the social fabric must be carefully guarded against protesting passions on a social scale, which

might destroy man. For F.R. Scott, a progressive social vision means evolution and not revolution, a vision borne out in his poetry.

Amongst the influences that pushed F.R. Scott to his particular social vision, his father Canon Frederick George Scott stands pre-eminent. An Anglican priest, Canon Scott bequeathed to his son the Christian belief in redemption, which informs Scott's own belief that collective man may yet perfect himself through the exercise of reason and achieve a social Eden. As a minor poet of the Confederation nature school, Canon Scott bequeathed to his son a love for the regenerative balance of the Laurentian landscape. The pursuit of a comparable sense of balance underlies F.R. Scott's poetry, constitutional thought, and political goals. As a staunch advocate of the civilizing tradition of Imperial Britain, Canon Scott bequeathed to his son an enduring commitment to serve man, as well as a firm respect for the sanctity of the civil order. Under the Christian, conservative influence of his father, F.R. Scott passed a peaceful childhood and adolescence in Quebec City. This pastoral existence was disturbed only slightly by World War I, which claimed the life of an older brother, took Canon Scott to Europe as "Pastor" to the Canadian troops, and first exposed F.R. Scott to social disorder in the form

of the Conscription Riots. Sheltered at home, as well as at school and university by the conservative 19th century values of Canon Scott, the carnage and social upheaval of World War I did not touch Scott significantly until almost ten years later, when he began reading modern poetry and really began to engage the 20th century.

The paternal forebears of F.R. Scott immigrated to Canada during the early nineteenth century, arriving in Montreal in 1831, when Scott's grandfather, William Edward, was<sup>1</sup> nine years old.<sup>2</sup> The adult William Edward Scott became a doctor and eventually joined the Faculty of Medicine at McGill University in 1847,<sup>3</sup> the year of his marriage. William Edward's son, Frederick George Scott, was born in 1861,<sup>4</sup> and it was he who interrupted the Scott family's presence in Montreal. The close deaths of F.G. Scott's parents in 1883, left him at the age of twenty two "an orphan...which affected him so much that it moved him into the Church". F.G. Scott left Montreal to study for ordination in the Anglican Church at Oxford where he "got caught up in the original Oxford movement...very High Church, very close to Catholicism" and upon his return to Canada, the lower-church "Anglican bishop of Montreal would not give him a parish". This clash between personal conviction and the established authority of the Montreal

diocese forced F.G. Scott "to move into the diocese of Quebec", to Drummondville,<sup>5</sup> the birthplace of the first five of F.G. and Amy Scott's children, William, Henry, Mary, Elton, and Charles.<sup>6</sup>

In 1898, F.G. Scott moved his family to Quebec City where he became the curate of St. Mathew's Church which "had a beautiful rectory with large grounds." Following F.G. Scott's eventual promotion to rector, his sixth child, F.R. Scott, was born in St. Mathew's rectory on August 1, 1899.<sup>7</sup> During this same year, F.G. Scott began what was to be his long involvement in the Canadian Army for, "from 1899 to 1914 Reverend Scott was unofficial Chaplain to the permanent garrison at the Citadel" in Quebec City, which destined him to become "The Beloved Padre" to the Canadian troops during World War I.<sup>8</sup> The seventh and last child of F.G. and Amy Scott, Arthur, was born in Quebec City in 1901.<sup>9</sup> Centring his own life, as well as that of his family, on the Anglican Church, Reverend Scott eventually became a canon of the Quebec Cathedral in 1906, and archdeacon of Quebec in 1925.<sup>10</sup> F.R. Scott recalls that "at a very early age the family members were incorporated into the life of the parish, the Church", which gave the childhood years "a natural rhythm", with "the seasons flowing and the ecclesiastical...seasons flowing with them".<sup>12</sup> The young F.R. Scott displayed such

a strong interest in his religion that he was thought eventually "to go into the Anglican Church";<sup>13</sup> the adult F.R. Scott has written, "the Christian symbolism in my verses...came of course naturally from my Anglican background, and the fact that I had read the Bible three times from cover to cover before I was sixteen".<sup>14</sup>

However, it was an older brother, Elton, who became an Anglican clergyman, and over the years F.R. Scott's own Christian faith and practice declined in proportion to his growing interest in "modern science"<sup>15</sup> which drew him "away from formal Xty".<sup>16</sup> To Scott, Einstein's theory of relativity appeared "fantastic. There was no absolute truth ...life is constantly changing and moving. So, the relative idea is eternal."<sup>17</sup> This sense of equilibrium was to influence his poetry profoundly. Scott experienced "no sense of vacancy at any point in the change"<sup>18</sup> and remained "filled with Christian myths and images", insisting that "all great religions are epic poems about reality: they all ask the unanswerable questions."<sup>19</sup> But, during the 1920s, as Scott abandoned his formal religious beliefs and practices he turned with equal curiosity to another important, childhood influence, the surrounding natural world, its geophysical record of time, and its seasonal rhythms.

The setting of the Scott family's rectory home in Quebec City greatly affected F.R. Scott. During family outings, he grew to know intimately the landscape:

the Laurentian Mountains are only seven or eight miles away, and the whole of the lower St. Lawrence, both the north and south shore, had these places for summer holidays. We first of all used to take picnics very frequently, quite apart from normal holidays. Father simply loved the woods and the outdoors, and he found all sorts of picnic places.<sup>20</sup>

The adult Scott links the visual impact of these childhood outings directly to the images of his later poetry. He recalls:

a place called Beaupré...on the St. Anne River. Father walked up the banks of the river and discovered a lovely little beach. It wasn't very sandy...small rounded pebbles...of course, you know the Laurentian rivers have polished all the stones on their banks, made them almost like artifacts. I've put a lot of that feeling in some of my poems.<sup>21</sup>

During these childhood outings Scott also came to know the Laurentian landscape as an historical and social entity.

Father used to rent this beach from Mr. Côté every summer, and you know the Côté house was the house that the family was still living in at the time of Wolfe's invasion...So, you knew...about Quebec, you were living in history. Well, we had this beach and we would go spend about six weeks every summer, in tents.<sup>22</sup>

Thanks to the interest of F.G. Scott in the outdoors, at an early age F.R. Scott became acquainted with the Quebec landscape as a geophysical, as well as an historical and social unity. Canon Scott, evokes such an inter-relationship of landscape, history, and faith in his own sonnet "Quebec", in the sestet of which he celebrates the city and its larger natural context, illustrating the northern direction his poet-son would follow:

Behind her, voiceless to the frozen  
North,  
The mountain wilderness unconquered lies;  
Beneath her, rolls the river to  
the sea;  
Upon her scroll of fame great names  
shine forth,  
But on her storied craggs from  
morning skies  
There dawns the light of greater  
days to be.<sup>23</sup>

The young F.R. Scott "spent the first twenty years of his life living in and out of the rectory",<sup>24</sup> during which time the various forms of the landscape implanted themselves in his creative mind. The inter-relationship of these geophysical, historical, and seasonal elements of the landscape would begin to emerge clearly in the Laurentian poems of the 1920s and mature in the MacKenzie River poems of the 1950s.

Throughout his adolescence, at the direction of his father, F.R. Scott kept a diary with which he was to discover "what it was he was supposed to be doing in this world." Canon Scott insisted that individuals and certainly his family "were here on this earth to do useful work for humanity, and you weren't to bother with yourself or your career, you'd find something to do. And, above all, duty; he stressed the necessity of duty".<sup>25</sup> Cumulatively, the "early religious training, and life in the family and church work...inaugurated a sense of duty to society" whereby "the public interest had to be served and the private life"<sup>26</sup> assumed a lesser priority. Clearly, Canon Scott convinced his son of the value of "an attitude of concern for human beings and human welfare, and particularly this teaching that the pursuit of one's own interests were not important in life".<sup>27</sup> This inherited commitment to concerned public service, as well as a personal sense of renunciation, was to emerge in Scott's deliberately chosen teaching vocation, his commitment to the socialism of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation as well as in the tension between his often didactic, public poetic voice and his often lonely, private poetic voice. F.R. Scott's social

poetry and politics were to demand an accelerated pace that contrasted with the patience of Canon Scott's "favourite quotation... 'The Lord will provide'. It contained his philosophy of life; he always believed things would turn out well."<sup>28</sup>

F.R. Scott grew up in a community of Quebec City that language and faith separated from the francophone, Catholic majority. Canon Scott "pretty well dominated"<sup>29</sup> this community, much as he shaped his family with his own interests in the landscape, the Anglican Church, and the British heritage. Canon Scott "was very British in his admiration for the British tradition, and the British Empire. He was a staunch Imperialist in his youth."<sup>30</sup> By the time of F.R. Scott's birth in 1899, Canon Scott had published "three volumes of poetry" and was to publish "seven more before his death in 1944."<sup>31</sup> The Scott children knew that he

wrote poetry because no sooner had he finished a new poem in his study in the rectory, than he would dash out, and call out, 'Amy, Amy, bring the children.' And he'd have a little public reading to his family of his latest poem...it really almost gave a distaste for reading.<sup>32</sup>

Given such recitations, during his childhood, the young Scott lacked an "instinctive, immediate feeling" for poetry, although in later years he understood that Canon Scott had

"fed him good books, and later poetry, so that unconsciously he was picking it up...poetry was not something extraordinary."<sup>33</sup>

Roy Daniells, in "Minor Poets 1880-1920", writes that the poems of Canon F.G. Scott "reflect his love of the Laurentian landscape and the faith and courage which won him wide regard during his service as an army chaplain in the First World War."<sup>34</sup> Louis Dudek, in "F.R. Scott and the Modern Poets", asserts that Canon Scott "represents for the Canada of 1890-1920 the solid Victorian tradition of faith, earnestness and moral energy". Dudek adds that "it is to his father as a representative of the Victorian earnestness and faith that F.R. Scott, on the satirical side of his poetry stands in striking antithesis."<sup>35</sup> Desmond Pacey, in Ten Canadian Poets, refers to the analagous difference in the treatment of nature by the poets, father and son, to illustrate the antithesis to which Dudek alludes,

in the stark landscape of the Laurentian north, Scott has found an objective correlative for the idea that the Absolute is not, as his father F.G. Scott had conceived it, a friendly, life-giving force, but an indifferent, inhuman power.<sup>36</sup>

In 1934, Canon Scott published his Collected Poems, a representative selection of his poetry that confirms the description by Dudek of Canon Scott's earnest belief in the

established order of politics, religion, and verse. And, as Daniells and Pacey both point out, Collected Poems includes many nature poems by Canon Scott. He characteristically begins such nature poems with a description of the landscape before him, in which he searches for the beneficent divine spirit. Frequently the poet passes in reverent silence through an isolated wilderness, as in "The Unnamed Lake" which "...sleeps among the thousand hills/Where no man ever trod". In such an undisturbed corner of the landscape, only the harmonious sounds of nature break the pre-existent silence of God. Man leaves no trace in this landscape, the stillness of which the poet absorbs and reflects, "We passed in silence, and the lake/We left without a name."<sup>37</sup> Often, the first and last stanzas of such nature poems enclose Canon Scott in a spiritual reverie described in the body of the poem. In "My Lattice" an introductory description of a song propels the poet into "that little square of sky/that becomes a boundless ocean", the middle verses of the poem describe an uplifting spiritual fantasy, and in the concluding verse the poet "suddenly returning", awakes to the bird's song:

...the wind which, cool as dew  
 Upon my face is falling,  
 And see again my patch of blue  
 And hear the sparrows calling.<sup>38</sup>

Analogously, in "Nature's Recompense", the poet "with barren heart and weary mind" wanders into the woods in search of spiritual succour. After a despairing and humble wait,

"Mother Earth" responds to his appeal:

And as it thrills each languid sense  
And lifts me from the world apart,  
Great Nature makes full recompense  
For her past coldness to my heart.<sup>39</sup>

Be it implicitly or explicitly, Canon Scott bases his descriptive nature poems on his desire to contemplate God, as in "My Garden":

So in my garden night and day,  
With sunshine or with stars above,  
God takes my petty cares away,  
And fills me with His perfect love.<sup>40</sup>

However, the constant search by Canon Scott for the face of God in the landscape minimizes the importance of the natural surroundings and certainly softens his descriptions of the austere face of the Laurentian landscape.

This pursuit of the divine order also underpins Canon Scott's poems about various mythic heroes who experience a dislocated life that suggests that

they are out of step with the divinely-ordered universe. In "Samson", the hero pleads for a brief return of his former power, testifying to his disjointed life:

Then, O God, Thy mercy show -  
Crush him in the overthrow  
At whose life they scorn and point  
By its greatness out of joint.<sup>41</sup>

Similarly, in "The Frenzy of Prometheus", the hero's delirium matches his egotistic ambition. Prometheus wishes to have "the spent stars from their orbits reel" and "With voice of fire proclaim him God alone."<sup>42</sup> These poems about mythical heroes suggest that deviation from the divine order accepted by Canon Scott brings an aberrant egotism that must inevitably be crushed.

Elsewhere in Collected Poems, Canon Scott states his commitment to the British heritage. In "To England", he exhorts the "mighty Soul of England" to "Uphold the cause of justice and of right", asserting that it is the responsibility and the destiny of the British race to "Lead...mankind into the way of peace."<sup>43</sup> In "The Crown of Empire", moved by the "England of our Fathers and England of our Sons", Canon Scott counsels that "He grips the hearts of all mankind who stands for liberty."<sup>44</sup>

In Collected Poems, Canon Scott invariably commits himself to the ideal of the British heritage, the defense and the civilizing of the less fortunate. In "Montenegro", he berates an idle England for its failure to live up to this ideal and defend the small country. Asking "Who hath betrayed thee, England...", Canon Scott urges, "Faint not and falter not, England, my Queen", for "Thy trust is world-wide, and hath ever been."<sup>45</sup>

In his poems on World War I, Canon Scott further enunciates his faith in the civilizing tradition of British Imperialism, insisting that the British victory ultimately embodies Christian valour. Not infrequently, he depicts the nobility of a soldier's death and alludes to Valhalla, the ironically-pagan, warrior heaven to which the dead soldier will go. In "The Penalty", however, Canon Scott breaks the pattern of his generally superficial, poetic analysis of the war. Describing the execution of a deserter, on whose behalf he unsuccessfully intervened, Canon Scott attempts a sympathetic psychological portrait of the soldier, although the persistent quest for God's presence minimizes the realism. Nevertheless, Canon Scott concludes "The Penalty" with a uniquely abject picture of war:

A shuffling in the mire,  
 'Ready, Present--fire.'  
 He falls and one man more  
 Has vanished from the war.<sup>46</sup>

"The Penalty" notwithstanding, in Collected Poems, Canon Scott exhibits a conservative and traditional, artistic bent. His style is conventional; his verse forms lack innovation; his rhymes and structures are sometimes forced, and his imagery is vague, soft, and romanticized. These poetic limitations reflect the poet's search for the divine, but nebulous, element in nature and in human experience.

In his early poems, F.R. Scott was to demonstrate the romantic vagueness and the stylistic weaknesses that characterize the work of his father. These early poems contrast vividly with the poems produced after his introduction to the modernists in 1925. In such later work, F.R. Scott was to achieve new firm clarity, as the images of the compelling, yet indifferent, Laurentian landscape began to supplant the vaguer inspiration of a nebulous divinity. In large part, the sensitivity of F.R. Scott to the poetic images and messages of the seasonal landscape derives from the outdoor interests and poetic perspective of Canon Scott. In the face of nature, be it the terrain or the seasons,

F.R. Scott assumes a contemplative stance comparable to that of his poet-father. But unlike Canon Scott, F.R. Scott does not subordinate the autonomous rhythms of indifferent nature to the presumed presence of the divinity in the landscape.

As demonstrated in Collected Poems by the poems about World War I and the beneficent tradition of Imperial Britain, Canon Scott bequeathed to his son a vital, publicly committed poetic persona. Although often holding dissimilar political views, each of the two poets, father and son, demonstrates a sense of obligation to comment on the social nature of man. Where Canon Scott celebrates the nobility of war-time sacrifice, F.R. Scott writes of the horror of war which maims both the victor and the vanquished. As well, in Collected Poems Canon Scott portrays mythic heroes whose egocentric interests lead them astray in a divinely-ordered universe. While not convinced of the divine order of the universe, F.R. Scott similarly attacks the aberrant individuals and social classes who abdicate their

responsibility to the common weal. In the poems of Canon Scott, such a social miscreant simply perishes. However, F.R. Scott suggests the harmful and improper nature of such self-interested behaviour, implicitly demanding the opposite, responsible behaviour.

The childhood and early life of F.R. Scott in Quebec City continued peacefully until the outbreak of World War I when in 1914, with the declaration of war, Canon Scott "dropped his parish work and said, 'I'm going.' And he became a chaplain, senior chaplain actually, eventually to the First Canadian Division."<sup>47</sup> Canon Scott set sail for Europe on September 29, 1914, and returned to Canada "on Sunday morning, the 4th of May, 1919, on the Empress of Britain, after a [self-imposed] absence of four years and seven months",<sup>48</sup> itself an important example of the subordination of the personal to the public. The Scott family lost one son during the War; the "second brother, Harry, a marvelous member of the family, went off at age twenty-two, and was killed at the Battle of the Somme"<sup>49</sup> on October 21, 1916.

Despite the long absence of his father, the European service of two older brothers, and the death of a third brother, Scott remembers the war years as quiet save for "the Conscription Riots".<sup>50</sup> F.R. Scott recalls:

in 1917, things reached such a point that troops occupied Quebec...one Sunday evening at Evensong...We suddenly heard a kind of roar on the street. It got closer and closer, and louder and louder. The louder it got, the harder we prayed...I can remember sitting in the back gallery of St. Mathew's rectory, and hearing machine guns going way down in Lower Town.<sup>51</sup>

Ironically, while in Europe Canon Scott argued for Conscription, the measure that provoked the riots his family witnessed in Quebec City. His son's early experience with the social disorder and violence of the Conscription Riots had a profound effect, shaping and symbolizing his adult reaction against civil disorder.

Canon Scott recorded his memories of World War I in The Great War As I Saw It, which was first published in 1922, while his son was at Oxford. In his memoirs, Canon Scott addresses several themes that also have occupied F.R. Scott, the growth of Canadian nationhood, the moral conduct of the social man, and reason as a social force. In The Great War As I Saw It, Canon Scott describes a military parade that he addressed in September 1914, before embarking for Europe. The parade "was a wonderful sight...Here was Canada quickening into national life and girding on the sword to take her place among the independent nations of the world."<sup>52</sup> For Canon Scott, nationhood meant that

in time of war Canada would stand staunchly by the British Empire. In contrast, during the late 1920s and the 1930s, F.R. Scott defined Canada's nationhood in terms of independence from the British Empire; moreover, he affirmed a position of virtual neutrality in any future Imperial war. Despite his essential respect for the Empire, Canon Scott saw Canada's nationhood in an increasingly North American context that obliged him to contrast the harmony of the Canadian natural world with the decay of settled Europe. As the ship leaves Quebec City in 1914, Canon Scott ponders his future in the European theatre of war:

what did fate hold in store? Among those hills ...were lakes and salmon rivers in the heart of the great forests which make our Canadian wild life so fascinating. We were being torn from that life and sent headlong into the seething militarism of a decadent European feudalism.<sup>53</sup>

In answer, Canon Scott asserts "that the American continent...had entered upon the sphere of world politics", adding that "we were not fighting for the security of the Mother Country only, but for the security of Canadian nationalism itself."<sup>54</sup> Mindful of Canada's obligations to the British Empire, in his memoirs Canon Scott argues that Canada's future would be inevitably affected by the

North American context, anticipating his son's own political arguments during the 1930s.

In The Great War As I Saw It Canon Scott outlines the power of Christian faith to inspire the troops in their fight against the Germans and in reference to the Army, notes that "the individual was submerged in the great flood of corporate life, and the words of the text came to him, 'He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it.'"<sup>55</sup> However, in the course of the War, Canon Scott met "men who knew no theology, who professed no creed, who even pretended to great indifference about the venture of eternity", although these soldiers held an "unflinching faith in the power of right". In his memoirs Canon Scott judges this to be an acceptable expression of an implicit Christian faith for "right is after all only another name for the will of God."<sup>56</sup> Encompassing all responsible behaviour, Christian faith motivates the struggle for "the salvation of the world". Yet, in his memoirs, Canon Scott also stands as an exponent of the power of rationalism to prevent further carnage. Following the destruction of World War I, "the romance and chivalry of the profession of arms has gone forever. Let us hope that in the years to come the human

mind will bend all its energies to right the wrongs and avert the contentions that result in bloodshed."<sup>58</sup>

Canon Scott's tacit acceptance of right-minded behaviour, albeit as part of Christianity, as well as his faith in reason, influenced the words and actions of F.R. Scott who, in abandoning formal religion, accepted an equally commanding concept of moral conduct by the responsible citizen. Fearful of the destructive power of the impending World War II, F.R. Scott later argued that national and international expressions of principled reason could lead to a salvation similar to that envisioned by Canon Scott.

Throughout his life, in Canada and in the European theatre of war, Canon Scott ministered unceasingly to persons in need. After the Great War, for example, he travelled to the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919, to support the strikers, many of whom were his former soldier charges. Due to his worrying expression of sympathy, the authorities ordered Canon Scott, who was still under military command, from the city. F.R. Scott writes that his father "had a great sympathy for labour in general" and a "natural warmth toward the working class",<sup>59</sup> that contributed to the evolution of his own political ethics. The veterans

of World War I held the Canon in great regard, visiting his home in Quebec City and heeding his advice when he appeared publicly on their behalf. However, Canon Scott lacked the "statistics" and "theory", with which to transform his pastoral sympathy for the working class into political support. He simply asked, "what might we not accomplish if our national and industrial life were full of sympathy and love!"<sup>60</sup> Only in the course of his years at Oxford, did F.R. Scott himself begin to acquire the "statistics" and the "theory" necessary to social analysis and change, which he would later refine in the League for Social Reconstruction and the C.C.F. Yet as F.R. Scott grew to adulthood, Canon Scott, too, learned something about politics and social theory going so far in 1931, as to suggest that he might convene a small group to discuss the formation of a branch of the L.S.R. in Quebec City.<sup>62</sup> Even so, Canon Scott was not won over fully to his son's socialist viewpoint, as his son in a letter of 1933, notes that Canon Scott "is apt to think all my friends are revolutionaries."<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, Canon Scott did support his son's demonstrated commitment to the resolution of social inequities and took pride in F.R. Scott's election in 1942, to an executive position in the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation:

news of your election to the secretaryship of the [CCF] came over the radio at ten oclock We all here send you our warmest congratulations Long life and good luck to you in your big work

Your proud father.<sup>64</sup>

In his recollection of Canon Scott's death, F.R. Scott illuminates the mutually-informing relationship with his father:

I was looking through the little mica vent in the oxygen tent when he seemed...at last dead... Suddenly I could see a spirit...come back into his eyes...and out of the nothingness that he had been a moment before...all the associations of his ideas about me came immediately into his mind...and then he went that further stage beyond, where he was able to make a comment upon what I symbolized in his mind, and looking at me said simply, 'Frank, is this the revolution?'<sup>65</sup>

Scott further details this relationship in his poem "Last Rites" where he observes a nurse and a priest who are attending his dying father. "Nurse prays with skills, serving her Lord with rites and acts of love." Yet, "she will fail/In the end, and lose her battle." However, the nurse's inevitable loss belongs to the larger progress of medical science and she "will come with stranger and more

cunning tools/To other bedsides, adding skill to skill,/Till death is driven slowly farther back." In contrast, the "priest does not fight./He lives through death and death is proof of him." With his characteristic historical eye, Scott observes the nurse's and the priest's struggle to prevail. He discerns in their respective fight for the body and the soul of Canon Scott that "the warring creeds run past the boundary" of death "And stake their claims to heaven; science drives/The boundary back, and claims the living land". In "Last Rites" Scott treads a fine line between the personal sorrow of a son and his writer's compulsion to interpret the meaning of sorrow. He writes, "And I who watch this rightness and these rites,/I see my father in the dying man". On the one hand, his loss is immediate and heart-felt, "I am his son who dwells upon the earth,/There is a holy spirit in this room". On the other hand, his observing intelligence distances him from the death. Ironically, Scott renders the intensely personal moment as a dispassionate, historical confrontation between ages of faith and science. Even so, Canon Scott's death remains personal and immediate, all the while illustrating his own position between ages of faith and reason: "And straight toward me from both sides of time/Endless the known and unknown roadways run."<sup>66</sup> In the Literary History of Canada, Munro Beattie writes, "to feel with the intensity

that makes a poem memorable, F.R. Scott, it would appear, must be engaged intellectually as well as emotionally in his theme. 'Last Rites' which beautifully achieves this equipoise, is possibly his best poem."<sup>67</sup>

In contrast to the information on Canon Scott, a study of F.R. Scott's background throws a dimmer light on his mother and her impact on him. Scott portrays his mother, Amy Scott, as a figure in silhouette, one who has form and impact, but no specific, discernible characteristics. This is particularly curious given that Amy Scott was responsible for the home during the four and a half years that Canon Scott committed himself to Europe in World War I. Perhaps Amy Scott is best seen as the symbol of Canon Scott's single-minded renunciation of the personal life for the public-duty of the war, a tension that has marked F.R. Scott's own life and poetry. Scott writes, "I grew up in a very masculine establishment...though everything seemed to hinge around my Mother, who was an extraordinarily quiet person who just saw that things went well". He remembers her as "a very good musician"<sup>68</sup> and due to her influence his "first love was the piano and music. [His] mother played beautifully on a big square Steinway she brought with her trousseau. [He] would be lulled to sleep with Beethoven's sonatas."<sup>69</sup> As

the young F.R. Scott hovers at the edge of sleep, this maternal woman-figure, seated at the piano, suggests comfort and safety. But, this figure from memory also evokes the curious woman-figure of the title-poem of Overture - in reality Una Fleming<sup>70</sup> - who attends the adult Scott awakening to a changing world. This muse, combining a significant maternal image, heralds Scott's adult realization in "Overture" that "the tissue of art is torn"<sup>71</sup> by a changing world, which is governed by both passion and reason.

Canon Scott embodies in F.R. Scott's life that impulse which is adult, morally-responsible, public-minded, and irascible. Amy Scott, in her bare presence, embodies the renunciation of the private life and the emotional tie between parent and child, suggesting the inward-dwelling personality, and offers an essential image of the muse. In the poem, "Mother", Scott suddenly notes the aging Amy Scott, "On your face was that quiet, gentle look/Of those who have loved serving others too well/Ever to feel impatient at neglect."<sup>72</sup> In "Bedside", Scott treats his relationship with his mother at the time of her death, his

restraint adding power to his sorrow, "in June I saw the withering of my mother./Oh trees like tears, sweet fellowship of stone!" He does not view his mother's death from a distance, nor does he engage in the intellectual debate of "Last Rites", rather he affirms the powerful bond between his mother and her children, "And every lengthened intake, each return/Brought back some tender moment of her succour/Each one of us was hers, and none his own." The poet emphasizes the intense, familial bonding by means of organic metaphors, much as he does when describing an intense love relationship and the potential of cooperative social relations. With the death of Amy Scott, "the root wherein we joined at last uprooted/We lingered, reaching in our shallower soil." Although her death possesses an organic inevitability, the disappearance of the constant maternal bond breaks the group of Scott children "And five no longer integral departed."<sup>73</sup>

Both Canon Scott and Amy Scott embody artistic perspectives. Along with the commitment to serve mankind, Canon Scott conveyed to his son the literary background for F.R. Scott's future public poetry. Amy Scott conveyed to her son an abiding love for music, which is rooted in the remembered, lullaby-like, Beethoven sonatas. The latter,

maternal influence was to re-appear in Scott's conscious mind when, at retirement age in the early 1960s, he would begin the spiritual, self-evaluating task of a "Collected Poems".

After his schooling in the High School in Quebec City, in 1916, Scott went to Bishop's College in Lennoxville, the Anglican character of which assured a comfortable place of study. F.R. Scott remembers Canon Scott "saying, when [Scott] left Bishop's in [1919], 'Now I've given every one of my sons a B.A. degree, and they've got to look for themselves after that.'" <sup>74</sup> Scott also remembers Bishop's most warmly for an unnamed professor who inspired a keen affection for history and poetry, influencing Scott's decision to study history while at Oxford. <sup>75</sup> After leaving Bishop's, Scott "taught school at Quebec High School...for one term" and "also...at Bishop's College School for a term." Although he had by then secured a Rhodes Scholarship, ill-health prevented him from going to England until "the autumn of 1920". <sup>76</sup> Not surprisingly, Canon Scott's reputation in England influenced Scott's presence at Oxford. Scott writes that he got to

Oxford because his "Father's poetry had been published in England" and read by Oxford's Professor of Poetry.

Similarly, the president of Magdalen College took a personal interest in the son of Canon Scott, selecting him for the College.<sup>77</sup>

Scott took his B.A. in history in two years at Oxford rather than in the usual three, finishing it in 1922, an economy that he attributes to having "had a B.A. from Bishop's".<sup>78</sup> Faced with an uncommitted third year of the Rhodes Scholarship, in 1923, Scott "took a B.Litt., which was a post-graduate degree", specializing in the Napoleonic period". But, he was most thrilled by the "ability to travel on the Continent...[he] was all prepared for this cultural life and tradition", although these new experiences were set within the context of studying at Oxford, which "was Anglican to the nth degree, so [he] had no theological jolt."<sup>79</sup>

While at Oxford Scott's major discoveries were largely cultural, for he was "a man who went long distances just to see new art galleries...Everything that was past seemed fascinating to [him]. The older it was, the more fascinating."<sup>80</sup> Oxford has embodied explicitly

happy memories for Scott, "you just gulped it down, got drunk on it. You had the whole of Europe at your feet...In a sense it was a bit of the 'North American going to the homeland of culture' ".<sup>81</sup>

These days at Oxford stand in vivid contrast to Scott's quiet adolescence when even during World War I, Quebec was quiet. "Nothing very much disturbed [Scott's] life until [he] went over to Oxford...and began really to get educated in the contemporary world, in a larger way."<sup>82</sup> Ironically, "the only contemporary poetry [Scott] read at Oxford was a little anthology called Poems of Today", and he "wrote scarcely any poetry at the time. [He] placed two satirical pieces in the Isis...but hardly ever tried to write other types of verse."<sup>83</sup> Scott remembers many of his discoveries at Oxford as extensions of values that had been introduced at home in Quebec. Magdalen College "watered all [his] seeds. [He] had been well prepared for it in [his] cosy little family in Quebec." However, the stimulating years at Oxford "did not make it easy to adapt to the McGill and Montreal [Scott] afterwards entered",<sup>84</sup> in the mid-1920s.

At Oxford, Scott acquired an introduction to the theory of social change, which had been missing from Canon Scott's ideas of Christian duty, as a member of the Student Christian Movement:

study groups were formed, which I attended in my first term at Oxford; my brother was already there, he had friends, most of them were in the Divinity School, and they were discussing serious issues of the day.<sup>85</sup>

The S.C.M. study group studied the Lambeth Council of Bishops Report of 1919, Christianity and the Industrial Order which served as his

first formal introduction to socialist thinking. Instead of coming from any kind of Marxian position it came exclusively from the christian socialist tradition, which was very much stronger in England than in other places.<sup>86</sup>

In the company of his brother Elton, a divinity student, Scott found new social possibilities for the Christian service to mankind long advocated by their father, Canon Scott. Through the S.C.M. study group, Scott passed from a pastoral vision of life rooted in the rectory in Quebec City, to the troubled, industrial twentieth century. Previous to reading the Report of 1919, he had

"never really thought much about the industrial society around" and "had no particular relationship to it."<sup>87</sup> Through his study of the Report, Scott greatly improved his understanding of society and economics. In retrospect, he notes that the Report did treat lightly "the whole subject of...over-all economic planning", which came with the "introduction of Russia's first five-year plan"<sup>88</sup> in 1928, and which underlay much of Scott's social planning with the L.S.R. and the C.C.F., during the 1930s. But, at the time of the S.C.M. study group, these organizations were at least ten years away. The S.C.M. study group studied not only the Lambeth Council of Bishops Report of 1918, of which Tawney was the author, but also Tawney's book, The Acquisitive Society, "undoubtedly the most important book [Scott] read at Oxford, because none of the history books were more than history books."<sup>89</sup> From The Acquisitive Society Scott learned how to move from the analysis of a social problem to the formulation of a solution. He remembers the book for the integrated perspective of Tawney who had "absorbed all the social and historical material he needed to sustain his argument," and had "his own philosophical statement of the necessary changes in society to rid it of the evils he [was] describing."<sup>90</sup> Scott

acquired from the S.C.M. study group at Magdalen College "the basic ideas which were to permeate the remainder of [his] life".<sup>91</sup> Due to "the strength of the ethical principles" of the Report of 1919, and Tawney's own book, Scott's eventual "abandonment of church practices" did not mean "an abandonment of religious convictions."<sup>92</sup>

During the three years at Oxford, Scott refined his aesthetic tastes in general, deepened his sense of history, and acquired new, social perspectives from the books by Tawney. As well, the Report of 1919, left Scott with the stern injunction that was to become a life-long theme, "no self-respecting teacher will stop to consider whether what he says will be popular."<sup>93</sup> Still to come for Scott were the years when, in his poetry, with the League for Social Reconstruction, and with the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, he would apply these new perspectives to Canadian problems. As Scott notes, "I hardly knew anything about Canada when I went to Oxford...I didn't discover Canada really until I got back and came to Montreal."<sup>94</sup> For more than two decades Scott was schooled in the expectations of an orderly and responsible society,

acquiring a taste for poetry as well as a keen taste for aesthetic excellence.. While at Oxford, he honed an already strong taste in history, feasted on the art and antiquity of Europe, and in the safe religious context of the Oxford Student Christian Movement, savoured his first taste of social criticism. These various artistic and intellectual tools were to be of great importance in the interpretation of contemporary Montreal and Canada.

I

<sup>1</sup>F.R. Scott, Interview by Anne Scotton for the Douglas-Coldwell Foundation, 1977-78, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, May/June, 1963", F.R. Scott family genealogy prepared by Peter Dale Scott, n.d. Research into the Scott Papers was conducted while they were still the property of F.R. Scott and the titles of the cited files taken from the private collection. The Scott Papers now belong to the Public Archives of Canada and some of the original titles of the files have been slightly changed.

<sup>3</sup>Scott Papers, "Scott, F.G.", F.R. Scott to The Editor in Chief, Dictionary of Canadian Biography, November 9, 1976.

<sup>4</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, May/June, 1963", Scott family genealogy, n.d.

<sup>5</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, May/June, 1963", Scott family genealogy, n.d.

<sup>7</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1961", William Scott to F.R. Scott, October 13, 1961.

<sup>9</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, May/June, 1963", Scott family genealogy, n.d.

<sup>10</sup>Desmond Pacey, "F.R. Scott", in his Ten Canadian Poets (1958) (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1966), p. 224.

<sup>11</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup>Scott Papers, "F.R. Scott talking about poems", August 27-28, 1962, p. 16.

<sup>13</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 17.

<sup>14</sup>Scott Papers, "The Canada Council, Poetry, 1969", F.R. Scott to Patrick Lane, March 17, 1976.

<sup>15</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 41.

<sup>16</sup>Scott Papers, "The Canada Council, Poetry, 1969", F.R. Scott to Patrick Lane, March 17, 1976.

<sup>17</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 41.

- <sup>18</sup>Scott Papers, "F.R. Scott talking about poems", p. 9
- <sup>19</sup>Scott Papers, "The Canada Council, Poetry, 1969", F.R. Scott to Patrick Lane, March 17, 1976.
- <sup>20</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, pp. 11-12.
- <sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 12.
- <sup>22</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup>F.G. Scott, "Quebec", in his Collected Poems (Vancouver: Clarke and Stuart Co. Ltd., 1934), p. 107.
- <sup>24</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 2.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 9.
- <sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 22.
- <sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 30.
- <sup>28</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1973", F.R. Scott to J.R. Colombo, August 23, 1973.
- <sup>29</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 13.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 14.
- <sup>31</sup>Desmond Pacey, "F.R. Scott", Ten Canadian Poets, p. 225.
- <sup>32</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 14.
- <sup>33</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>34</sup>Roy Daniells, "Minor Poets, 1880-1920", in Carl Klinck, ed., Literary History of Canada, Vol. I (University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 445.
- <sup>35</sup>Louis Dudek, "F.R. Scott and the Modern Poets", in Peter Stevens, ed., The McGill Movement (The Ryerson Press, 1969), p. 59.

242. <sup>36</sup>Desmond Pacey, "F.R. Scott", Ten Canadian Poets, p.
- <sup>37</sup>F.G. Scott, "The Unnamed Lake", Collected Poems, p.8
- <sup>38</sup>F.G. Scott, "My Lattice", Collected Poems, p. 12.
25. <sup>39</sup>F.G. Scott, "Nature's Récompense", Collected Poems, p.
- <sup>40</sup>F.G. Scott, "My Garden", Collected Poems, p. 42.
- <sup>41</sup>F.G. Scott, "Samson", Collected Poems, p. 14.
- p. 18. <sup>42</sup>F.G. Scott, "The Frenzy of Prometheus", Collected Poems,
- <sup>43</sup>F.G. Scott, "To England", Collected Poems, p. 133.
144. <sup>44</sup>F.G. Scott, "The Crown of Empire", Collected Poems, p.
- <sup>45</sup>F.G. Scott, "Montenegro", Collected Poems, p. 150.
- <sup>46</sup>F.G. Scott, "The Penalty", Collected Poems, p. 60.
- <sup>47</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 3.
- <sup>48</sup>F.G. Scott, The Great War as I Saw It (Toronto: F.D. Goodchild Company, 1922), p. 318.
- <sup>49</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 5.
- <sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 10.
- <sup>51</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>52</sup>F.G. Scott, The Great War as I Saw It, p. 22.
- <sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 26.
- <sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 28-29.
- <sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 25.
- <sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 70.
- <sup>57</sup>Ibid., pp. 116-117.
- <sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>59</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 21.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>F.G. Scott, The Great War' as I Saw It, p. 78.

<sup>62</sup>Scott Papers, "L.S.R., Correspondence, 1931", F.R. Scott to G.H. Cartwright, December 6, 1932.

<sup>63</sup>Scott Papers, "C.C.F., Correspondence, 1932-34", F.R. Scott to Graham Spry, March 14, 1933.

<sup>64</sup>Scott Papers, "C.C.F., General, 1941-42", F.G. Scott to F.R. Scott, July 29, 1942.

<sup>65</sup>Scott Papers, "F.R. Scott talking about poems", p. 18.

<sup>66</sup>F.R. Scott, "Last Rites", in his Selected Poems (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 174.

<sup>67</sup>Munro Beattie, "Poetry: 1920-1935", in Carl Klinck, ed., Literary History of Canada, Vol. II (University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 245.

<sup>68</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 3.

<sup>69</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1978", F.R. Scott to Milton Acorn, July 7, 1978.

<sup>70</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1975", U.M. Fleming to F.R. Scott, July 9, 1975.

<sup>71</sup>F.R. Scott, "Overture", in his Overture (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1945), p. 12.

<sup>72</sup>Scott Papers, "Mother", in his "Auto-Anthology", n.d.

<sup>73</sup>F.R. Scott, "Bedside", in his Selected Poems (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 172.

<sup>74</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 22.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., pp. 16-17

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., p.18

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 94

<sup>82</sup>Scott Papers, Interview by Vincent Tovell, 1971, p. 2

<sup>83</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1955-56", F.R. Scott to Desmond Pacey, November 23, 1956.

<sup>84</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, January, 1972", F.R. Scott to Ron, May 2, 1972.

<sup>85</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 19.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 24

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 35.

<sup>92</sup>Scott Papers, "Articles for Carleton Edition Book", F.R. Scott to Michiel Horn, July 24, 1979.

<sup>93</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, pp. 25-26.

<sup>94</sup>Scott Papers, Tovell Interview, pp. 3-4.

CHAPTER II

## THE MONTREAL YEARS, 1923-29

F.R. Scott returned to Canada in 1923, and in 1924, at the urging of his eldest brother, William, entered the Faculty of Law at McGill University where he met the young poet and critic, A.J.M. Smith, who was to become a life-long friend. Scott and Smith helped to found The McGill Fortnightly Review and under Smith's tutelage, Scott learned about modern poetry. Building primarily on the aesthetic tastes that he had developed at Oxford, Scott succumbed rather easily to Smith's disdain for Canadian society and eventually began to produce critical poems attacking the stagnant traditions of Imperial Britain, and scorning the uneducated tastes of the middle class. By the late 1920s, further motivated by his marriage to a Montreal painter, as well as by his membership in a discussion group formed of Oxford graduates, Scott spoke with a well-honed, culturally critical voice. But lacking a clear economic perspective, in his poems of the day he attacked not the capitalist,

but the philistine and the Canadian Imperialist tradition,  
as in "The Canadian Authors Meet":

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

Despite his frustration with outmoded cultural values, F.R. Scott could not escape the organic, conservative influence of his father, which told him that he must synthesize and not reject the cultural history of Canada. In consequence, Scott could not fully embrace A.J.M. Smith's cultural disdain for Canada. Although like Smith, he lamented the work of Canada's Confederation poets, unlike Smith, he could not simply reject the nineteenth century cultural values that had shaped him. Scott remained loyal to the evolutionary, rather than the revolutionary cause in art, as well as in the political action that he came to see as essential to the correction of the true, social ugliness that confronted him upon his return from England.

When he returned to Canada in 1923, Scott found Montreal "dreadful", for the form and the life of the city contradicted the aesthetic and human expectations raised at Oxford. "The whole of Montreal seemed incredibly ugly" and the cultural life of the city "seemed very paltry and

incomplete". In comparison to the magnificent art and antiquity of Europe, the Montreal of the early 1920s was inadequate".<sup>1</sup> The critical, social perspective of Tawney might have suggested to Scott the causes of the social ugliness in Montreal, but he reacted against the city on largely aesthetic terms. "For ten years [he] hardly ever talked about"<sup>2</sup> the social ideas of Tawney, principally because Scott "wasn't being fed this type of material."<sup>3</sup> Without a mentor or study group to guide him further in socialist studies during the 1920s, Scott largely ignored political, and economic ideas. Instead, he pursued interests of a cultural nature, in both the artistic and social sense, that led him to the nationalist debate of the period, and found himself an aesthetic mentor in the person of A.J.M. Smith.

During the 1920s, in the pages of The McGill Daily Literary Supplement, The McGill Fortnightly Review, and The Canadian Mercury, Scott published poems that marked not only the growth of his cultural interests, but also the evolution of his newly critical perspective on society. At McGill University, under the influence of A.J.M. Smith, he introduced to his poetry a less romantic, more contemporary diction which he initially used to depict a languid, self-regarding, and asocial landscape for lovers.

These rather ethereal landscapes gradually gave way to poetic portraits of the austere seasonal Laurentian landscape. This poetic progress into more realistic poetic landscapes matches Scott's movement away from a self-regarding universe toward a realistic, social environment. This slow shift into social realism obliged Scott to temper the aesthetic influence of A.J.M. Smith with an historical perspective drawn from that of his family, whose conservative political values Scott nevertheless felt compelled to resist. In general terms, he began to chastize his fellow Canadians, poets included, for genuflecting to the cultural values of Imperial Britain. In the course of this chastisement, Scott began to find a pungent and public, poetic voice. Even so, at the end of the 1920s he remained a critical poet who frequently attacked what he construed to be uneducated mass taste. Lacking the necessary economic perspective on Canadian society, he was not a political poet. The Depression was to force Scott to re-examine his primarily cultural outrage and, fired by the dutiful, moral rigour of his father, he would begin to probe the economic causes of the social ugliness in Canada that had so offended him in the early 1920s. Even so, only in 1931-32, was Scott to participate in the founding of the socialist League for Social Reconstruction; the social ideas of Tawney were then to emerge "from their little hiding place"<sup>4</sup> and Scott's

poetry then to assume overt, political shape.

Not long after returning to Canada from England in 1923, Scott found himself at Lower Canada College, "quite happily teaching, not knowing what else to do, and beginning to write."<sup>5</sup> His "earliest poems were filled with perfectly formed and structured sonnets...inherited from [his] father and from the Victorians."<sup>6</sup> These Victorian verse forms proved satisfactory until he met A.J.M. Smith at McGill University,<sup>7</sup> where in the autumn of 1924, Scott enrolled at the behest of his eldest brother. William Scott "was terribly responsible...like another Father"<sup>8</sup> and thought that his younger brother "would waste [his] life as a school master" at such institutions as Lower Canada College. "Being next to the youngest in a family of seven children, [Scott] was accustomed to having other people plan [his] life, so he meekly obeyed and literarily [sic] 'woke up' inside the Law Faculty at McGill."<sup>9</sup> During 1924-25, Scott "wrote a couple of pièces", a poem in translation and an article, for The McGill Daily Literary Supplement which was edited by A.J.M. Smith whom Scott "had not met",<sup>10</sup> and which was to be "the base for all that followed--Fortnightly, Mercury, New Provinces, etc. A sort of launching pad, with [Smith] holding the flag aloft."<sup>11</sup> The Literary Supplement published such

literary material as "The Descent of a Poet", a rather sympathetic article on Bliss Carman; an editorial attack on the Canadian Book Week; and Smith's own article "From Patriotism to Pacificism", in which he traces the impact of World War I upon modern poetry. In general, the Literary Supplement attacked the prevailing "aggravating spirit of optimism"<sup>12</sup> in Canada, which the contributors felt ill-suited a world so changed by The Great War. Also during 1924-25, a law professor, H.A. Smith, sparked Scott's life-long interest in constitutional law, the ordering principles of which shaped his interest in the disorder of international politics.

At the end of 1924-25, A.J.M. Smith invited Scott to join in the founding of a successor to the Literary Supplement and the result was The McGill Fortnightly Review, "an independent journal of literature and student opinion". Although The McGill Fortnightly Review lacks a "strong political stance",<sup>13</sup> the journal does feature articles of a generally progressive, social nature such as an editorial attacking Canadian Book Week; an editorial about a Labour Club at McGill and the League for Industrial Democracy in the U.S.; and an article, "Labour Party in Canada", by J.S. Woodsworth, whom Scott apparently first met in 1926.<sup>14</sup> The tentative political content of The McGill Fortnightly Review reflects the uncertain

political atmosphere of the day in Canada, for organized, socially progressive politics existed only in J.S. Woodsworth's "Ginger Group in the House of Commons...there was no third party as such."<sup>15</sup>

During the publication of The McGill Fortnightly Review, Smith "introduced [Scott] to modern poetry, and virtually to the modern world, through the New Americans."<sup>16</sup> poetry did not "really begin in an important way"<sup>17</sup> for Scott until 1925, when Smith began "working his will"<sup>18</sup> on him. Scott recollects, "I began to show my bits of verse to Smith and he dismissed them as being out of date, and no good for what he wanted. Of course, I realized that was so."<sup>19</sup> Under Smith's tutelage, Scott was busy "reading T.S. Eliot and the modern poets, and doing a great shift psychologically and intellectually in [his] relationship to the outside world."<sup>20</sup>

In his initial reaction to "The Wasteland", Scott asked himself, "'Is this poetry?'" although he came to see Eliot's poem as "one of the greatest political documents...after Tawney's The Acquisitive Society." "The

"Wasteland" offered "more emotional insight into the kind of world [he] had lived through and was living in...than any other book. It portrayed society in decay and obviously having to be changed."<sup>21</sup> "The Wasteland" was "a revolutionary experience",<sup>22</sup> for it communicated to Scott the chaos of the modern world, of which he was largely unaware. Scott derived his early interest in Eliot from the "structural approach to an entire scheme of things",<sup>23</sup> although it was Smith who was responsible for his understanding of Eliot. In such early articles as "Hamlet in Modern Dress", published in 1926, Smith outlines the structure, scheme, and tone of Eliot's poetry, praising him for his "rejection of a conscious intellectual sequence of ideas in favour of a subconscious emotional one. The result is an obscurity." Yet, asks Smith, "how better portray [the] disintegration [of the world]...than by splintered images and broken sequences?" In answer, Smith identifies portions of Eliot's poetry "that are the complete expression of a decadence that is fascinated by the analysis of its own falling off." But writes Smith, Eliot was "unable to find within himself a remedy for [the] present discontentment" and surrendered "to despair." Such despair means that "life...is too weary, too hopeless to be taken quite seriously"<sup>24</sup> Smith concludes that the contemporary poet must take refuge in "an analytical irony". Not

surprisingly, many of Scott's poems of the time were to convey a similar sense of detachment and isolation.

The McGill Fortnightly Review consists of two volumes of ten issues apiece, published during the periods of November 21, 1925 - March 22, 1926, and November 3, 1926 - April 27, 1927, respectively. The periodical inspired in Scott an enduring editorial interest in little magazines. Scott appears in The McGill Fortnightly Review under his own name, as well as under such pseudonyms as Bernard March, R.S., T.T., Brian Tuke,<sup>25</sup> Sax, and X. In Ten Canadian Poets, Desmond Pacey describes Scott's various contributions as mainly "witty satires and simple stripped descriptions of the Laurentian landscape."<sup>26</sup> However, in contrast to Pacey's description, in the poems of Volume I, Scott also concentrates on love and the lovelorn poet, and in an asocial, other-worldly setting he explores a rather passionless love. In Volume I, number one, he offers two translated epigrams on the transitory nature of love and youth,<sup>27</sup> and in issue number two, in the sonnet "Miniature", he depicts a bereft woman who is "...left a rooted rose/longing to share in the last, dread repose."<sup>28</sup> Although Scott's diction is contemporary and well-chosen, he applies it to the description of a

closed world of lovers, further isolated by a funereal tone. Similarly, in number three, in "To Beauty" by Brian Tuke,<sup>29</sup> the poet seeks an aesthetic retreat from desire. In number eight, Tuke's "Sonnet (Would I were Angelo...)", Scott resorts to classical myth to describe his love, proposing to take "...stone/rough-hewn from bold Carrara's mountain brims,"<sup>30</sup> and with it give solid expression to his love. Even so, the mythical setting continues to set his declared love apart from the world. And, in number nine-ten, in "What is Hid" by R.S., Scott considers the difficulty of capturing the likeness of his love, now elusively embodied in "the quiver of an eyelid".<sup>31</sup>

Eventually, Scott abandoned such agonized poems, "easy thoughts of pain and frustration and love that never arrived", for he grew to dislike the thought "that the greatest loss any human being could possibly suffer would be that of not having been fulfilled sexually - a very childish notion."<sup>32</sup> In abandoning the agonies of unrequited love and the attendant unreal landscapes, Scott began to describe a more realistic, anxious passion set in the chill Laurentian landscape. His mind and heart were increasingly held by "the loneliness and brooding silence of the northern hills",<sup>33</sup> as he himself was falling in love with a painter. In Volume I, number four, in T.T.'s "Frost

in Autumn", Scott illustrates his growing interest in the northern landscape, itself becoming an equivocal setting for love. Finding himself "In the presence of granite mountains,/Ice-rounded valleys and rock shores", the poet-lover avows, "I cannot bring myself to your embrace", an enduring inhibition embodied in the landscape or, at least, objectified in the landscape:

For love is an impudent defiance  
 Flung into the teeth of time,  
 A brazen denial  
 Of the omnipotence of death,  
 And here death whispers in the silences,  
 And a deep reverence is due to time.

Volume I of The McGill Fortnightly Review features several poems that approach the "witty satires" identified by Pacey, although Scott's asocial perspective and often sneering tone distinguish them from his later socially critical poems. In number four, T.T.'s in "Fantasy", Scott mocks a love which inopportunately "...pierced the loricated heart of a cheese-monger./Clumsily, uncontrollably, and quite improperly". The spontaneity of such love proves to be futile, and both Love and the cupid-figure, "sorrowfully removed to the Vale of Innocent Shadows".<sup>35</sup> As well, in T.T.'s "Sonnet (On reading the results of the examinations)", in number five, Scott does not discuss love, but mocks his own perfectionist aspirations, "I am a man who, by ambition stirred,/Aimed at a first, and only got a third."<sup>36</sup> In

number seven, in Sax's "Saturday Night", Scott comes close to his later, socially critical voice, although his disdain mars the poem. Finding himself in a jazz club Scott scorns the apparent pleasure of the dancers whom he nevertheless watches with fascination the "...low and tawdry room/Smelling of dinner and old perfume/Straining couples in close embrace." The poet finds the dancers' goal of "satiety" to be offensive, preferring instead the contrastingly pure "...face of a lovely girl;/A face created for lovely things,/Lost in a rabble that sways and swings."<sup>37</sup> Scott deliberately isolates the image of the "lovely girl" from the crowd, much as he isolates himself from the crowd with his contempt for the dancers.

Just as he exchanged the ethereal settings of his love poems for the material, northern landscape, Scott came to exchange his contemptuous tone for a more effective, satiric perspective. His more-reasoned critical voice, as well as the firm new landscapes, mirror his clearer vision of society and in the pages of The McGill Fortnightly Review, Scott is to be seen shaping his childhood sensitivity to "the northland" into the organic and regenerative symbol of his maturing poetic vision of mankind. In the Laurentians Scott "found one thing the English and Europeans hadn't got...the oldest mountains in

the world."<sup>38</sup> After the crowded warehouse of art in Europe, Scott found that the "sense of loneliness, emptiness, unused antiquity...was the only feeling...comparable in its effect upon one's imagination to the occupied and historic antiquity of Europe."<sup>39</sup> The mid to late 1920s were "purely literary days before" Scott immersed himself in "social and political matters and world affairs."<sup>40</sup> "Geologic time...sufficed...at first for poetic inspiration."<sup>41</sup> In the poetry of this time, Scott began to measure the proportion of man against the awesome Canadian landscape, itself imbued with both geophysical and historical attributes. Measured against the Laurentian landscape, Scott perceived man's "nothingness...in relation to the northland"<sup>42</sup> and yet also sensed that the Laurentians themselves were small, for they had once "been under ice ages" and "ground down". The individual mountain, "polished like a pebble on the shore of a northern stream",<sup>43</sup> was dwarfed by the natural "ineluctable laws that make mountains rise and descend".<sup>44</sup> Canon Scott had taught his son the importance of an ordered and responsible place for man in the social landscape, minimizing the individual ego, and in the poems of F.R. Scott, the awesome proportion of the Laurentian landscape began to minimize man. In the nature poetry of F.R. Scott during the later 1920s, the

Laurentians dwarf man and also symbolize the inhibition of full emotional expression. In turn, the Laurentians themselves are dwarfed by even larger natural laws, to which Scott attributes a near-divine quality. Appearing both large and small, the Laurentians embody a double sense of proportion that coincides with Scott's growing interest in the inter-relationship of man and society, as the hierarchical conservatism of his past gave way to a more egalitarian vision of society. However, only during the early 1930s, would Scott finally declare his faith in balanced, socialist relations for mankind.

The Laurentian poems of Volume II of The McGill Fortnightly Review are not simply the descriptive pieces that Pacey describes. In these poems the Laurentian landscape becomes the background against which the poet explores a more realistic love, tries to express the tenacious, redemptive promise of the seasonal landscape, and declares his growing social perspective. "Below Quebec", in number three, finds the poet "on the wet sands edge" of the St. Lawrence River from where he observes:


Along the north shore  
 There are dark hills,  
 And what their dreams are  
 A cool wind tells.

Poised between the river and the mountains of the Laurentian landscape, the poet listens to the same stillness that captivated his poet-father:

...no other whispering.  
 Than waves and wind  
 Makes...a song  
 At this day's end.

Scott does not focus solely upon descriptions of the Laurentian landscape, as Pacey suggests, for the indifference suggested by the murmuring waves and the brooding hills frames his own anxious loneliness. Similarly moved by the landscape, in T.T.'s "New Names", in number four, Scott seeks a new language with which to express both the impact of the Laurentians, as well as his growing sense of poetic purpose. He writes to "...give new names,/To the stars", suggesting his evolving universalist theme.<sup>46</sup> He does not restrict himself to a portrait of the northern landscape, choosing instead to juxtapose inspirational details of the northland to poetic clichés drawn from the old world, battle-grounds, lovers' groves, myths, and ancient history.

The poems "Snowdrift" and "November Pool" by Bernard Marsh, in number six, come close to the characterization by Pacey of "simple stripped descriptions", for in each poem Scott addresses a detail of the seasonal landscape. In



"Snowdrift", attempting to capture the penultimate moment of the snowdrift, he pits the irresistible heat of the sun against the quixotic determination of the snowdrift to endure:

Set your proud mouth,  
Snowdrift!  
Curve the knife-edge  
Of your lips  
To a thin, imperious smile,  
The sun mounts high today.

In "November Pool", Scott again addresses a detail of the seasonal landscape, the late autumn pool:

Sombre and very still  
You have lain,  
Frowning at the wind's will.

Now Winter frosts will bring  
Cold ecstasies.  
Well you know not even Spring  
Gives you so wild a kiss<sup>47</sup>

Once more, Scott attempts to capture an image of the pool, but again he goes beyond an imagistic stasis by introducing the implicit movement of human anger and passion. This impulse to transcend the static image with motion, struggle, or ironic thought, is an important feature of Scott's movement away from the rather static, sepulchral poetry influenced by A.J.M. Smith. Although T.T.'s "Diamonds", in number seven, does not feature the Laurentian landscape, it suggests a related knowledge of geology on Scott's part, as well as his ability to animate such knowledge with .

wit in juxtaposing the cosmic laws to the individual ego:

Did some immense and shallow-crusted sun  
Spend ponderous aeons  
In stellar labour  
Fashioning your hard clarity?

How well you look around that woman's neck!<sup>48</sup>

While the various love poems in Volume II lack the concrete Laurentian setting of "Below Quebec", Scott continues to depict his passion in realistic terms that contrast sharply with the mythic or aesthetic terms for love in Volume I. "Proud Cellist" by Bernard Marsh, in number seven, relies on a musical metaphor to convey the tremulous quality of love, depicting first the delicately moving hand of the cellist, or lover, and then the same hand both happily and unhappily at rest. This hand, which moves in concert with the different thoughts of the lover, precludes any static comparison of a musical instrument to the body of a lover.<sup>49</sup> In T.T.'s "Troubled Understanding", in number eight, Scott ponders the personal perplexity of love that he was not to resolve:

Dark rhymes  
Woven of old, sad words  
Are your eyes.

Song lurks  
In the long hair fallen  
Over your pale shoulder.

Then why does the touch of your hand  
 Trouble me with understanding  
 Too deep for verse?

Not surprisingly unable to define precisely this troubling quality of love, Scott affirms the vital presence of passion in his poetry. In Bernard March's "Vale", in number eight, Scott willingly goes beyond the troubling reality of a love that he has known and lost, for his sense of loss confirms his ability to sustain himself by other interests that draw him ever-closer to the social landscape:

Once there was laughter  
 And eyelids lifting.  
 And now? See, in the gutter  
 Old papers are drifting.<sup>51</sup>

Without underestimating the change in his perception of love, the political poems of Volume II testify to a more significant change in Scott's poetic vision, as he looks with growing distaste at the surrounding social landscape. Something of a goad, he set to work attacking the ill-considered taste of those philistines in Montreal whose material well-being measured the failure of their critical intelligence, as in "Trivium":

Masses heard the great Houdini,  
 Masses shouted for the Queenie  
 Did you ever see such asses  
 As the educated masses?<sup>52</sup>

Scott derides the schooled, but still uncritical, crowd who frequent McGill University, Sherbrooke Street, and St. James.

Street and rather than simply sneer at their ignorance he challenges the basic assumptions of their lives. In the disputatious "Sonnet (Written on a May morning)", in number two, the poet asks:

Why not bare arms and legs that gleam in the  
sun,  
A fillet of leaves in my hair, flowers in masses  
Of startling hues on my body, grass on my feet?  
By all the old gods of Christendom  
I think this would be good for the upper classes  
Who stroll each Sunday morning on Sherbrooke  
Street.

The intention of the poet is to shock, but without an economic or class analysis his criticism remains unfocussed, the reference to "the upper classes" notwithstanding.

In the pages of The McGill Fortnightly Review, Scott greatly advances the social and critical elements of his poetry in "XXX" and the now-famous "The Canadian Authors Meet". In "XXX" by X, in number two, Scott details, with some humour, itself an important advance, his growing social perspective, beginning with a near comic question, "Is a tree kinder than a doormat/With frayed edges?" In the last stanza Scott answers this question, suggesting the redirection of his inquiring poetic eye to the characteristics of the social landscape:

Trees have only birds, and insects, and crawly  
 things  
 There is no humanity in these,  
 Only evolution, and sentimental poetry.  
 But in doormats there is much Humanity  
 Vulgarly  
 Dust, bootmarks and sunlight.<sup>54</sup>

Although Scott does not reject the ability of the landscape to inspire poetry, he does suggest that nature will become the organic social metaphor which like "sunlight" will expose the darker, unexamined corners of the social landscape.

In the now well-known "The Canadian Authors Meet" Scott questions the shallow achievements of Canadian poets narrowly devoted to the conventions of the post-Confederation school, the strictures of which are defined by "...the portrait of the Prince of Wales." In stanza one Scott raises the concern that is central to the poem itself, as well as to his overall career, the assertion that the "...muse has somehow failed to function, "although this failure is blurred by the dedication of the representative Miss Crotchet to poetic fashion. With the social landscape outlined in "XXX" gaining prominence in his mind, Scott's concern over the function of the muse clearly anticipates the questions about the social responsibilities of the poet that were later to be addressed to the muse figure in "Overture". Ironically, in "The Canadian Authors Meet" Scott chastizes the failed muse figure of Miss

Crotchet for being one of the "Virgins of sixty who still write of passion". This element of ambiguous sexuality was to characterize many of Scott's muse figures, particularly where they possess a passionate nature that threatens to conflict with his devotion to the social landscape.

In stanza three of "The Canadian Authors Meet", drawing on the themes of his own upbringing, Scott explains what he means by his declaration that the muse has failed:

The air is heavy with Canadian topics,  
And Carman, Lampman, Roberts, Campbell, Scott,  
Are measured for their faith and philanthropics,  
Their zeal for God and King, their earnest thought.

Scott implicitly sets himself to add a growing social sense to what he perceives to be narrow nature-based "Canadian topics", the narrowness of which was in part defined by inadequate anthologies. Yet to come during the 1930s were such new interests for Scott as a cooperative internationalism, with which to supplement the Imperialist nationalism of the day, a system of rational investigation, with which to balance conventional declarations of belief in the established order, and an all-important sense of humour with which to balance the "earnest" pronouncement described above. The self-perpetuating, uncritical order

represented by the "...most delightful party" of would-be poets clearly frustrates Scott. Yet, his open-ended questioning of the old order suggests on his part, more of a growing dissatisfaction than a clear sense of new direction. At his clearest, Scott invites his reader to believe that his questioning embodies a watershed moment in Canadian culture that should call forth innovation and change:

O Canada, O Canada, Oh, can  
 A day go by without new authors springing  
 To paint the native lily, and to plan  
 New ways to set the self-same welkin ringing?

Nevertheless, the anticipated cultural change lacks definition, as emphasized in the last stanza where Scott indulges in an overly personal description of his own frustration at being "A rather lewd and most ungodly poet/Writing these verses 'for his soul's salvation."<sup>55</sup> In later revisions, this last stanza was to be dropped, permitting the poem to close with the anticipatory note of the next to last stanza. Scott later described "The Canadian Authors Meet" as a transitional poem, not wishing to be known simply as a satirist. Decades later, he wrote that the poem evokes "a stage in [Canada's] literary history which has passed, and its use of a fixed and formal pattern of verse [has been] mostly abandoned."<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, in "The Canadian Authors Meet" Scott introduces to his poetry a satiric immediacy, with which he places himself

historically in the midst of the cultural debate in Canada. He stops sneering at mass taste, being languidly critical, or simply wishing to goad. Instead, he begins to search for root causes to problems.

During the days of The McGill Fortnightly Review, Eliot through A.J.M. Smith, alerted Scott to "the collapse of the old European order, and indeed, almost of the Western civilization"<sup>57</sup> following World War I, a perspective that contrasted sharply with the prudent Imperial optimism of Canon F.G. Scott. F.R. Scott neither gave way to an Eliotic despair in his poetry, nor looked solely within himself for escape from the anxiety. Instead, he began to offer poetic critiques of his cultural and social circumstances, as well as poetic challenges to the social passivity of Canadians, ironically confirming Smith's claim that "poetry...must be the result of the infringement of modern conditions upon the personality and temperament of the poet". Despite his search for "a new and more direct expression", and "a finer technique" for his poetry, Scott was imbued with his father's commitment to service and unable to turn "aside from the world". He would not concern himself exclusively "with abstruse questions of technique, probing [his] own subconscious",<sup>58</sup> at the expense of larger social questions. "What counted was the search for a

poetry more true of the world [he was] living in, a clearing of the road for a fresh advance."<sup>59</sup> Yet despite the force of Scott's moral imperative, "the attempt to write a new kind of poetry met with considerable resistance in Canada. The old attitudes died hard. Faced with this opposition [Scott] sometimes took refuge in satire".<sup>60</sup> He defined satire as an "inverse statement of faith...that shows [one thinks] its opposite is...what should happen...so, the opposite of [the] satire is...positive faith, or social purpose."<sup>61</sup>

Scott's use of the term "faith" is entirely appropriate, given that his interest in the betterment of mankind originates in Canon Scott's dutiful Christian ethics, themselves refined by the socially-conscious, Christian ethics of Tawney. Convinced by Eliot through Smith and by the coming Depression, too, of the chaotic state of Western civilization, Scott began to search for a means to apply on a social scale the ethical impulse rooted in Canon Scott. The cumulative effect was to convince Scott of the need for, as well as the possibility of, betterment through rational, cooperative action. Such conviction was to lead Scott both to more consciously social verse in the late 1920s, as well as "to socialism"<sup>62</sup> and overtly political poetry in the 1930s.

The McGill Fortnightly Review was last published on April 27, 1927. Funded by "a provincial scholarship", A.J.M. Smith left Montreal for "Edinburgh and took his Ph.D. in English",<sup>63</sup> destined not to return permanently to Canada. His departure removed a major poetic influence on Scott, although the effect of Smith's absence was lessened in the autumn of 1927, when Scott began a year's practice of law. As well, in February 1928, Scott married the Montreal painter, Marian Dale,<sup>64</sup> whose "painting matched his poetry and made their common life one dedicated to artistic creation",<sup>65</sup> for in the following decade the Scotts shared interests in both representational art and social realism. In April, 1928, despite his absence from Canada, A.J.M. Smith was able to publish his article "Wanted: Canadian Criticism" in The Canadian Forum, the auxiliary committee of which Scott himself joined in Montreal.<sup>66</sup> In "Wanted: Canadian Criticism", Smith advises, "one looks in vain...for that critical enquiry into first principles which directs a new literature as tradition guides an old one."<sup>67</sup> As Canadian writing lacks adequate historical patterns, Smith proposes to define the critical terms that will bring forth a new poetry to replace the current "confusion...between commerce and art". Canada's "small population", who are "engaged in subduing its environment", have "some quite understandable doubts as to the

necessity of artists." In Smith's mind, the boosterism of the Canadian Authors Association further undermined the integrity of the artist by tempting him "to effect a compromise" in his work. For, if the contemporary writer "chooses to work out his own salvation along lines which cannot be in keeping with the prevailing spirit of pep and optimism he finds himself without an audience, or at least without an audience that will support him."<sup>68</sup> In part, Smith's analysis was to be a self-fulfilling prophesy, for after completing his Ph.D. in Edinburgh, he "came back and taught English in several American colleges, finally settling at Michigan State College."<sup>69</sup> Due to circumstances and personal inclination, Smith failed to marry his poetic and critical skills to academic employment in Canada, in contrast to Scott.

In "Wanted: Canadian Criticism" Smith notes a recent improvement by Canadian writers, who have begun realistic analysis of national themes. Nevertheless, he argues that "without a body of critical opinion to hearten and direct them Canadian writers are like a leaderless army", and concludes that Canadian writers need to formulate "a critical system" with "universal acceptance". The Canadian writer must battle "for freedom in the choice and

treatment of his subject." The "puritanism" of Canadians must be smashed by "a work of art that is at once successful and obscene" and that requires such weapons as realism, irony, and cynicism, all of which Scott adopted. Yet, in appraising the hoped-for new literature Smith advises that one should not consider "its moral, but...its aesthetic harmony". He calls for "the critic militant"<sup>70</sup> to make this proposition popularly understood, although he promotes most carefully, and in fact resembles, "the critic contemplative...the philosophic critic", who will examine "the fundamental position of the artist in the community", and consider "the influence upon the Canadian writer of his position in space and time." Smith hopes thereby to make the Canadian writer less "self-conscious of [his] environment" and more aware of his "position in time". Smith argues against an "unconscious or overconscious" reliance on the environment, which produces "obvious and shallow", and "merely conventional" poetry. He argues for a temporal knowledge on the part of the poet that will yield an artistic subtlety and depth that evokes the best of the poetic tradition. To Smith, this means that "the contemporary artist...shall be an intellectual."<sup>71</sup>

In the June, 1928, issue of The Canadian Forum, Scott replied by letter to Smith's article. Applauding

Smith's "frankness", which is "all too rare in Canadian journalism", he agrees with Smith's analysis of the compromise of Canadian literature by commercial interests; but takes exception to Smith's "misconception of 'first principles'" for they entail "the danger of a forced and immature maturity." "A nation cannot be deliberate about its art; it cannot, without the certainty of imprisoning its soul, 'formulate a critical system.' Formulas may safely be left to science." By inference, Scott fiercely argues that poetry must evolve from the historical and social experience of the poet, with all the success and failure that might entail:

it is too severe a strain upon one's credulity to believe that when we have 'formulated a critical system' and 'secured its universal acceptance', nature, the Muses, or Mr. Smith will suddenly drop among us a genius whose diction, style and view of life correspond with the then accepted tradition.

Supporting Smith's hopes for a subtle poetry that both provokes the intellect and stirs the emotions, Scott nonetheless disapproves of Smith's insistence on new poetic principles that ignore the cultural inheritance of the poet. Unquestionably, Scott advocates a Canadian poetry more appropriate in style and in subject to the evolving social issues. However, he cannot dismiss the evolutionary relationship between past, present, and future, a legacy of his conservative, historically minded family, his studies in

history, as well as his new interests in constitutional law. Affirming a process of organic, historical growth, Scott leaves Smith with the admonition, "As well hope to hasten the harvest by amassing the harvesters in May."<sup>72</sup>

The disagreement between Scott and Smith in 1928 focussed on the value of past poetic achievements in the shaping of a new poetry. In "Wanted: Canadian Criticism", Smith admits virtually no value to the past work of Canadian poets. Scott, too, disliked the overly romantic elements of the Confederation and post-Confederation poetry, which includes that of his father, but he implicitly recognized it as a legacy to acknowledge and to surmount, not simply to ignore. Unquestionably, during the 1920s, Smith exposed Scott to stylistic advances in poetry, led him to important poetic commentaries on modern life, and made attractive intellectual speculation on poetry, but Smith was only the most recent of influences on Scott, whose conservative upbringing had predisposed him to an evolutionary cause. Smith contributed to Scott's re-interpretation of past cultural influences, but he could not effect their outright rejection by Scott. Moreover, as Scott became increasingly sensitive to the social ills of the late 1920s he found aesthetic disdain insufficient and began to seek an

historical explanation. While sympathetic to Smith's clarion call for more rigorous poetic standards, he insisted on giving past achievements their due. The 1928 exchange in The Canadian Forum between Scott and Smith anticipated a similar argument about the value of the Confederation poets during the preparation of New Provinces: Poems of Several Authors. Smith's "Wanted: Canadian Criticism" stands as the working draft of what became the "Rejected Preface", while Scott's rebuttal to "Wanted: Canadian Criticism" stands as a clear indicator of his later attitude toward Smith's proposed preface.

The debate between Smith and Scott over "Wanted: Canadian Criticism" undoubtedly relieved the tedium of Scott's year of law practice during 1927-28, which ended with "an invitation - unsolicited - to teach at McGill". He "jumped at it, though many people thought [he] was foolish to throw away the opportunity of successful law practice."<sup>73</sup> Among those who objected was his eldest brother, William, who later became Chief Justice of the Quebec Supreme Court, and the two brothers engaged in a heated debate over Scott's clear rejection of his family's influence. William Scott had persuaded Scott to study law at McGill University, had assisted him as a student, and no doubt helped him to get his job, but in 1928, F.R. Scott

rejected his brother's advice to remain in law practice, according to a principle that was to become a mainstay:

I cannot, however, as a consequence either of your assistance or of my obligations to the firm abandon the freedom of choice which a man is entitled to in the pursuit of a livelihood.<sup>74</sup>

According to Scott, the Dean of Law at McGill University, Percy Corbett, offered the teaching position "partly because of [his] writing in the Fortnightly", leaving him to conclude that "poetry saved [his] life."<sup>75</sup> Scott accepted the offer by Dean Corbett because "a greater part of [him could] work for McGill than could ever work for the [law] office". Moreover, Scott's new intellectual and poetic interests, acquired during the previous five years, demanded time for contemplation. Teaching would provide such time and Scott's "whole" being "would be employed if [he] could devote [his] time entirely to writing." After the year's practice of law, and Dean Corbett's unexpected and welcome offer of escape, Scott felt strongly his desire to write and to reflect. In taking leave of the law firm, Scott informed his brother William that beside writing, "nothing really matters."<sup>76</sup> In 1928, at the age of 29, Scott "found [his] road",<sup>77</sup> an image of discovery that was to thread through his poems. This road led him back to McGill University and to his life's vocation. Scott easily "gave up the practice of law in order to devote [his] life

to teaching",<sup>78</sup> for within "the precincts of the University" he felt "free to teach and think and write".<sup>79</sup>

In electing the teaching vocation, Scott found his own professional response to Canon Scott's insistence on service. As well, he was able to combat at first hand the philistinism that he so criticizes in his poems in The McGill Fortnightly Review. But perhaps more importantly, the teaching vocation strengthened the responsible, public character of his poetic voice. Well before returning to McGill University as a professor, Scott began to focus his discontent with the contemporary social problems of Montreal. The city was not only "ugly, but all sorts of civil maladministration [had come] to light." In 1927, the Laurier Palace theatre fire took the lives of many children who died as a consequence of neglect by the fire inspectors. During 1927, Montreal also experienced "a typhoid epidemic, because the milk inspectors weren't doing their job". Such examples of civic indifference deeply offended Scott's sense of responsibility. At the same time, financiers were exploiting Quebec in general. A group of English-Canadians "discovered they could buy the Westmount water works", which they then sold at an inflated price, "and cleaned up six million dollars in a couple of months."<sup>80</sup> And later,

admittedly after his return to McGill University, Scott witnessed the scandal of corporate-governmental collusion in the building of the Beauharnois Canal.

In part, Scott's growing discontent with social conditions during the mid to late 1920s resulted from his participation in "the Group", an informal non-partisan discussion club composed mostly of young men who had been at Oxford",<sup>81</sup> with whom Scott met from 1925 on. The members of "the Group" "debated current literary topics, Fabianism, the new art of the Group of Seven, and Canada's colonial position in the Empire." At one point, "dissatisfied with the thinness of the cultural life in Montreal, The Group founded a Leonardo Society and opened a little shop to sell art reproductions." The impact of the Depression on Canada prompted "the Group" to plan a book about the contemporary political, economic, and social problems. They proposed "a critical description of the present position", which would prescribe "remedies". Although scheduled for "the autumn of 1930",<sup>83</sup> the book was not completed, but even so, the project may be seen as a precursor of the public, educational books of the later League for Social Reconstruction and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation.

After returning to McGill University in the autumn of 1928, Scott co-founded The Canadian Mercury. The editorial board of The Canadian Mercury consisted of Jean Burton, Felix Walter, Scott, and Leo Kennedy, whom Scott remembers as the most active individual. The editors published one volume of seven monthly issues between December, 1928, and June, 1929, including one double issue for April-May. In a circular letter of December, 1928, the editors announced their purpose "to correct an old wrong - the need for a lively, fearless and independent literary magazine", although the editorial in number one of The Canadian Mercury, December, 1928, goes further. The editors demand "a higher and more adequate standard of literary criticism in Canada", echoing the critical demands of A.J.M. Smith in The McGill Daily Literary Supplement, The McGill Fortnightly Review, and "Wanted: Canadian Criticism". But the editors of The Canadian Mercury avoid Smith's insistence on the absolutist "first principles" to which Scott objected earlier, voicing instead a more temperate wish for "the emancipation of Canadian literature from the state of amiable mediocrity and insipidity in which it now languishes." Always searching for an escape from the contemporary literary miasma, the editors advocate the re-working of Canadian literary history, not its rejection, in the hope that "an order will come out of the void, an

order of a distinct type, reflecting, as modern Canadian painting has begun to do, a unique experience of nature and life."<sup>85</sup> The editorial emphasizes the integration of such traditional Canadian poetic sources as "nature" with contemporary topics.

The Canadian Mercury offers a variety of articles illustrating the increasingly social interests of Scott and his co-editors, criticizing the boosterism of the 1920s, and demanding of Canadians a greater independence and excellence, in thought and deed. Seeking to define Canadian nationhood, the editors denounce contemporary nationalism for its loyalty to out-dated 19th century cultural symbols, as well as to the British Imperial traditions. In issue number one, Stephen Leacock contrasts the lack of Canadian poems, movies, and books to the self-assurance of contemporary Canadian painting. In number two, Percy Corbett, Dean of the Law Faculty, examines Canada's "Naval Tangle", recommending an independent, Canadian defense policy. In number three, Marcus Adeney dismisses "The Nationalist Myth" as "barbarous though picturesque". In number four, H. Martin discusses the lack of progressive social and political elements in Canada, and in "The Future of Canadian Politics", in number seven, Eugene Forsey

praises the progressive Labour and United Farmers movements.

As well; The Canadian Mercury features A.J.M. Smith's "A Note on Metaphysical Poetry" from which one may infer an enduring tension in Scott's own poetry. Smith addresses himself to the metaphysical poet's "intellectual ability...to generate emotion".

Though he reduces substances to its elements, and these to their atomies; all this is but a preparation...Has he not now the problem of re-arranging his shattered world, building it again, nearer, <sup>86</sup> not to the heart's but to the mind's desire?

The description recalls Smith's analysis of T.S. Eliot in "Hamlet in Modern Dress" in The McGill Fortnightly Review. Smith ascribes to the intellect the primary poetic function, arguing that in nature "there are hidden correspondences and occult similarities which must be apprehended by the intellect before they can touch the emotions."<sup>87</sup> While affirming the inter-relationship of the intellect and the passions, Smith characteristically accords first place to the former. "Emotion does not come directly through the sense. It is kindled only after an intellectual process." In his conclusion, Smith contrasts the metaphysical poet to the lyrical poet, by implication the Canadian Confederation poet, who "expresses a pure emotion aroused within him

by the direct contact of his consciousness with the outer world. The points of contact are his physical senses."<sup>88</sup> The analagous tension in Scott's own poetry between the intellect and the emotions is compounded by a parallel tension between the public and the private voice, each of which relies heavily on the seasonal Laurentian landscape which embodies an organic order. Scott's early poems address the awesome indifference of nature, a physical influence that he absorbed in conjunction with the spiritual influence of the church seasons.

In complement to Smith's speculative article on metaphysical poetry, The Canadian Mercury offers Leo Kennedy's more practical "The Future of Canadian Literature", in number five-six. Kennedy attacks the loyalty of the Canadian Authors Association to Victorian styles, decorum, and diction, "The Canadian Authors' Association, that pillar of flimflam, is a stumbling block over which the aspiring younger Canadian writer must first climb". The literary conservatism of the C.A.A. has driven promising Canadian writers abroad in search of contemporaries "whose writing" reveals "their own wounds, and" echoes "the cry which they" have "not yet managed to utter." Kennedy hopes for "a Canadian Whitman" who can "correctly interpret the whole Canadian consciousness"<sup>89</sup>

and show the way for future writers. Scott, too, contributed to the literary debate in a review of Bliss Carman's Wild Garden, in number seven. Carman "who has written as good poetry as anyone in this country," offers "not one poem" in Wild Garden, prompting Scott's catalogue of complaint, "Carman's technique and form is undiluted 1880; he appears impervious to change. He has no conception of rhythm, but only metrical accuracy." Carman adheres to "discarded rules of scansion"; provides no idea, metaphor, or even adjective that has a "drop of emotional content"; and is readable only for "the unconscious humour in some of the poems".<sup>90</sup> Ironically, Scott's early poetry displays many of these same characteristics.

By the time of The Canadian Mercury, Scott held firm social interests; he had published several poems in which he criticizes contemporary Canadian life; and he had declared his poetic interest in urban realism. Even so, in the pages of The Canadian Mercury, he does not emerge as a poet with a coherent social voice and perspective. Generally, his poems are tinged by an element of uncommitted, Eliotic despair, or simply portray the Canadian landscape. "Vagrant", in number one, is the most socially minded of Scott's poems in The Canadian Mercury. Here, he chides an individual who evades

society's ordering principles, conventions, historical terms, and even human companionship. The poem evokes the disdain in which Canon Scott holds the aberrant, heroic ego. For his own part, F.R. Scott resorts to mocking rhymes with which to criticize a grand flight from society:

he fled beyond the outer star  
to spaces where no systems are

beyond the last accepted norm  
the final vestiges of form

the compass of his mind     astute  
to find a polar absolute  
patrolled a mute circumference

the present seemed the only tense

interminably trod his feet  
even his lust was incomplete

and he the last dot in the sky  
did but accentuate an i

infinity became his own  
in fact he found he was alone

now you may see him     virginal  
content to live in montreal<sup>91</sup>

Ironically, the vagrant takes refuge in Montreal; his evasion is founded on an attitude of disengagement rather than on actual physical flight from society. The mocking tone with which Scott disparages this disaffection links the poem to the other, pre-political poems of the 1920s. It would be some years before Scott voiced his historical and economic challenge to the social ills that afflicted Canada, in the savage satires of the 1930s

but as the 1920s drew to a close, and as the impact of the Depression became more obvious, Scott's most accomplished poetry concerns the Laurentian landscape. In "Old Song", in number three, the poet illustrates his sense of geophysical time, against which the social time of man appears contrastingly small. "Old Song" appears on the page as spare as the geophysical elements of the landscape that it depicts, a focus that Scott balances with a careful evocation of the larger, constant motion of nature. The timeless natural motion smooths the bare details of rock and ice, and seems to lengthen the short lines which flow into each other with a fluidity that parallels the ineluctable motion and rhythm of nature. "Old Song" opens with the sounds of the seasonal landscape and the only disruption that seems to spring from the earth, "far voices/and fretting leaves/this music the/hillside gives". Like his poet-father, F.R. Scott seeks to identify the autonomous voice of the northland which, while not that of the divinity, conveys an analagous sense of peace "...in the silent flowing river/an elemental song/for ever". This voice or "song" was to haunt Scott throughout his career:

a deep calling  
of no mind  
out of long aeons  
when dust was blind  
and ice hid sound

Scott detects no man or place for him in this austere  
Laurentian land:

only a moving  
with no note  
granite lips  
á stone throat.<sup>92</sup>

Yet, as Scott came to know better the workings of the social  
landscape, he came also to know that man must inevitably  
take up residence in the northland, an interaction that  
would produce the later "Laurentian Shield", as well as the  
MacKenzie River poems.

"March Field" appears in number seven of The  
Canadian Mercury, a literary portrait of the seasonal  
landscape that incorporates details of seasonal renewal,  
Christian resurrection, and an Eliotic despair. As Eliot  
notes in "The Wasteland":

April is the cruellest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain.

However, Scott paints March as bleaker than even Eliot's  
April, due to its delayed, perhaps even failed, promise of  
renewal. The repetition of "now" and "not yet" isolates  
this seasonal moment for aside from the poet, man is only  
implicit to "March Field", the "dark furrow" his handiwork.  
In consequence Scott awaits the promise of renewal given  
only by the landscape:

...a warm wind, stealing  
 From blunt brown hills, loosening  
 Sod and cold loam  
 Round rigid root and stem.

Even so, the bleakness of the terrain is unrelieved, a bleakness that Scott renders in a Christian allusion, "Yet no seed stirs/In this bare room/Under the hollow sky."<sup>93</sup> The landscape of the "March Field" is simultaneously the soil or womb, in which as yet "no seed stirs", as well as the "bare room" or empty tomb that heralds Christ's resurrection. But the sterility of the March moment is reinforced by "the hollow sky", which blunts the promises of Spring, conception, and Easter. The poem suggests a poet who is uncertain of his direction, one who senses the contemporary despair, but who also holds to the ultimate promise of renewal, despite his transient faith.

Scott's book reviews in The Canadian Mercury also reveal an uncertainty as to the social role of art that matches the mood of uncertainty in "March Field". In one such review, Scott decries "otherworldliness", a feature of his own early poetry, particularly his love poems, and asks "of what use are soaring Gothic arches, if you do not want to look up to heaven?"<sup>94</sup> In another review, despite his newly-proclaimed earthward perspective, Scott voices a privileged elitism. In the manner of "Saturday Night", he reviles "the Divine Average [that] is the divinity which

would shape our ends, were it not for the atheism of a few creative minds."<sup>95</sup> And in a third review, he misjudges his own poetic future, asserting that "the poet who attempts to write what shall be at once history and poetry is bound to fail if he is a good poet. His creative powers will run him into historical error."<sup>96</sup>

In number five-six of The Canadian Mercury, Scott reviews Canada and World Politics by the Dean of Law, Percy Corbett, outlining what was to become his enduring interest in the "forms" and "substance" of the constitutional link between Canada and Great Britain. Scott advocates "a further development of autonomy"<sup>97</sup> from the Empire, a perspective that he confirmed by joining the Canadian Institute for International Affairs in 1929, at the urging of Dean Corbett.<sup>98</sup> The C.I.I.A. itself promoted "a new form of Canadian nationalism which led inevitably to [Canada's] independent status in world politics."<sup>99</sup> By 1929, despite the relative absence of man from his poetic landscapes, Scott's ancillary interests gave strong hints of his growing interest in the national and international welfare of social man. A decade later, this interest was to bring the final break with the conservative Imperialism of his family.

The 1920s were years of great advance for Scott who in discernible poetic stages, focussed his eye ever more clearly on the character of the society that surrounded him, and which he found to be wanting. As Scott abandoned his self-regarding poetic landscapes of the early 1920s under the force of the awesome Laurentian landscape, he began to criticize the generally unquestioning attitude of Canadians toward the cultural, political, and economic structures that shaped their lives. As the Depression began to settle over Canada, Scott began to realize that after careful economic study, change could be brought about only by collective political action and in the poetry of the 1930s Scott began to illustrate the human misery growing out of the prevailing economic disorder.

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<sup>1</sup>F.R. Scott, Interview by Anne Scotton for the Douglas-Coldwell Foundation, 1977-78, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>9</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1955-56", F.R. Scott to Desmond Pacey, November 23, 1956.

<sup>10</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 84.

<sup>11</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1975", F.R. Scott to A.J.M. Smith, January 17, 1975.

<sup>12</sup>G.M., "The Descent of a Poet", The McGill Daily Literary Supplement, I. no. 4, 2.

<sup>13</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 85.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>17</sup>Scott Papers, Interview by Vincent Tovell, 1971, p.1.

<sup>18</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, January, 1973", F.R. Scott to Irving Layton, March 9, 1973.

<sup>19</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 84.

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>22</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1946", "A Function for Poetry", F.R. Scott to the Federation of Canadian Artists, March 15, 1946, pp.1-2.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>A.J.M. Smith, "Hamlet in Modern Dress", The McGill Fortnightly Review, II, no. 1 (November 3, 1926), 2-4.

<sup>25</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1953-54", F.R. Scott to Dr. C.F. Klinck, March 13, 1954.

<sup>26</sup>Desmond Pacey, "F.R. Scott", in his Ten Canadian Poets (1958) (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1966), p. 227.

<sup>27</sup>F.R. Scott, two epigrams in The McGill Fortnightly Review, I, no. 1 (November 21, 1925), 7.

<sup>28</sup>F.R. Scott, "Miniature", The McGill Fortnightly Review, I, no. 2 (December 5, 1925), 13.

<sup>29</sup>Brian Tuke, "To Beauty", The McGill Fortnightly Review, I, no. 3 (December 19, 1925), 20.

<sup>30</sup>Brian Tuke, "Sonnet (Would I were Angelo...)", The McGill Fortnightly Review, I, no. 8 (March 6, 1926), 64.

<sup>31</sup>R.S., "What is Hid", The McGill Fortnightly Review, I, no. 9-10 (March 22, 1926), 71.

<sup>32</sup>Scott Papers, "F.R. Scott talking about poems", August 27-28, 1962, p. 11.

<sup>33</sup>R.S., "Art", The McGill Fortnightly Review, I, no. 2 (December 5, 1925), 14.

<sup>34</sup>T.T., "Frost in Autumn", The McGill Fortnightly Review, I, No. 4 (January 9, 1926), 56.

<sup>35</sup>F.R. Scott, "Fantasy", The McGill Fortnightly Review, I, no. 4 (January 9, 1926), 33.

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<sup>36</sup>T.T., "Sonnet (On reading the results of the examinations)", The McGill Fortnightly Review, I, no., 5 (January 23, 1926), 43.

<sup>37</sup>Sax, "Saturday Night", The McGill Fortnightly Review, I, no. 7 (February 20, 1926), 58.

<sup>38</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 95.

<sup>39</sup>Scott Papers, "F.R. Scott talking about poems", pp. 8-9

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1964", "The Role of the Poet in Quebec Today", n.d., p. 2.

<sup>42</sup>Scott Papers, "F.R. Scott talking about poems", pp. 8-9

<sup>43</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 95.

<sup>44</sup>Scott Papers, "F.R. Scott talking about poems", pp. 8-9

<sup>45</sup>F.R. Scott, "Below Quebec", The McGill Fortnightly Review, II, no. 3 (December 1, 1926), 22.

<sup>46</sup>T.T., "New Names", The McGill Fortnightly Review, II, no. 4 (December 15, 1926), 27.

<sup>47</sup>Bernard March, "Snowdrift" and "November Pool", The McGill Fortnightly Review, II, no. 6 (February 18, 1927), 43.

<sup>48</sup>T.T., "Diamonds", The McGill Fortnightly Review, II, no. 7 (March 10, 1927), 53.

<sup>49</sup>Bernard March, "Proud Cellist", The McGill Fortnightly Review, II, no. 7 (March 10, 1927), 55.

<sup>50</sup>T.T., "Troubled Understanding", The McGill Fortnightly Review, II, no. 8 (March 25, 1927), 63.

<sup>51</sup>Bernard March, "Vale", The McGill Fortnightly Review, II, no. 8 (March 25, 1927), 61.

<sup>52</sup>F.R. Scott, "Trivium", The McGill Fortnightly Review, II, no. 1 (November 3, 1926), 6.

<sup>53</sup>F.R. Scott, "Sonnet (Written on a May morning)", The McGill Fortnightly Review, II, no. 2 (November 17, 1926), 11.

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<sup>54</sup>X, "XXX", The McGill Fortnightly Review, II, no. 2 (November 17, 1926), 14.

<sup>55</sup>F.R. Scott, "The Canadian Authors Meet", The McGill Fortnightly Review, II, no. 9-10 (April 27, 1927), 73.

<sup>56</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1976", F.R. Scott to Milton Acorn, February 14, 1976.

<sup>57</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 84.

<sup>58</sup>A.J.M. Smith, "Contemporary Poetry", The McGill Fortnightly Review, II, no. 4 (December 15, 1926), pp. 31-32.

<sup>59</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1951-52", F.R. Scott's C.B.C. Poetry Broadcast, n.d., p. 1.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 100.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, 1946", F.R. Scott to Professor A.H.S. Gillson, June 28, 1946.

<sup>64</sup>Desmond Pacey, "F.R. Scott", Ten Canadian Poets, p. 229.

<sup>65</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces - Paperback", "Some comments by F.R. Scott", n.d.

<sup>66</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, January, 1970", F.R. Scott to Peter Stevens, February 5, 1970.

<sup>67</sup>A.J.M. Smith, "Wanted: Canadian Criticism", in J.L. Granatstein & Peter Stevens, ed., Forum: Canadian Life and Letters: 1920-70 (University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 56.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>69</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, 1946", F.R. Scott to Professor A.H.S. Gillson, June 28, 1946.

<sup>70</sup>A.J.M. Smith, "Wanted: Canadian Criticism", pp. 57-58.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

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<sup>72</sup>F.R. Scott, Letter to The Canadian Forum, VIII, no. 93 (June, 1928), 697-698.

<sup>73</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1955-56", F.R. Scott to Desmond Pacey, November 23, 1956.

<sup>74</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, 1940", F.R. Scott to William Scott, August 2, 1928.

<sup>75</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1955-56", F.R. Scott to Desmond Pacey, November 23, 1956.

<sup>76</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, 1940", F.R. Scott to William Scott, August 2, 1928.

<sup>77</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, January, 1960", F.R. Scott to Michael Pitfield, April 19, 1960.

<sup>78</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, 1948", F.R. Scott to F.C. Cope, February 9, 1948.

<sup>79</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 107.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Michiel Horn, The League for Social Reconstruction: Intellectual Origins of the Democratic Left in Canada: 1930-1942 (University of Toronto Press, 1980), p. 20.

<sup>82</sup>Sandra Djwa, "F.R. Scott", Canadian Poetry, no. 4 (Spring/Summer, 1979), 5.

<sup>83</sup>Scott Papers, "Canadian Politics and Reform, Proposed Book", ca. 1929.

<sup>84</sup>Scott Papers, "The Canadian Mercury", circular letter, December 10, 1928.

<sup>85</sup>Editorial in The Canadian Mercury, I, no. 1 (December, 1928), 3.

<sup>86</sup>A.J.M. Smith, "A Note on Metaphysical Poetry", The Canadian Mercury, I, no. 3 (February, 1929), 61.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 61-62.

<sup>89</sup>Leo Kennedy, "The Future of Canadian Literature", The Canadian Mercury, I, no. 5-6 (April/May, 1929), 99-100.

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<sup>90</sup>F.R. Scott, Review of Wild Garden, The Canadian Mercury, I, no. 7 (June, 1929), 140.

<sup>91</sup>F.R. Scott, "Vagrant", The Canadian Mercury, I, no. 1 (December, 1928), 117.

<sup>92</sup>F.R. Scott, "Old Song" & "Spring Flame", The Canadian Mercury, I, no. 3 (February, 1929), 62.

<sup>93</sup>F.R. Scott, "March Field", The Canadian Mercury, I, no. 7 (June, 1929), 126.

<sup>94</sup>F.R. Scott, "Art and Reformation", The Canadian Mercury, I, no. 3 (February, 1929), 68.

<sup>95</sup>F.R. Scott, "Some Modern Sculptors", The Canadian Mercury, I, no. 4 (March, 1929), 92.

<sup>96</sup>F.R. Scott, "John Brown's Body", The Canadian Mercury, I, no. 4 (March, 1929), 89.

<sup>97</sup>F.R. Scott, "Canada and World Politics", The Canadian Mercury, I, no. 5-6 (April/May, 1929), 115.

<sup>98</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, August, 1966", F.R. Scott to Edward Greathead, November 15, 1966.

<sup>99</sup>F.R. Scott, "Language Rights and Language Policy", in his Essays on the Constitution (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 377.

CHAPTER III

## THE DEPRESSION YEARS, 1930-39

Just as Canon Scott and A.J.M. Smith shaped Scott's dutiful, critical poetic intelligence, during the 1930s Scott followed the political model of the patriarchal socialist, clergyman, and Member of Parliament, J.S. Woodsworth. Fired by the commitment of Canon Scott, looking at the world through newly critical eyes thanks to Smith, and inspired by the politics of Woodsworth, Scott devoted himself to the cause of the working man on whose behalf he attempted to shape a rational order out of the chaos of the Depression. Spurred on by the human misery which the old economic and cultural values could do little to alleviate, Scott resorted to the ordering principles of socialism and poetry to illustrate the dilemmas of society, the necessary changes, and his confidence in the ability of the common man to improve his lot. Scott co-founded the League for Social Reconstruction, a socialist study group that drafted national economic and social policies with which to combat the misery of the Depression. In turn, the L.S.R.


became the "brains trust" for the new Cooperative Commonwealth Federation which itself was to become the political vehicle for democratically implementing rehabilitative national social policy. This goal of both the L.S.R. and the C.C.F. to better society was to become the organizing theme for the prose and poetry that Scott published during the 1930s, most frequently in The Canadian Forum.

Raised to serve humanity, Scott the teacher undertook to help "the labour people and the farmers...see the wider interest"<sup>1</sup> of cooperative, collective action in fighting the Depression, the very seriousness of which invited Scott to believe in the eventual triumph of socialism. He believed that a certain "economic determinism"<sup>2</sup> favoured the future of the fledgling C.C.F., itself part of a larger movement, with a "counterpart in every country of the world", possessing "an element of a crusade".<sup>3</sup> In the company of such persons as David Lewis, Scott passed the 1930s fighting to unionize working men and women in Canada. Like his democratic socialist colleagues in the L.S.R. and C.C.F., Scott firmly insisted that meaningful social change must be achieved through normal democratic political methods and he rejected the

revolutionary methods others advocated at the time. Throughout the Depression, in essays, political campaigns, as well as in his poems, Scott fought the uncaring power of the capitalists, the inactivity of the Canadian governments, as well as the Communists whose commitment to revolutionary change threatened the peaceful path to democratic socialism in Canada. During this decade Scott complemented this fight for social cooperation in Canada with a comparable fight for international cooperation. This internationalism led him to oppose any subsequent participation by Canada as a war-time ally of Imperial Britain. In the face of the then-approaching World War II, he became a neutralist and a virtual isolationist, to the horror of his staunchly pro-British family.

Despite the demands placed on him by the C.C.F., the issue of the Spanish Civil War, and the debate on neutrality, Scott withdrew from the political fray of the 1930s long enough to review in several articles the history of modern poetry and the conjunction of contemporary art with social change. As well, he found sufficient, albeit intermittent, time to co-edit New Provinces: Poems of Several Authors, itself a battle of critical perspectives, in which Scott minimized his political poetry in order to illustrate his poetic development up to the mid 1930s. The

anthology suggests a strong, motivating tension between the social and private functions of the artist. During the 1930s, in contrast to the largely non-political nature of New Provinces, Scott published in The Canadian Forum a number of expressly political poems. These poems illustrate his growing ability to blend a socialist perspective with an humane anger of the deprivation of the common man, in order to produce stinging attacks on not only the philistines and cultural Imperialists of the 1920s, but also on the reactionary institutional Church, capitalists, and negligent governments. But ever the realist, Scott reserved his most bitter note for the political gullibility of the Canadian electorate who continued to elect governments indifferent to the collective well-being. Nonetheless, there remains a curious dichotomy between the avowedly ~~political~~ nature of the poems that Scott published in periodicals and the deliberately temperate nature of the selection of poems in New Provinces. At the very least, one senses Scott's struggle during the 1930s to accommodate himself not only to an aesthetic muse who drew him toward the lonely Laurentian landscape, but also to a dutiful muse who drew him toward the social landscape.



Scott remembers the 1930s as a period of intense debate on "whether the poet should express a social consciousness". As he himself was "without some family income",<sup>4</sup> he simply could not afford to turn away from the world and dedicate himself to art alone. Moreover, the all too real deprivation experienced by Canadians during the Depression prevented him from dispassionately recording the anguish of the times and instead impelled him to undertake the defense of the working man. After the limited range of the Montreal little magazines Scott turned to the nationally-minded The Canadian Forum, in which he published critical poems and essays that contrasted markedly with the calmer New Provinces.

Founded in 1920, The Canadian Forum was purchased in 1927 by J.M. Dent and Sons which granted editorial freedom to "J.F. White, and his chief collaborator...Frank Underhill". "By the autumn of 1932 the Forum's tone was decidedly leftist",<sup>5</sup> which suited Scott who was by then the contributor of provocative articles and poems. Between 1930 and 1935, The Canadian Forum featured a number of Scott's poems, ranging from early poems on love and the Laurentian landscape, to contemporary portraits of urban life and satiric attacks on economic deterioration in

Canada. Most of these poems appeared between August, 1930 and June, 1932, after which most of Scott's poetic energy was directed to New Provinces.

In the August, 1930 issue of The Canadian Forum, Scott published three poems. "Proud Cellist", virtually the same as the original version, and "Young Lovers Old" together evoke the self-regarding, love-lorn poetry of the era of The McGill Fortnightly Review. Even so, in the latter poem Scott speaks almost despondently of a love reduced by time to mere routine. Though his perspective remains closed and inward, he does acknowledge the darker side of intimate human relations:

Time seems to slip by them with a slow  
Methodical tread.  
And the wife says, as she prepares to go,  
'Put out the light, John, before you come up to  
bed.'

Between them "Proud Cellist" and "Young Lovers Old" signal an abiding tension in Scott's poetry, between his aesthetic delight and his determination to seek out the grimmer aspects of life, which do not admit such beauty. In the third poem, "Sunday", Scott extends his poetic investigation from the personal to the social dimension, although a touch of elitist contempt for the masses, held over from the 1920s, mars his analysis. Focussing on institutional Christianity, Scott ascribes to the Church a spiritual

darkness that contrasts to the light pouring forth from nature, which itself communes only with the observant few, the poet among them. In marked contrast to the visionary poet, the unobservant masses turn from the light and implicit knowledge of nature to rituals which compound their ignorance. These people constitute "...crowds walking solemnly/Into false Gothic doorways/Into religious dimness."<sup>6</sup> Throughout the years, Scott came to see the established church as a powerful obstruction to the collective well-being. He sharply criticized not only the Quebec Catholic Church for opposing the C.C.F. and impeding the growth of democracy, but also his own Anglican community for supporting the British Imperial tie, of which Canon Scott was a notable exponent. The same issue of The Canadian Forum that features "Sunday" also features "The Value of Imperial Sovereignty"<sup>7</sup> in which Scott casts doubt on the value of Canada's membership in the British Empire, an argument advanced earlier in "The Canadian Authors Meet".

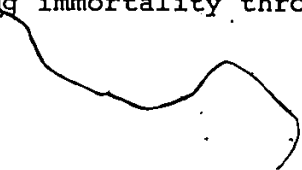
Through the autumn of 1930, Scott published several poems in The Canadian Forum, moving finally toward a clear expression of his antipathy for specific social institutions. The September issue features a revision of "Below Quebec", which first appeared in The McGill Fortnightly Review. The new final stanza introduces a

couple, adding a consciously human element to the geographical landscape. As a result, despite the usually forbidding Laurentian landscape, "Below Quebec" offers a more positive personal outlook than did the previous version.<sup>8</sup> In the October issue of The Canadian Forum, Scott published "Tourist Time", in which in the disdainful manner of the late 1920s he satirizes a small-town visitor who is overwhelmed by the modern city that Scott himself had found so uninspiring. His interest in the tourist, a small detail of urban life, and in the smaller details of her appearance, dates from the earlier "XXX", in The McGill Fortnightly Review, in which Scott commits himself to the urban landscape. In "Tourist Time", however, Scott is moved by a certain condescension to witty though rather patronizing comment:

Madam, the most extraordinary thing in this  
town  
Is the shape of your legs.

O communication!  
O rapid transit!<sup>9</sup>

In the November issue of The Canadian Forum, which features Scott's four inter-related epitaphs of a cleric, a lawyer, a financier, and the common man, Scott moves away from such personal criticism and toward his broader satires. In the first three poems, he argues the futility of attempting immortality through the power of a profession



or institution. By overstating the specialized language of each profession, Scott mocks the attempts of the three individuals to live on through the social institutions they represent, the Church, the law profession, and the corporation respectively. Ironically, it is only death that brings a measure of this immortality, as devouring worms incorporate each figure into the regenerative cycle of nature, which the common man embodies. Suspicious of the familiar family figures of the cleric and lawyer, in "Epitaph For You or Me" Scott allies himself with and speaks for the common man, "This man was normal, so he needs a stone/To save his memory from oblivion."<sup>10</sup>

After the poems published during the autumn, The Canadian Forum did not again feature Scott's poetry until December, 1931, although the May and June, 1931, issues of the magazine featured a two part article on modern poetry by Scott the reluctant critic, "New Poems For Old". In his first part "The Decline of Poesy", Scott describes the birth of modern poetry after World War I, suggesting A.J.M. Smith in "From Patriotism to Pacificism", "A Note on

Metaphysical Poetry", and "Wanted: Canadian Criticism". In his description of modern poetry Scott also offers a pungent description of the poetry and cultural values of Canon Scott, the cleric, and William Scott, the lawyer:

Immediately the little band of English singers...arose as one to proclaim its faith in the stock-in-trade ideals of the European nationstate of 1914 - tribal god, crusading country, glory of warfare, honour of dying, etc., etc.

Scott implicitly dates the movement for the rational pacificism that he was to accept from the conclusion of World War I. "The fact of the war was proof enough of its obsolescence" in resolving international disputes, for World War I fractured the pillars of the old social order in Europe. Religion "was shown...to be built...upon the sands of primitive social custom"; "the old economic order" was proved inadequate by socialist theory; "psychologists unearthed buried portions of the temple of the mind"; Einstein re-interpreted the nature of the cosmos; and reflexive morality was no longer able to meet the needs of modern man. With the collapse of each such pillar of the old order under the force of reason, Scott sensed himself ever more free of his cultural inheritance. With Europe the scene of the collapse of the old order, as highlighted by World War I, "the weapons of revolution were being forged by the New American poets" in the U.S., to whom Smith

introduced Scott at McGill. "The product of this labour was available for a generation which had ceased to believe in the wisdom of its fathers, and was determined to assert its independence". The suggested struggle between the two generations for independent thought, expression, and action mirrored Scott's own attempts to separate himself from the values of his family. Addressing his growing concern that poetics bear political witness to the condition of man, Scott writes that after World War I poets began to attack the legacy of "late Tennysonian sentimentality", under which "poetry had become the handmaid" of the English ruling class. "The result was that most later-nineteenth century verse (which would include all Canadian verse up to this year of grace), had [nothing] of the universal." Building on the more expansive intellectual perspective of the post War poets, Scott began early in the 1930s to define poetry as a potential weapon in a class struggle for economic and social justice. He intended to use his poetic skills to fight for democratic values and "to express faithfully and in the most fitting language his deepest emotional experiences and his clearest vision of the world about him."

Rejecting the notion that the poet should dispassionately record the disorder of contemporary life, Scott insisted instead that he should challenge the classes, institutions,

and values that cause such problems. With more than a hint to his own background, Scott writes that "the poet will create the poem with a complete disregard of its possible effect upon the official or ecclesiastical mind."<sup>11</sup>

In the second part of his article, "The Revival of Poetry", Scott elaborates on the poetic goals outlined in "The Decline of Poesy", the archaic term itself suggesting his disdain for much of the earlier poetry. Again referring to the liberation of form and subject-matter after World War I, he directs the poet toward urban subjects expressed in realistic language, for the modernist has "kicked poetry rather rudely out into the street to seek...the stuff from which a vital and humane art might be created." Pointing toward his own political poetry of the 1930s, Scott announces the convergence of his poetic and social perspective, with political results.

The modernist poet, like the socialist, has thought through present forms to a new and more suitable order. He is not concerned with destroying, but with creating, and being a creator he strikes terror into the hearts of the old and decrepit.<sup>12</sup>

By the spring of 1931, poetry stood clearly as a revolutionary tool to be applied to modernization, as well

as the improvement of the human condition. Scott had broken with the notion that poetry is the medium for dispassionately recording social disorder and the individual's personal sense of dislocation.

As these two articles indicate, "by the summer of 1931 Scott was ready for a political movement and a cause", which he found through Frank Underhill, whose political views he had come to know through The Canadian Forum. Scott and Underhill finally met at "the annual Institute of Politics at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts" where on a Sunday walk with Law Dean Percy Corbett, the three men discussed the effects of the Depression.

Underhill stressed the need for a sort of Fabian society in Canada. He believed that a new political party would soon arise, with support from farmer and labour organizations. There should be a group of intellectuals that could provide the new party with a coherent platform.<sup>13</sup>

Underhill was "as important to the evolution of [Scott's] thinking as...A.J.M. Smith was with respect to [Scott's] poetry", for Underhill offered an "historic perspective"<sup>14</sup> on the political and economic needs of Canada, which balanced the primarily aesthetic, frequently ahistorical, perspective that Smith advanced. During the

autumn of 1931, Scott and Underhill founded two groups in Montreal and Toronto, respectively, to plan national social policy and Scott found less and less time for poetry. In the December, 1931, and the January, 1932, issues of The Canadian Forum, for example, he published but one poem apiece, each of which resembles more the Laurentian poems of the late 1920s than his social verse. In "Trees In Ice",<sup>15</sup> in the December issue, Scott offers an intense personal vision of the northland that testifies to his religious upbringing. Unfortunately, The Canadian Forum compressed the lines of the poem and ruined the visual effect of the described tree;<sup>16</sup> as well, this early version of "Trees In Ice" resembles rather too closely "The Lonely Land" by A.J.M. Smith.<sup>17</sup> Scott was later to rework his poem, exposing parallel, transcendent images of resurrection and seasonal renewal, which have served as models for social regeneration. In "Waking", in the January, 1932, issue, Scott again sets a love relationship against the Laurentian landscape, a theme appropriate to the poems of the late 1920s, such as the initial "Below Quebec", in which the awesome landscape embodies an obstacle that prevents the poet from committing himself to his personal life. "Waking" interweaves the captivating and almost overwhelming, rhythms of landscape and woman:

The moan of wind over ground  
 The low round palpable sound of water  
 Rolling down upon stone over and down  
 And birches beckoning in the moving air  
 Come to me at dawn and in the morning  
 Like the flow and contour of an approaching  
 woman  
 Like a burden too heavy to bear.<sup>18</sup>

Neither "Trees on Ice", nor "Waking" suggests the interest in contemporary social issues that Scott displays elsewhere in the January issue of The Canadian Forum, in "Communists, Senators, and All That".<sup>19</sup> As well, in late January, 1932, Scott's and Underhill's study groups met to form a socially committed, educational organization of national scope. "The pressures of the day had broken into the ivory towers of Canada's universities", which were to provide many members to this organization and "the L.S.R. was the result".<sup>20</sup> The League for Social Reconstruction offered Scott the "point of entry to Canadian socialism"<sup>21</sup> anticipated in the two articles forming "The Revival of Poetry" and profoundly affected his economic perspective. From the beginning Scott belonged to the executive of the L.S.R.<sup>22</sup> The new organization chose as its honorary president the leader of the Ginger Group in Parliament, J.S. Woodsworth, whom Scott remembers as "a man wholly imbued with the spirit" of humane, social progress in the Lambeth Council of Bishops Report of 1919, as well as a more evolved version of Canon Scott<sup>23</sup>.

The L.S.R. was to be "of great service"<sup>24</sup> to the C.C.F., itself founded on August 1, 1932, with J.S. Woodsworth as its leader, for the L.S.R. provided the C.C.F. with studies on the economy and society of Canada. Undoubtedly, such studies heightened the realism of Scott's poetry, as well as his outrage over the exploitation of the working man, which he outlines in the May, 1932, issue of The Canadian Forum, "An Anthology of Up-to-Date Canadian Poetry". The title itself suggests an additional reproach to the inadequate anthologies of Canadian verse that had so angered Smith. Scott's "Anthology" consists of sixteen sections that variously attack the prevailing values and practices of Canadian society, the exploitation of Canadian resources and workers by the U.S.A., inadequate social welfare, the debasement of democratic institutions, and corporate abuse of the working man.

In the prologue to "Anthology" Scott disputes the supposed strength and freedom of the country by adding to the anthem "O Canada" a mocking chorus, "'We see thee rise, O Canada/The true North, strong and free,/(Tralala-lala, tralala-lala, etc...'" To illustrate the contrasting abuses that Canadians actually enjoy, Scott presents sixteen portraits of exploitation, alternating between descriptions

of those who exploit and descriptions of those who are exploited. The epilogue to "Anthology" consists of an excerpt from the then Minister of Trade and Commerce who religiously declares his capitalistic allegiance to Canada, "To her products I pledge my patronage,/And to the cause of her producers/I pledge my devotions."<sup>25</sup> Although Scott has rejected such nationalism, based as it is on a concern for corporate wealth, rather than on a concern for common wealth, in his poem he does not inveigh against such capitalists as the Minister. Rather, he offers terse descriptions of the consequent economic conditions that blight the lives of many Canadians, committing himself to the peaceful, rational elimination of such conditions. Characteristically blending social change and orderly process, Scott writes,

the labour and working class movement has come to stay, and cannot be now destroyed...There is still time, by wise handling, to keep Canadian radicalism constitutional, and to maintain its belief in the possibility of political action.<sup>26</sup>

Even though Scott was to become a devoted supporter of the labour movement through the C.C.F., his critical intelligence was to remain independent, modifying its autonomy only after much reflection. Such reflection took place after the founding of the C.C.F. in the summer of 1932, when a number of the L.S.R. members, Underhill included, wanted to affiliate immediately with the new

party. Scott, however, preferred to keep "the L.S.R. at its educational job alone";<sup>27</sup> "there can be no immediate necessity...to decide, now, whether the C.C.F. is our proper bedfellow."<sup>28</sup> By mid-autumn of 1932, he perceived "the common idea of" the L.S.R. and the C.C.F. of "creating a more just and equitable social order in Canada",<sup>29</sup> and by December he could sanguinely describe the L.S.R. as "a purely educational society, attempting to persuade people". The C.C.F. gave to the work of the L.S.R. a reciprocal "practical quality that it would otherwise lack."<sup>31</sup> And, by January 1933, the practical fact of politics moved the committed Scott to write, "now there is Mr. Woodsworth's new party to assist."<sup>31</sup>

Although various ideological and organizational problems outlined in "The C.C.F. Convention",<sup>32</sup> caused Scott anxiety, his initial reserve gave way to full support for the C.C.F.'s goal of "an economy controlled in the interests of the public". Frequently called upon to defend the programme of the new party, Scott ironically would evoke his family's commitment to social service, frequently arguing that the C.C.F. was "most certainly a 'Christian' party" given "that on its economic side...present society is in many ways unchristian".<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, Scott diligently contrasted the humanitarian goals of the C.C.F.


with the narrow vision of the Catholic Church in Quebec, concerned "with two main ideas - the sanctity of private property and the danger of communism, and of these twin bogeys is fascism bred."<sup>35</sup> The Catholic Church in Quebec promoted "enslavement", piously teaching its people "to be content with poor and depressed living standards when they could enjoy the fuller and richer lives which greater economic security makes possible."<sup>36</sup>

Even though the L.S.R. and the C.C.F. were "fairly radical", they were not revolutionary and Scott, like others, insisted "that a decent social order can be brought into being by normal political methods",<sup>37</sup> which could forestall destructive social passions. Although Scott severely criticized the economic structure, he firmly advocated peaceful change, believing that Canada is "a country where it is possible to differ without quarrelling."<sup>38</sup> In forswearing revolution, he differed from a Montreal contemporary of the 1930s, Norman Bethune, who left Canada to pursue his revolutionary goals. Bethune perceived a contest between "the old jungle individualism, and...cooperative efforts". He, too, was the son of a cleric and relied on biblical metaphors to suggest a method for replacing capitalism that contrasted with that of Scott,

From every gun in every hand I would speak death for the corrupted breed, and with a voice like Gabriel's trumpet, I would roar at the ears of the slumbering world.<sup>39</sup>

Such political language suggested to Scott the triumph of social passion over social reason. Of Bethune, Scott concluded "le coeur le guidait plus que la tête."<sup>40</sup> Despite their differences the two men displayed an internationalist perspective, as Bethune illustrated in an address to his Chinese compatriots, "you and we are internationalists; we recognize no race, no colour, no languages, no national boundaries to separate and divide us."<sup>41</sup> Scott declared, "democracy must be international in its outlook...it is a force that breaks down the barriers that divide man today". He added, "the universal quality in democracy makes it the only possible basis for the future international institutions...if we are to rid ourselves of the anarchy of a world of so-called 'independent' states."<sup>42</sup>

In the summer of 1933, the L.S.R. undertook two major tasks. In response to a request by Woodsworth, members of the L.S.R. headed by Underhill, prepared the draft of the C.C.F.'s "Regina Manifesto". It was "an adaptation and elaboration of the manifesto adopted...by the L.S.R.",<sup>43</sup> which Scott characteristically described as



"an appeal to the intelligence of the people...a venture in audacity".<sup>44</sup> That same summer, the L.S.R. also began a socialist text "tailored"<sup>45</sup> to the particular problems of Canada. Like "the Group" before it, the L.S.R. intended the book "to foster 'widespread knowledge...of the faults and deficiencies of [Canada's] economic system and of the constructive proposals to deal with them'."<sup>46</sup> Social Planning for Canada appeared in September, 1935, with a cover by Marian Dale Scott.

But after 1933, the L.S.R. began to lose those members who were not committed socialists. Even though the L.S.R. pre-dated the C.C.F., maintaining its "independence in order...to express [its] own ideas on public questions",<sup>47</sup> the "chief functions" of the L.S.R. "were taken over by the research department of the C.C.F."<sup>48</sup> In an early Report as Secretary of the L.S.R., Scott himself notes that "the growth of the C.C.F. in Montreal occupied the time and energy of many of our members who would otherwise have concentrated more on the... L.S.R."<sup>49</sup> But within months of this Report, Scott himself plunged into a project that took what little time was not devoted

already to teaching and politics, New Provinces: Poems of Several Authors.

Forty years after publication, Scott described New Provinces and its two Prefaces, as "the missing link between the 20's and 40's",<sup>50</sup> although one must consider it in the context of the political poetry in periodicals of the time. The anthology began under the instruction of A.J.M. Smith to "avoid being merely Georgian",<sup>51</sup> but concluded under the supervision of Scott, without whose placating, cajoling, and sometimes arbitrary insistence, New Provinces would not have been published.

Since Smith was away from Montreal all year except at Christmas, [Scott] made the contract, saw the book through the press, and put up \$120 of the \$200 which had to be paid Macmillan to induce them even to publish the book.<sup>52</sup>

In deference to Smith's influential critical skills, Scott emphasized his practical contribution to the anthology, minimizing his own critical impact. Smith wanted the anthology to offer an up-to-the-minute statement of the craft; Scott wanted the anthology to offer a retrospective statement of the poetry of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Although the contributors agreed on themselves as "post-Eliot", Scott felt compelled to set aside his personal wish for "a touch of political radicalism somewhere";<sup>53</sup> eventually, he wanted simply to see the anthology

published. As he managed the practical aspects of publication, his critical inclinations prevailed over those of Smith, although the "Introduction" to the reprint of New Provinces contains a history that plays down Scott's critical impact on the anthology.

The Montreal poets "started to collect these poems in 1931",<sup>54</sup> and Scott began to supervise the anthology in 1934. In early January, he wrote casually to E.J. Pratt, asking him both to join the Montrealers and to "broach the matter"<sup>55</sup> with Robert Finch. In turn, Pratt announced his delight in joining with the "Montreal group",<sup>55</sup> tagging them with that label before W.E. Collin in The White Savannahs, and taking particular pleasure in making Smith's acquaintance through his poems, all of which "overjoyed"<sup>56</sup> Scott and his Montreal colleagues. Scott subsequently proposed to meet with Pratt and Finch in Toronto, where he would be "on L.S.R. business on February 10th-11th",<sup>57</sup> to which Pratt agreed, predicting that the anthology would introduce individuals for whom poetry would be "a life avocation." Pratt also recommended that the anthology should be known for "its salt rather than its sweetness", pressing for "programmes, manifestoe, and so on, that will furnish artistic integrity to [the] movement."<sup>58</sup> In February, A.J.M. Smith, too,

proposed an... "impersonal critical introduction that might be sort of manifesto and explanation", offering the following outline:

1. Canadian poetry has been conscious of its position in space, but not in time.
2. This body of verse represents... a group of young Canadian poets who are aware of the new developments of their art in France, England and US.
3. Their technique elegant and appropriate...
4. Pure poetry
5. Metaphysical poetry
6. Political poetry
7. Satire

Clearly, Smith meant to expand upon "Wanted: Canadian Criticism", published in The Canadian Forum in 1928, to which Scott had taken exception.

Smith saw the proposed anthology as "something of importance in Canada", with the qualification that England and the U.S.A. already enjoyed "writing of equal or superior merit." He put forward the anthology as a reproach to the poets of Canada for their failures, insisting that "there is nothing national about the contents of this book... Attack nationalism in Art & politics. Attack the C.A.A. and the typical national poets". In a further, political flight from national culture, he wonders if communism might not

"provide...an ideal that nationalism has failed to give",<sup>59</sup> undoubtedly celebrating the international perspective of communism rather than its revolutionary means, which Scott had rejected.

The first evidence of discord amongst the poets appeared at the Toronto meeting between Pratt, Finch, and Scott, over Smith's criticism of Finch. Scott "more or less laid down the law as to what sort of verse we wanted from them", prompting Pratt to ask, "'Who is this man Smith?'" To Scott, Smith was "the real leader of the young movement"<sup>60</sup> and his word was law. With Pratt and Finch on one side, and Smith on the other, Scott began an uneasy task of mediation, for he sympathized with both parties. Although he concurred with the "severe" critical evaluation of Canadian poetry by Smith, he still objected to the outright dismissal of this poetry. Liking Smith's "idea of the introduction immensely", Scott urged him to "prepare a draft", to "be careful not to make claims for a greater radicalism than this volume will show", and to distinguish his current poetic interests from the retrospective aim of the anthology:

I entirely agree...that we should turn our poetical interest in the direction of politically left-wing verse, but...the publication of this

anthology will do more to help us in that direction than anything else; we shall have got something out of our systems.

After publication, the contributors would "be freer to develop the [social] tendencies that are in the collection", leading Scott to propose "a second anthology, entirely concerned with the social order",<sup>61</sup> which might include Dorothy Livesay. All the while urging poets to move closer to the concerns of the common man, Scott resisted the temptation to base his poetic self-portrait in New Provinces solely on his social verse, perhaps fearing that it would be seen as contemporary ephemera. In publishing the first formal selection of his poetry, Scott resisted presenting himself as simply a satirist, a reputation that was to bother him throughout his career. All the while adapting his poetry to contemporary social problems, Scott favoured a broad evolutionary description of his work.

Through early 1934, Smith and Scott consulted over the selections for the anthology, while Smith considered the introduction that he wished to model on that of New Signatures, proposing that it "be written very impersonally, and anonymously."<sup>62</sup> In May, 1934, Scott read with satisfaction the sections by Smith that dealt with Finch and Kennedy and suggested that Smith "deal in the same way with all of" the poets. Again Scott urged him not "to place

the authors in the ranks of the world poets", and to treat them in their proper context. Even though Pratt and Finch wanted no introduction, Scott advised Smith to prepare a finished introduction, in order to present the Toronto poets with "a fait accompli."<sup>63</sup> At the same time, Scott sent Pratt "a copy of the complete MS. for the Anthology", suggesting that the still unfinished introduction would "provide a thread of theory to hold together the rather varied assortment that we have to offer."<sup>64</sup> But Smith's introduction languished through 1934, and with it the "fait accompli". Only in the late summer after several entreaties<sup>65</sup> including an offer by Scott to complete the introduction,<sup>66</sup> did Smith reply, "Here's your goddamn preface",<sup>67</sup> which along with the manuscript Scott sent to Pratt.<sup>68</sup>

In the meantime, Scott was seeking a publisher<sup>69</sup> and after much uncertainty decided that he preferred "MacMillan's to any other publisher", although another year was to pass before any firm deal could be struck. When he finally dared to ask what Pratt thought of the anthology and Smith's preface, Scott himself pronounced the last part of the preface "quite alright", but conceded significantly that "the general tone of the opening pages" still bothered him, "rather than make a mistake about it I would prefer to

scrap it altogether. Could you find out what Finch thinks and let me know?"<sup>70</sup> After such lukewarm support by Scott and his specific suggestion "to scrap" Smith's preface, the final insistence by Pratt and Finch to do so, was inevitable. Yet Gnarowski's "Introduction" to the reprint of New Provinces virtually ignores Scott's apprehensions about Smith's perspective on Canadian poetry and singles out Pratt, abetted by Finch and Eayrs of Macmillan, as the culprit in the rejection of Smith's preface.<sup>71</sup> Aside from his own critical reservations, Scott simply wanted to see New Provinces published as originally planned, rejecting Pratt's offer to resign, "your suggested withdrawal is utterly rejected, quashed, thrown out, cast down and sat upon. This anthology began with a group, is a group, and will appear as a group."<sup>72</sup> In order to get this group published, Scott insisted that they "close with MacMillan's on the best terms possible", which seemed to exclude Smith's preface. Even so, Scott hinted that "it would be a pity to lose the preface"<sup>73</sup> and wondered if Pratt would accept a revised preface, which is where the matter was to rest for the next nine months.

During the winter of 1934, J.M. Dent and Sons had sold The Canadian Forum to "a young Liberal of progressive views" who in turn sold it for one dollar to Scott's

colleague, Graham Spry,<sup>74</sup> who took over after the April, 1935, issue.<sup>75</sup> Spry "restored to the editorial columns...the socialist tone they had lost the year before. Several of Spry's associates joined the board" of The Canadian Forum, including F.R. Scott.<sup>76</sup>

In March 1935, The Canadian Forum again offered Scott's poetry, which was now dominated by a cold contempt for the capitalists he saw as responsible for the decay of Canadian society. In "Social Notes" Scott renews the attack on human misery that he began in "Anthology", published in May, 1932. During the intervening three years, he had immersed himself in the socialism of the L.S.R. and the C.C.F., educating himself about the social chaos that resulted from the inefficiency of the Canadian economy. Consequently, the thirteen satirical poems that make up "Social Notes" strongly emphasize the link between economic disorder and human misery, and suggest a poet who is very disturbed by the social problems that surround him. On the one hand, Scott describes the spiritual and material impoverishment of working class Canadians during the Depression, while on the other hand, he lambasts the government for studying, but not acting on the economic problems that cause so much human misery. In addition to such governmental indifference, Scott cites high tariffs,

Church officials, and the increasing emphasis on technology as obstacles to the creation of a just and democratic society.

In each of the thirteen poems of this sequence Scott describes the actual, lamentable state of Canadian society, implicitly demanding the reverse situation. Yet, ever a realist, he reserves his most bitter note for the last poem, "General Election". Despite the ruin of their individual and collective lives by a succession of inactive Liberal and Conservative governments, Canadians refuse to elect to power a progressive party:

There is nothing like hard times  
For teaching the people to think  
By a decisive vote  
After discussing all the issues  
They have turned out the Conservatives  
And put back the Liberals.

The failure of the electors to learn from the "hard times" of the Liberal and Conservative governments contributed to the growing didacticism in Scott's poetry of the day. Yet, Scott included only "Summer Camp" from "Social Notes" in New Provinces, to which he once again turned his attention in the autumn of 1935, convinced "that something definite must be done about this anthology", presumably with or without a preface.


Although Scott came to feel that much of the poetry in the anthology ill-suited the current condition of Canadian society, he held that the poems occupied an

historical place and deserved "to be recorded". He asked Smith not to "cause difficulties by suggesting considerable changes"; to consider altering "some parts of the preface"; and to "be serious, conscientious and decent",<sup>78</sup> in the larger interest of the group. Smith remained unconvinced,<sup>79</sup> but fortunately Scott could announce, "MacMillan's will be glad to publish...some time in April", 1936.<sup>80</sup> He wrote more effusively to Finch, "the longed for miracle has occurred",<sup>80</sup> and to Pratt, he reported that Eayrs of MacMillan held "no objections to prefaces...his principle being that a publisher has no politics"; hopefully, Pratt would "approve of the idea." Nevertheless, Scott wondered anxiously if New Provinces would "be more suited to the temper of the coming boom years than to the tensions of the economic depression",<sup>82</sup> although these economic "boom years" were to arrive only with World War II. Smith requested no changes in the manuscript,<sup>83</sup> but Finch insisted that there be no introduction, or at most one by an outsider,<sup>84</sup> while Pratt softly noted that he preferred "a small foreword".<sup>85</sup> Increasingly anxious, Scott urged Finch to "send the anthology along to MacMillan's at once...We can agree about the preface later...Whatever happens the book must come out." Scott again pressed for a preface by a contributor, preferably Smith, conceding that "the original

version was a bit smart", but insisting that "the present one is...merely honest, vigorous, and undeferential." Even so, he again undercut his defence by admitting "one perfectly valid reason for possibly changing the preface was, "Pratt's position as editor of the new Quarterly [Canadian Poetry Magazine], under the auspices of the C.A.A. We would not willingly compromise him." In the face of Finch's continuing opposition, Scott agreed to "compromise on a short factual foreword."<sup>86</sup> Better to attack the C.A.A. "in articles for the Forum rather than in our preface"<sup>87</sup> and true to his word, in the December, 1935, issue of The Canadian Forum, Scott attacked the C.A.A. with a revised version of "The Canadian Authors Meet". From the original version he deleted the overly personal last stanza, in which the poet indulges his annoyance with the meeting in question. Imbued with the socially critical exasperation of "Social Notes", the poem attacks inhibiting cultural values and invites the reader to believe that change is imminent:

O Canada, O Canada, Oh, can  
 A day go by without new authors springing  
 To paint the native lily, and to plan  
 More ways to set the selfsame welkin ringing?<sup>88</sup>

In January 1936, Scott informed Smith that his "excellent preface has had to be scrapped...Pratt and Finch put their feet down flat." Although he considered it an



unfortunate loss, Scott remained "willing to concede anything in order to get this book out of the way",<sup>89</sup> including a new one-page preface, which earned only Smith's scorn.<sup>90</sup> With a certain sang-froid Scott reported to Finch, "Smith squealed hard at the removal of his preface, but I held him in line",<sup>91</sup> which rendered anti-climactic Smith's final agreement to "listen to [Scott's] plea and refrain from throwing a monkey-wrench" into the works of the anthology. Although Smith protested that the "vague, aimless jargon"<sup>92</sup> of the new preface would do no good, by the time of publication in April 1936, the difficulties of the past two years were forgiven, if not forgotten, leaving Smith to write that "New Provinces strikes me as a very respectable piece of work".<sup>93</sup> His "Rejected Preface" was filed away, to be rediscovered by Scott in 1953.<sup>94</sup>

The "Rejected Preface" by Smith and the "Preface" by Scott differ most in their respective length and tone.<sup>95</sup> As noted, Smith's long opening attack on the historical quality of Canadian poetry made Scott uneasy. Presumably, the contemptuous dismissal of pre-modernist Canadian poetry threatened some of the poetic influences that Scott had absorbed at home, not to mention his respect for an historical perspective. Rather than reject out of hand the poetics of his father's generation, Scott re-interpreted them, blending the organic renewal of the seasonal landscape

with the Christian story of redemption, to form a model for social regeneration. Through the 1920s, he pursued a concrete, contemporary style to investigate realistic subjects drawn from the social landscape. Believing in the organic nature of society, Scott seemingly could not accept the rancorous break with the organic theories of the Confederation school that the "Rejected Preface" seemed calculated to provoke.

In the "Rejected Preface", Smith bases his dismissal of past Canadian poetry on such anthologies as the Oxford Book of Canadian Verse, by W.W. Campbell, and Canadian Poets, by J.W. Garvin, ironically ignoring the possibility that an anthologist might distort the literary profile of a period. The best work of the Confederation poets does not consist simply of emotional introspection and nature verse, as various anthologies suggest and as Smith apparently believed. In their own way, the Confederation poets addressed the discordant elements of their era and amongst other topics, they examined the loss of faith and the growing industrialization, topics dear to Scott's heart. Unfortunately, the various anthologies of the period do not adequately represent such poetry, featuring instead the poetry that underscores traditional religious, patriotic, and emotional values that Canon Scott fed his son in excess

and to which Scott takes exception in "The Canadian Authors Meet". The Canadian modernist poets were not the first to turn an appraising eye on their society, and find it wanting.

In the "Preface" to New Provinces, Scott avoids Smith's historical schism, assuming a decidedly gentler tone, as well as welcoming the present and future reader, rather than repudiating the older poets. He challenges the reader with the poetry in the anthology, not with a prefatory division of Canadian poets into either "cosmopolitan" or "provincial" schools, and he avoids judging these poets according to a supposed reliance on the emotions or on the intellect, as Smith proposes. As suggested to Smith before publication, Scott in his "Preface" introduces New Provinces as the product of "several authors" work over the previous years, forswearing an exclusively contemporary bias. Even so, in the "Preface" Scott does suggest his own political interests during the 1930s, inviting the reader and new poets to combat "the aimlessness of our social environment", which set in with the Depression. All the while presenting New Provinces as a welcoming, retrospective text, Scott confirms the urban and realistic base of his art, as in the early "XXX", and looks hopefully toward the conjunction of art and politics in

order to improve the lot of the common man, as stated in the conclusion to "New Poems for Old", published in The Canadian Forum in 1931.

Scott contributed ten poems to New Provinces, six of which appear in either The McGill Fortnightly Review, The Canadian Mercury, or The Canadian Forum. The poems themselves variously treat the Laurentian landscape, satirize the social landscape, and cumulatively portray the refinement of Scott's critical intelligence. The order of these poems suggests the poet's growing commitment to improve society, a commitment in which the images of the regenerative seasonal landscape figure prominently. In the first four poems, "Trees in Ice", "March Field", "Surfaces", and "Calvary", Scott begins with a deliberate description of the Laurentian landscape. In order to capture the awesome character of the northland, he highlights such poetic influences as Christianity and its social impact, the tone of Eliot, as well as personal relationships. Although the poet undertakes a personal introspection, he remains aware of a natural or religious context larger than his single intelligence.

"Trees In Ice", which had appeared in the December, 1931, issue of The Canadian Forum, was revised for New Provinces.<sup>96</sup> Stanza one displays more active phrasing and images, which themselves suggest greater motion. As well, in the middle stanza Scott re-establishes the staggered arrangement of lines, in approximation of hanging branches or arms, which gives the poem a visual power that clarifies for the reader its metaphoric, and implicitly political, thrust. "Trees in Ice" differs from the earlier version most noticeably in the final stanza. The original version of the poem concludes in a more or less realistic image of a frozen tree; the religious elements are confined to the implication of the "burning of a barren bush". In the revised version of "Trees in Ice", however, the frozen tree no longer stands as a static symbol of seasonal death. Instead, with the changes in the lines, the frozen tree stands as a tree of crucifixion, promising the transcendence of resurrection, "this glittering pain", which by the mid 1930s, had become a key element in Scott's vision of collective man's ability to regenerate or redeem himself. While "Trees in Ice" offers a crisp, contemporary portrait of the Laurentian landscape, it also renews Scott's childhood sense of the interwoven natural and ecclesiastical seasons. While the frozen tree serves as an image of death, the fact that it is a tree of crucifixion promises resurrection as well. This image of death in winter

implicitly promises to yield to the renewal of spring. This interwoven belief in the promise of Christianity and spring underpins Scott's evolving confidence in the regenerative power of rational, social man.

"March Fields" appeared in the June, 1929, issue of The Canadian Mercury. In the original version, the poet looks anxiously at a bare landscape where the implied despair of the Eliotic "hollow sky" almost overwhelms the interwoven promise of spring and Easter, the "seed" and the "bare room", respectively. However, in New Provinces, Scott infuses "March Fields" with a new promise for the future. Scott adds two lines to the last stanza of the poem, which relieve the despair of the original desolated landscape. The "yet" now confirms the inevitable, regenerative power of spring and Easter:

But no seed stirs  
 In this bare prison  
 Under the hollow sky.  
 The stone is not yet rolled away  
 Nor the body risen.

In both "March Field" and "Trees in Ice", the seasonal and religious cycles function in tandem, giving larger meaning to details of the renewing landscape. Presumably, Scott's sense of the wasted landscape comes from Eliot, but his final personal confidence in the renewal of nature, and the

redemption of man through Christ, recall his religious upbringing and suggest the organic quality of life in Songs of the Common Day by C.G.D. Roberts a chief member of the troubling Confederation school. In both "Trees In Ice" and "March Fields", Scott avoids the static and sepulchral images that characterize many of A.J.M. Smith's poems. By means of inevitably regenerative seasonal images Scott intimates the spiritual confidence that underpins his confidence in cooperative social man.

In "Surfaces" and "Calvary" the adult Scott separates the powerful childhood influences of religion and landscape. In "Surfaces" he establishes a delicate balance between an emotional relationship and the surrounding northland. On the one hand, the calm Laurentian landscape, itself a balance of water and land, dominates the scene:

This rock-borne river, ever flowing  
Obedient to the ineluctable laws,  
Brings a reminder from the barren north  
Of the eternal lifeless processes.  
There is an argument that will prevail  
In this calm stretch of current, slowly drawn  
Toward its final equilibrium

Against this heavy, geophysical flow of water and rock, an image that was to endure throughout his poetry, Scott pits a defiant note of life, as man enters the landscape.

Unusually daring in the face of the austere northland, in

short and crisp lines the poet urges his companion on to an act of Edenic rebellion,

Come, flaunt the brief prerogative of life,  
Dip your small civilized foot in this cold water.  
And ripple, for a moment, the smooth surface of  
time.<sup>98</sup>

The quick delicacy of his companion effectively, if briefly, challenges the lugubrious flow of the "rock-borne river" and confirms man's presence in the northland. Even, though this couple embody social man's emerging presence in the northland, it was not until the 1940s that Scott actively began to consider the social presence of man in the northern landscape.

In "Calvary", too, the poet re-examines his religious heritage. The crucifixion takes place in a familiar northland setting, which adds a bleak indifference to the killing. In "Trees in Ice", the crucifixion ultimately serves as a metaphor for seasonal change and renewal; the implied death is a painful, but ultimately transcendent moment by which nature and man are renewed. In "Calvary", however, the poet examines the crucifixion in social, rather than in metaphorical terms. A single man dies a painful death, to become a symbol by which many others will die, "So, with the body broken,/blood becomes token:/eras are stricken."<sup>99</sup> From the crucifixion

springs a creed and an influential social structure that shape history and Scott's own family.

The fifth poem by Scott in New Provinces is "The Canadian Authors Meet", which appeared in the April 27, 1927, issue of The McGill Fortnightly Review and which was revised for publication in the December, 1935, issue of The Canadian Forum. This latter version,<sup>100</sup> along with minor changes in punctuation and capitalization, appears in the anthology. Although Scott does not here treat the Canadian landscape as in the preceding poems, he does express his disgust with the poetry inspired by the landscape in the post-Confederation period. Attacking the out-dated poetics of the C.A.A., the poet becomes expressly aware of his cultural, in distinction to his political, context. Scott attacks the cloying nature portraits and the blind obedience to the traditions of the British Empire, with which the members of the C.A.A. concern themselves. Within the ten poems in New Provinces, Scott neither describes nor prescribes against the ills of contemporary society and consequently by default "The Canadian Authors Meet" marks him as a powerful critic of Canadian cultural values. The deletion of the original last stanza and its overly personal description of the disgruntled poet, strengthens the increasingly objective poetic perspective of

Scott, himself further informed by the L.S.R., and the C.C.F., during the preparation of New Provinces.

In "Teleological" and "vagrant", Scott details the critical, social element of his poetry, while maintaining the humorous tone of "The Canadian Authors Meet". In "Teleological", Scott traces an individual from conception to his emergence as a complacent, conventional capitalist. This individual is simply the consequence of a moment of sexual ardour, itself significant for its creativity, but ultimately useless without an impulse to improve society. Although in "Surfaces", Scott delights in the vibrant sexuality that balances the lugubrious rhythms of the northland, in "Teleological" he suggests that any such passion should advance the quality of life. The inherent danger of such passion lies in its ability to weaken the socially critical intelligence, "Who can prove the illusion/Against the glow of fusion?"<sup>101</sup>

Scott's concern with the larger social context of any one person or any one event also pervades "vagrant", which appeared in the December, 1928 issue of The Canadian Mercury. However, for New Provinces,<sup>102</sup> he revised the poem to emphasize not only the attempts of the vagrant to isolate himself from both human company, but also the

responsibility of living in a society in need of change. Scott does not assume a didactic stance from which to criticize the vagrant, but ridicules his vain attempts to escape societal bonds. The barb of Scott's humour is much more effective than outright condemnation.

In the last three of his poems in New Provinces, "Summer Camp", "Efficiency", and "Overture", Scott enhances his critical public voice with both an explicit and implicit, economic perspective. "Summer Camp" appeared as part of "An Anthology of Up-to-date Canadian Poetry", in the May, 1932, issue of The Canadian Forum. For New Provinces,<sup>103</sup> Scott made minor changes in punctuation, as well as more substantial changes in wording, in order to make more explicit the implicit economic critique of Canadian social welfare programmes. He moved the camp from vague "Canadian hills" to the "Laurentian hills", and changed the supporters of the camp from merely generous "charity subscribers" to more exploitative "wealthy citizens", a phrase that offers a stronger sense of class. Unlike "Teleological" and "vagrant" where Scott speaks in a light tone, in "Summer Camp" he speaks humourlessly and bitterly about the temporary well-being and ultimate deprivation of the poor children. But even though the poem

illustrates a glaring contradiction in the human welfare of the capitalist economy, Scott's anger seems largely moral. He emphasizes the humanitarian nature of his anger, by matching the changing circumstances of the children to the changing seasons, which in the preceding poems suggest a Christian and non-materialist vision of the world. Summer, for example, brings the children well-being and health, albeit temporary, while winter inevitably destroys the children's well-being. This seasonal definition of social health anticipates Scott's later use of spring and winter to represent the success and failure, respectively, of democracy during World War II, which at the time of New Provinces seemed increasingly likely.

After the overtly humanitarian and only implicitly economic socialist anger of "Summer Camp", in "Efficiency" drawn from "Social Notes", Scott speaks as an avowed socialist, refuting the "popular objection to socialism...that public ownership and state operation of industry will inevitably produce inefficiency and graft."<sup>104</sup> First published as part of "Social Notes" in the March, 1935, issue of The Canadian Forum, "Efficiency" appears unchanged in New Provinces, probably because it expresses Scott's developed socialist perspective. "Efficiency" catalogues the contradictions

between the economic potential of Canada, which could benefit its citizens, and the actual mismanagement of its resources. As a socialist committed through the L.S.R. and the C.C.F. to national planning Scott, ironically though no less bitterly, denounces the wasted human and natural resources of the country, "So don't let us start experimenting with socialism/Which everyone knows means inefficiency and waste."<sup>105</sup>

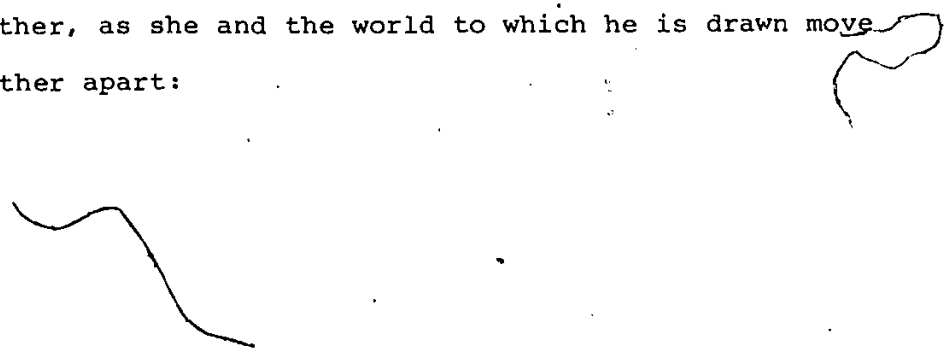
Despite Scott's intention not to politicize the poetry in New Provinces with "Summer Camp" and "Efficiency", respectively, he suggests his humane reasons for wishing to change Canadian society, as well as his socialist methods of doing so. However, in "Overture", his final poem in the anthology, Scott subordinates this joint artistic and social impulse to improve society to his earlier discovery that Canadian and world society were undergoing a profound change in which the artist had a role to play. In "Overture" Scott speaks neither as the outraged humanitarian of "Summer Camp", nor as the angry socialist of "Efficiency". Rather, he blends the strong, personal element of the first four poems in the anthology with the zealous public spirit of the later poems to produce an image of the prescient poet attuned to approaching social change. In "Overture", the best realized social poem of the period, Scott reviews the emergence of his socially conscious, critical intelligence which, unlike that of the

"vagrant", he cannot escape. Almost painfully attentive to the flawed social landscape before him, Scott wonders how such attention will affect his creative intelligence. Appropriately, he questions the muse figure at the piano who, in her artistic isolation, resembles the asocial "vagrant" and who might tempt Scott from his social commitment. In the four taut quatrains of "Overture" the poet attempts to integrate his abiding aesthetic sensitivity and morality, with the changing social landscape, which also moves according to indifferent rhythms, that can overwhelm the individual. Against this looming social backdrop, the isolated poet ominously contemplates an isolated muse, whose art hangs suspended in time:

In the dark room, under a cone of light,  
 You precisely play the Mozart sonata. The bright  
 Clear notes fly like sparks through the air  
 And trace a flickering pattern of music there.

In stanza two, Scott focusses with greater detail on the muse herself and on her performance, detecting in her playing an ominous metallic tone that detracts from the humanity of the artistic performance.

In stanza three, the poet ponders the meaning of the performance and the ability of this muse to inspire him further, as she and the world to which he is drawn move further apart:



But how shall I hear old music? This is an hour  
 Of new beginnings, concepts warring for power,  
 Decay of systems - the tissue of art is torn  
 With overtures of an era being born.

In stanza four, the poet takes his final distance  
 from this muse, her artistry vastly diminished by the  
 concerns of living men that he perceives through a window.

This pane of glass, or prism, simultaneously distorts, yet  
 sharpens the poet's vision and gives his thought a prescient  
 note. For in the worsening social conditions outside, Scott  
 perceives not only the tumult that was yet-to-come, but also  
 the need for the collectivity of artists to help resolve the  
 chaotic condition of man:

And this perfection which is less yourself  
 Than Mozart, seems a trinket on a shelf,  
 A pretty octave played before a window  
 Beyond whose curtain grows a world  
 crescendo. 106

Following the engagé poetic perspective of "Overture",  
 during the 1930s Scott was to devote ever-more attention to  
 the "world crescendo" that was so affecting mankind. All  
 the while affirming the potential of mankind's cooperation,  
 in both his poetry and prose Scott was to attack the  
 conditions that prevented such cooperation.

Despite the difficult negotiations that preceded the  
 publication of New Provinces and the demands of the  
 troubling social landscape, the contributors looked ahead to  
 another anthology, as Scott suggested to Smith shortly

afterwards.<sup>107</sup> The sometimes daunting arguments over the "Rejected Preface" did not diminish his respect for Smith who, in recognition of Scott's ability to shepherd the volume to press, asked Scott to obtain the cooperation of MacMillan in another, more contemporary volume.<sup>108</sup> In 1939, Smith again pressed for a successor volume,<sup>109</sup> although by that time, Leo Kennedy too, was proposing an anthology<sup>110</sup> that earned Smith's disdain.<sup>111</sup> For unstated reasons, Smith abandoned his plans, perhaps foreseeing conflict with Kennedy's planned collection and by February, 1941, Smith and Scott laid to rest the idea of a second anthology. "The only question [was] what to do with the remainders"<sup>112</sup> of the original volume.

As documented in the "Introduction" to the reprint of New Provinces, the volume did not fare well in sales or in its critical reception.<sup>113</sup> In November, 1938, Scott reported to Pratt that the anthology had sold "ninety-seven copies in near two years", even though E.K. Brown singled it out as one of the three major poetic accomplishments of 1936, along with The White Savannahs and Canadian Poetry Magazine. In partial consideration of Pratt's editorship of the latter, Scott had tempered the proposed preface to the anthology, yet Pratt did not ensure that Canadian Poetry Magazine review the anthology seriously. Indeed in the same letter of 1938, to Pratt, Scott notes,

I gather from your article in the U. of T quarterly that thousands of people in Canada write poetry and expect to have it published; couldn't you persuade them to do a little reading?<sup>114</sup>

But while his poetry languished, Scott threw himself into the political fray anticipated in "Overture", as a member of the L.S.R. and the C.C.F. He detailed his new social concerns in his many articles on socialist themes and the possibility of another world war published in The Canadian Forum, "the main conduit of L.S.R. views on current events"<sup>115</sup> by the late 1930s. Behind Scott's long fight for neutrality in the event of another Imperial war<sup>116</sup> lurked his uneasy memories of the unrest provoked by the Conscription Riots during World War I. These memories of World War I, and the fears of World War II, were confirmed in 1936, by the outbreak of the civil war in Spain which commanded the attention of many Canadians. Deeply moved, Scott observed the "slow and steady defeat of ...democratic forces"<sup>117</sup> by the fascist backed rebels of Franco, as well as by the indifference of the Western nations. In the autumn of 1936, while Scott was busy with his campaign for Canadian neutrality in the event of another war, the Republican government of Spain sent abroad three delegates, including a priest, to garner support. But before they arrived in Montreal, where Scott served "on the reception committee", the Catholic Church in Quebec

denounced the delegates as apostates. Scott once again witnessed social disorder reminiscent of the Conscription Riots of 1917, for on October 23, 1936, "organized mobs sent out from the classical colleges and the Catholic schools" disrupted the visit by the Spanish delegates, forcing the civic authorities to cancel the scheduled meeting. Scott labelled the disruption one of Montreal's "fascist disgraces" during which the "ecclesiastical authorities...the hidden government of Quebec emerged for a brief period, displacing constitutional government."<sup>118</sup> A later rally in support of the Spanish fascist rebels, sponsored by the Catholic Church,<sup>119</sup> disturbed Scott no less, "the recent outburst of activity has interrupted my work considerably."<sup>120</sup> Paradoxically, despite his near pacificism in the face of the threatening World War II, Scott advised the use of the full force of the law to prevent such civil disturbances and to preserve the social fabric.<sup>121</sup> Conditioned by the disturbances of 1917, and 1936, this attitude was to hold firm, and in October, 1970, he supported the Liberal government of the day in its imposition of the War Measures Act.

The years between the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and the outbreak of World War II disturbed Scott

profoundly. In 1937, the Canadian government passed the Foreign Enlistment Act, "a concession to 'the Quebec fascist crowd'",<sup>122</sup> which impeded Canadians who wished to fight in Spain. As well, the governments of Quebec and Ontario appeared to march in a regressive lockstep, with the Quebec government imposing the notorious "Padlock Act" in order to stifle what it defined as Communism, and with the Ontario Government embarking on a vigorous anti-labour campaign. Canada was beset by provincial fascists or corporatists, as well as by a federal government whose caution in foreign policy promised participation in yet another Imperial war, which would be virtually "the same thing" as the Great War and would solve nothing. Despite his internationalism, Scott became "pretty nearly. ~~an~~ isolationist".<sup>123</sup> Mindful of the threat to civil peace posed by the riots of 1917 and 1936, between the two linguistic and religious communities, he feared that further social strife would erupt should Canada go to war. In 1938, he foresaw but two choices for Canada, "to fight in Europe" and be an "imperialist"; or to "turn isolationist" and be "Pan-American". The interests of Canada should be those of "an American nation", not those of an Imperial ally waging war in Europe.

Despite nearly ten years of prescribing and lobbying for a planned national economy on the part of Scott and his colleagues, "the public mind was being prepared for large increases in defense" to mask the abiding "problems of the unemployed...of profiteering...of the maldistribution of wealth, [and] internal social questions". The irrational and uncaring force of capitalism would again triumph, just as the "colonial form of loyalty"<sup>124</sup> would again prevail, plunging Canada into another war as a "powder-monkey" for the British Empire.

By August, 1939, the certainty of war obliged Scott to review his political achievements during the 1930s. Although despairing over the "comparative absence of positive change" in Canada, he insisted that it was "not due to any lack of self-analysis",<sup>125</sup> thinking no doubt of the work of the L.S.R. and the C.C.F., the best efforts of which had not broken the back of capitalism. Ironically, the economic needs of World War II would lift Canada out of the Depression, rationalize its industry, and reduce unemployment. Scott wondered if he should silently accede to Canada's participation in this war, or if he should continue to speak out in opposition. Although his "utterances" and certainly his many anti-Imperial essays in The Canadian Forum "caused pain" to his pro-British family,

Scott remained adamant in his opposition. He was "convinced that the present British government has fought and will fight against the best interests of Canada in the foreign field". Opposing another automatic alliance with Great Britain, Scott sensed that another war would separate him "from the general position of the family", although in rejecting his family's political position he evoked their belief in purposeful, humane service. Scott described for his father Canon Scott the "firm belief that something much more desirable than yet exists can be made out of this country."<sup>126</sup>

In September, 1939, the threat of war became fact, leaving Scott as a member of the group who advocated neutrality, to insist that "a Canadian's first loyalty should be to his own homeland, Canada."<sup>127</sup> And as president of the L.S.R., he pressed Prime Minister King in a similar fashion:

Canadians should know what they are fighting for...but unless the governments fighting... have a clear idea of the order which they wish to see emerge after the war...it is unlikely that the war will lead to anything but destruction and chaos.<sup>128</sup>

But within the year, Scott realized that the war with Hitler threatened the very future of democracy. Canada itself

faced "a startling new possibility: war on our own shores", leading Scott to conclude that Canada's North American context, not national sovereignty, marked its best defense:

geography makes Canada an integral part of any North American defence system. Cooperation with Washington is going to be either voluntary... or else compulsory; in any event it is inevitable.

Determined to find some benefit in Canada's war effort, Scott strove to extend the social benefits of national planning:

war time controls and the wide acceptance of the principles of social and economic planning offer a great opportunity to create a social order more efficient than any fascist state because it is infused with the democratic spirit and purpose.<sup>129</sup>

Scott opposed a Canadian war effort that simply shored up the pre-war European status quo and that perpetuated British colonialism. He argued that England would "not arouse full support from North and South America until she [shows] that she also [stands] for a new order".<sup>130</sup>

In the autumn of 1940, Scott's socialist perspective on the war and the British Empire came under the fierce scrutiny of his eldest brother, William Scott, who accused him of being unpatriotic. The ensuing debate recalls the

brothers' disagreement in 1928, when F.R. Scott abandoned the practice of law for teaching. In 1928, he affirmed his personal right to free choice; in 1940, he affirmed the collective right of Canadians to free choice in their war effort. Faithful to the Imperial tie, William Scott perceived the North American Canada described by his younger brother as isolationist, pacific, and disloyal. Undoubtedly, William Scott objected to F.R. Scott's insistent socialist claim that "since the past society produced the present world, I consider it to be just as great an enemy as the Hitlers and Mussolinis it throws up from time to time." Scott insisted that "international conflict is only local conflict writ large."<sup>131</sup> The family debate continued through the autumn of 1940, when Scott was at Harvard University on a Guggenheim Fellowship. From there he defended the war policy of the C.C.F. to Canon Scott, affirming the need for "a vision of a new world order" and arguing that "a revived democratic faith is the only thing that will save democracy";<sup>132</sup> the C.C.F. embodied "a complete social philosophy profoundly Christian and democratic".<sup>133</sup>

These cool and measured phrases veil Scott's actual distress at the defeat of rationally-minded socialism by the barbarism of war. In a "cancelled draft" he details his true anguish over the failure of social democracy to take root in Canada, to improve the life of the working man, and to prevent another war: "it took falling bombs to knock these ideas into the heads of the British. I hope something less is needed for Canada. I will admit my attempts to preach them have not got very far".<sup>134</sup>

Scott began the 1930s confident that if properly educated and possessing a democratic political voice, social man could shape a new order out of the chaos of the Depression. Accordingly, Scott co-founded the educational L.S.R., became an early member of the C.C.F., and turned his poetry to the description of social problems and possible solutions. However, in creating his poetic self-portrait for the period, New Provinces, he deliberately minimized his social verse and looked back to his early work. Perhaps Scott subconsciously understood that regardless of his best public efforts the hoped-for rational order was not to arrive during that decade and, indeed, that collective man was about to slide into the greater horror of World War II. At a time of ever-increasing unrest - the source of his contemporary social verse - Scott perhaps understood that in

the uncharted years to come a poetic self-portrait imbued with organic and spiritual motifs of renewal and redemption drawn from his past, would be more appropriate than the contemporary poetic portrait urged upon him by A.J.M. Smith. Despite any such intuition, the failure of democratic socialism, the absence of rational solutions to world problems, and the outbreak of World War II, hit Scott himself with the force of the bombs on London. World War II was also to herald the end of the parliamentary career as leader of the C.C.F. of the inspirational J.S. Woodsworth, whose model had led Scott hopefully into the political activities of the Depression. In the face of World War II, Scott was forced to conclude that the new and rational order of which he had dreamed was still a distant vision for mankind. It was not to be until the mid-1940s that Scott found a greater poetic and political maturity that enabled him to articulate once again a co-operative vision for mankind.

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<sup>2</sup>Scott Papers, "C.C.F. General, 1935 - August, 1938", F.R. Scott to Harold Winch, November 3, 1936.

<sup>3</sup>Scott Papers, "L.S.R., 1933", F.R. Scott to Miss Mitchell, March 19, 1933.

<sup>4</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1978", F.R. Scott to Milton Acorn, July 7, 1978; "Poetry 1951-52", "C.B.C. Poetry Broadcast", n.d., p.3

<sup>5</sup>Michiel Horn, The League for Social Reconstruction: Intellectual Origins of the Democratic Left in Canada: 1930-1942 (University of Toronto Press, 1980), p. 129.

<sup>6</sup>F.R. Scott, Poems, The Canadian Forum, X, no. 119 (August, 1930), 394.

<sup>7</sup>F.R. Scott, "The Value of Imperial Sovereignty", The Canadian Forum, X, no. 119 (August, 1930), 398-399.

<sup>8</sup>F.R. Scott, "Below Quebec", The Canadian Forum, XI, no. 120 (September, 1930), 434.

<sup>9</sup>F.R. Scott, "Tourist Time", The Canadian Forum, XI, no. 121 (October, 1930), 12.

<sup>10</sup>F.R. Scott, The Canadian Forum, XI, no. 122 (November, 1930), 55.

<sup>11</sup>F.R. Scott, "New Poems for Old I. The Decline of Poesy", The Canadian Forum, XI, no. 128 (May, 1931), 296-298.

<sup>12</sup>F.R. Scott, "New Poems for Old II. The Revival of Poetry", The Canadian Forum, XI, No. 129 (June, 1931), 337-339.

<sup>13</sup>Michiel Horn, The League for Social Reconstruction, p. 21.

<sup>14</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 101.

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<sup>15</sup>F.R. Scott, "Trees in Ice", The Canadian Forum, XII, no 135 (December, 1931), 90.

<sup>16</sup>Scott Papers, "The Canadian Forum, 1931-35", F.R. Scott to Literary Editor, December 2, 1931.

<sup>17</sup>A.J.M. Smith, "The Lonely Land", New Provinces (1936) ed. Michael Gnarowski (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), p. 72.

<sup>18</sup>F.R. Scott, "Waking", The Canadian Forum, XII, no. 136 (January, 1932), 131.

<sup>19</sup>F.R. Scott, "Communists, Senators, and All That", The Canadian Forum, XII, no. 136 (January, 1936), 127-129.

<sup>20</sup>David Lewis and Frank Scott, Make This "Your" Canada (Toronto: Central Canada Publishing Company, 1943), p. 117.

<sup>21</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, July-December, 1977", F.R. Scott to Eileen Janzen, September 11, 1977.

<sup>22</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, pp. 101-102.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>24</sup>David Lewis and F.R. Scott, Make This "Your" Canada, p. 117.

<sup>25</sup>F.R. Scott, "An Anthology of Up-to-date Canadian Poetry", The Canadian Forum, XII, no. 140 (May, 1932). 290-291.

<sup>26</sup>F.R. Scott, "May Day", The Canadian Forum, XII, no. 141 (June, 1932), 325-326.

<sup>27</sup>Michiel Horn, The League for Social Reconstruction, p. 37.

<sup>28</sup>Scott Papers, "L.S.R., Correspondence, 1931", F.R. Scott to Frank Underhill, n.d.

<sup>29</sup>Scott Papers, "L.S.R., Correspondence, 1931", F.R. Scott to A.D. MacDonald, October 7, 1932.

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<sup>46</sup>Michiel Horn, The League for Social Reconstruction, p. 68.

<sup>47</sup>Scott Papers, "L.S.R., 1939", F.R. Scott to J.W. Perks March 13, 1942.

<sup>48</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, August, 1965", F.R. Scott to Mrs. Gordon Hawkins, November 18, 1965.

<sup>49</sup>Scott Papers, "L.S.R., 1934", F.R. SCott's Report as Secretary, November 22, 1933.

<sup>50</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces Paperback", F.R. Scott to A.J.M. Smith, February 19, 1975.

<sup>51</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", F.R. Scott to E.J. Pratt, January 11, 1934.

<sup>52</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1953-54", F.R. Scott to Desmond Pacey, April 11, 1953.

<sup>53</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", F.R. Scott to E.J. Pratt, January 11, 1934.

<sup>54</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1953-54", F.R. Scott to Desmond Pacey, April 11, 1953.

<sup>55</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", F.R. Scott to E.J. Pratt, January 2, 1934.

<sup>55</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", E.J. Pratt to F.R. Scott, January, 1934.

<sup>56</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", F.R. Scott to E.J. Pratt, January 11, 1934.

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", A.J.M. Smith to F.R. Scott, February 19, 1934.

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<sup>69</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", F.R. Scott to E.J. Pratt, October 10, 1934.

<sup>70</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", F.R. Scott to E.J. Pratt, November 1, 1934.

<sup>71</sup>Michael Gnarowski, Introduction to New Provinces: Poems of Several Authors (1936) ed. F.R. Scott and A.J.M. Smith (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. xvii.

<sup>72</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", F.R. Scott to E.J. Pratt, December 2, 1934.

<sup>73</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", F.R. Scott to E.J. Pratt, December 20, 1934.

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81 Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", F.R. Scott to Robert Finch, November 28, 1935.

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84 Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", Robert Finch to F.R. Scott, December 18, 1935.

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87 Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", F.R. Scott to E.J. Pratt, December 29, 1935.

88 F.R. Scott, "The Canadian Authors Meet", The Canadian Forum, XV, no. 179 (December, 1935), 388.

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<sup>90</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", A.J.M. Smith to F.R. Scott, February 6, 1936.

<sup>91</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", F.R. Scott to Robert Finch, February 24, 1936.

<sup>92</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", A.J.M. Smith to F.R. Scott, February 26, 1936.

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<sup>94</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, January, 1953", F.R. Scott to A.J.M. Smith, March 24, 1953.

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<sup>96</sup>F.R. Scott, "Trees in Ice", New Provinces (1936), p. 51.

<sup>97</sup>F.R. Scott, "March Field", New Provinces (1936), p. 52

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<sup>99</sup>F.R. Scott, "Calvary", New Provinces (1936), p. 54.

<sup>100</sup>F.R. Scott, "The Canadian Authors Meet", New Provinces (1936), p. 55.

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<sup>104</sup>F.R. Scott, "The Efficiency of Socialism", Queen's Quarterly, XLII (Summer, 1935), 215-225..

<sup>105</sup>F.R. Scott, "Efficiency", New Provinces (1936), p. 60.

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<sup>120</sup>Scott Papers, "C.C.F., General, 1935 - August, 1938", F.R. Scott to F.J. White, October, 1930, 1936.

<sup>121</sup>Scott Papers, "C.C.F., General, 1935 - August, 1938", F.R. Scott to J.S. Woodsworth.

<sup>122</sup>Michiel Horn, The League for Social Reconstruction, p. 36.

<sup>123</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 39.

<sup>124</sup>Scott Papers, "Articles, 1938", "Where Do We Go From Here? After Munich: II Looking Toward Unity", The Winnipeg Tribune, November 28, 1938, p. 11.

<sup>125</sup>Scott Papers, "Articles, 1939", Draft by F.R. Scott, August, 1939.

<sup>126</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, 1939", F.R. Scott to Father, August 21, 1939.

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CHAPTER IV

## THE WAR YEARS AND BEYOND, 1940-49

The outbreak of World War II deeply troubled Scott for it seemed to prove that man simply could not conduct himself in a peaceful and rational manner. Despite the campaign for neutrality during the 1930s, Canada had once again been drawn into a war as an ally of the British Empire, a war that promised to upset the delicate balance between French Canada and English Canada. As well, the equally fragile seed of democratic socialism, which Scott had helped to nurture through the 1930s, was being crushed in the battle between the Allied and Axis combatants. Not surprisingly, Scott lapsed into a profound questioning of himself and of mankind, fearing that all had lost their way. More specifically, in 1940-41, while at Harvard University on a Guggenheim Fellowship, Scott found himself a safe observer of the bombing of London by the Germans, an event that he feared might herald the virtual collapse of civilization. Despite his own earlier efforts to keep Canada neutral, Scott sensed that the then neutral

U.S.A. remained dangerously isolated from the human tragedy of the war, as illustrated in "Boston Tea Party: 1940" where "No rebel here shall dare to speak/And round this world, who hears a shot?"<sup>1</sup> Although he had opposed the war, and Canada's participation, once the tragedy began Scott felt that all must share in its resolution. At home in Canada, Scott's socialist and anti-Imperialist arguments continued to earn him strong criticism, particularly from his family. Only in an eventual reaffirmation of faith, was Scott able to convince himself anew that collective man could realize his rational potential in the post-war era.

Given Scott's swing from deep anxiety to a reawakened confidence in man, over the course of the war one finds a comparable vacillation between despair and hope in his periodical poetry of the day. Some of these poems were to be reworked for publication in Overture (1945). Convinced again that collective man could indeed prosper in the post-war era, Scott concluded that the artist must play an active role in the definition of this new era of civil beauty and social harmony, convincing Canadians that such change for the better was indeed possible. Throughout the 1940s, in the magazines, in philanthropic organizations, and in artists' organizations, Scott urged those with a creative

intelligence to cultivate a critical intelligence with which to survey Canadian society. Scott urged the artist to abandon limiting regional and artistic perspectives that stood in the way of a new and democratic, national culture. Not surprisingly, his strengthened interest in democratic socialism brought him into open conflict with the authorities of McGill University who, in the late 1940s dealt him a stinging professional setback. Following this decade of chastening political and professional experience, Scott's poetry lost its didactic bite as he focussed his eye on the landscape and its reassuring promise of renewal.

Scott began to describe his renewed confidence in man in the still-unpublished "The Democratic Manifesto", dated 1941. In fifteen short chapters, he outlines his faith in the ability of democratic ideals to inspire cooperative political action and by implication commits himself anew to the democratic socialist cause. In the Foreword to "The Democratic Manifesto" he links his personal act of renewal to those values which enable mankind to face its future:

This is not an argument, but an affirmation.  
It was written to the sound of destruction,  
For an age that is yet to come.

...

Sooner or later, men prefer to be free.

Scott details the reciprocal nature of the individual and his society, insisting that "the democracies must rediscover democracy or they will relearn the disaster of tyranny", for in neglecting the common man, "every tyranny is justified". Conversely, as suggested in "Vagrant", "everyone who is a passive recipient of the benefits of democracy is helping to undermine it." Moreover, the artist has a special duty to fight the notion that the "ugly and the sordid are normal" conditions for the common man. "Masses of men cannot be made to feel the potentialities of their own natures without the inspiration of the artists. All men respond to the creative interpretation of life which art alone can give." In the chapter "Democracy As World Society", Scott offers a "democratic vision [that] includes all mankind. It is a world idea, neither content nor able to confine itself to one state or group of states." Canada, the forum for his democratic socialism, could be "a principal agent of social advance...to a higher end--that of world democracy", a concept that Scott was to carry into his later resistance to separatism. In the final chapter "Democracy as Vision", Scott's expression of his vision of democracy verges on a prose poem. Referring to his own battles against the British Imperial policy, the reactionary Church hierarchies, and capitalism, Scott condemns the cultural and economic values that retard Canada's social progress and limit her

contribution to world peace. Democracy embodies "a vision of widespread greatness and grandeur; of an end to the petty policy, the bigoted creed, the narrow concept." Himself changed by the political storms of the war, and passing into middle age, Scott concludes that democracy "is a vision of man passing from adolescence to maturity",<sup>2</sup> a process which Overture records. The confident mood of "The Democratic Manifesto" sums up Scott's shift from despair to optimism, as the war ebbed and flowed around him. Flawed though they were, the democracies could endure, with the promise of better times. Scott's hope for a cooperative era began to balance his initial despair, as illustrated in poems that appeared in Poetry (Chicago) and Preview between 1941-44, and that were to form the nucleus of Overture. Cumulatively, these poems portray World War II as a wintry test of faith in democracy that yields to a spring of increasing democracy. As Scott notes in The Canadian Forum, the war must redefine the concept of nations that so troubled him, guaranteeing "the right of free expression and self-development for each portion of the human race."<sup>3</sup>

Inspired by the Edenic horizon of the post-war social landscape, Scott argued ardently for new, social commitment by the artist, although he remained faithful to

the less social pre-war influence of A.J.M. Smith, for whom he sought an academic post in Canada. However, Scott succeeded only in his recommendation of Smith for a Guggenheim Fellowship, tenable during 1941-42, noting that, "Smith's verse is not of a kind to appeal to the general public, but it will always have a fairly good reception among a small clientèle."<sup>4</sup> Under the pressure of the war and the social needs of the post-war era, Scott himself intended to speak to more than Smith's "small clientèle". However, he still found time for the more asocial, aesthetic concerns of Smith who in 1942, while working on a manuscript of "Contemporary Canadian Poetry",<sup>5</sup> was trying to arrange the publication of his manuscript for The Book of Canadian Poetry, already delayed by the war.<sup>6</sup> Scott approached several publishers on Smith's behalf, all to no avail, but in November, 1942, "the Chicago University Press...accepted [Smith's] Anthology"<sup>7</sup> for publication. Scott judged this outcome "a fine conclusion to the very fine piece of work",<sup>8</sup> which would "immediately displace all other Canadian anthologies", and "mark a new era in Canadian poetry".<sup>9</sup>

In early 1942, Scott entered "the next stage in [his] poetic experience", with "the arrival in Montreal of Patrick Anderson, an Englishman, who...began to meet some writers and decided to found a paper".<sup>10</sup> According to

Neil Fisher, author of a study on the Montreal little magazine First Statement, Preview "was dominated by Patrick Anderson; the bulk of the material was produced by five people - Anderson, P.K. Page, F.R. Scott, Neufville Shaw, and Bruce Ruddick."<sup>11</sup> Working toward a goal of six issues, the five co-editors produced the first issue in March, 1942, eventually publishing twenty-three issues that continued into 1945, with A.M. Klein taking the place of Ruddick along the way. The first nine issues of Preview, March to November, 1942, appeared on a monthly basis, while the remaining fourteen issues, January, 1943 to 1945, appeared irregularly. Scott published his poetry in Preview on a comparably irregular basis. In his case, as he sought to clarify his troubled thoughts on collective man, as well as on himself, there is justification for the claim by the editors that Prèview<sup>9</sup> is "not a magazine but rather an example of work in progress within the group".<sup>12</sup>

In the March, 1942, issue, the five editors unveiled their poetic platform which mirrors the political vision of "The Democratic Manifesto"; the platform was to be applauded by A.J.M. Smith.<sup>13</sup> Caught in a conflict "between democratic culture and the paralysing forces of dictatorship", the editors are determined to keep alive "creative and experimental writing". Looking ahead, they

anticipate "a possible fusion between the lyric and didactic elements in modern verse", and intend "to 'sing' with social content and criticism."<sup>14</sup>

The November, 1942, issue of Preview featured Scott's own "A Note on Canadian War Poetry" in which he elaborates on this poetic platform, detailing the need for greater domestic and international democracy. Scott calls for "poets sensitive to the growing forces of their age who will give symbolic expression to these forces and will become a potent instrument of social change." As he does in "The Canadian Authors Meet" from the late 1920s and in "New Poems for Old", from the early 1930s, Scott argues that "so much tradition, deprived of content, has become mere habit", producing "neat, accurate, unambiguous, correct and ordinary" poetry. In implicit reference to "The Canadian Authors Meet", he laments the "well-established tradition" of Canadian poetry whereby "at meetings of its devotees medals are given, the 'moderns' are scorned, and tea is poured." Insisting that the post-war "peace...can so easily be lost", Scott decries the complete inability of these traditional Canadian writers to comprehend "the need for democratic advance". Like the "Vagrant", the "colonial" poet turns away from the needs of the common man for "the

outside world of men seems foreign and hostile to him and he will cling to ancient traditions long after they have been abandoned in his metropolis." Doubtful that "a country can shape itself out of this state of mind", Scott declares his intention "to help in the enfranchisement"<sup>15</sup> of both the poet and the country, for only a mature, democratic nation can contribute seriously to world peace.

In a Preview article of 1943, Scott notes that the war embodies "a common revolution overtaking both us and our enemies, but which we intend shall have one result and our enemies intend shall have a totally different result."

Already an advocate of a supra-nationalism, the war proves to Scott the need for "integration between nations and... socialism within nations." The present nation states wage war only over the terms of their inevitable integration, "the union of new and larger imperialisms, a super fascism, or of free men in a democratically organized world".<sup>16</sup>

Mindful always of the political potential of artists in the shaping of the will of the common man, Scott gave his support to the Federation of Canadian Artists, "organized on a national scale in 1940", in order "to mobilize Canadian artists for the war effort".<sup>17</sup> The Federation embodied the proposition laid out in "The Democratic Manifesto",

"that artists have a special role to perform in interpreting...to the people." One deduces Scott's interest in the political potential of Canadian artists from a carefully preserved address by painter Fritz Brandtner. "Many artists", Brandtner challenges, "consider themselves outside [and] living in a cloistered world of their own, they believe art could function under any form of Government." Arguing like Scott that the war gives man a momentous choice "between darkness and light", Brandtner appeals to artists "to abandon...indifference" in favour of "the new social and spiritual resources, so that [their] art will help to shape and serve the new humanity."<sup>18</sup> On his copy of Brandtner's address, an enthused Scott has written, "Press these upon any parties that will accept them."<sup>19</sup> Where Brandtner chastizes the Canadian artist for fleeing to the margins of his society, as in "Vagrant", Scott and David Lewis in Make This "Your" Canada (1940) criticize the economic system for forcing the Canadian artist to the margins of society and to socially irrelevant work. Perhaps thinking of their mutual friend, A.M. Klein, Scott and Lewis lament the fact that

people who have received a training fitting them to make a creative contribution to society are condemned, in times of prosperity, to waste their talents on amassing profits for the few, and, in times of crisis, to idleness.<sup>20</sup>

Suggesting Scott's own crisis of faith, Scott and Lewis re-appraise their long-standing emphasis on national economic planning which

may achieve physical abundance...but it cannot alone achieve the democratic society. The planning of the economy must be directed toward the attainments of the objectives of dynamic, progressive society.<sup>21</sup>

Despite this emphasis on the need for value-laden goals, the socialist framework for the analysis of problems remains unchanged. "A few monopolists and their henchmen - not the eleven and one-half million Canadians"<sup>22</sup> own Canada and Scott himself writes in "The Barons", published in Preview, "for them the/Swag,/for us the/Bag."<sup>23</sup> Due to the continuing exploitation of the working man by the capitalists, as well as the threat posed by the organized, mechanistic war society, "democracy has become a form with little of soul or substance",<sup>24</sup> having lost its organic vitality.

Hoping to spur Canadian writers into social action, in early 1944, Scott and his Montreal colleagues laid plans for a Federation of Canadian Writers. They invited writers from across the country to join, although the aloof literary character of Preview, as well as conflicting war-time politics, posed organizational problems.<sup>25</sup> The organizers of the proposed Federation planned first for "a

national organ, combining Preview, First Statement, Contemporary Verse." In July 1944, a "preliminary meeting of available writers" drawn principally from the Preview and First Statement groups, took place in Scott's Montreal home, where they discussed "the possibility of setting up a 'Dominion wide writers' organization". A representative Provisional Committee composed of Patrick Anderson, Louis Dudek, A.M. Klein, Irving Layton, and Neufville Shaw, formulated their principal goals: government grants and radio time for Canadian writers, a national magazine, public recognition, and a commercial agency to aid writers. Suggesting the pervasive influence of Scott's emphasis on the need for mature national culture, the Committee concluded that the vitality of Canadian letters and the need "for democratic culture in the present and post-war world would justify an integration of the various little magazines, groups and regional tendencies."<sup>26</sup> During the autumn of 1944, the Committee decided to pursue plans for a conference and a magazine,<sup>27</sup> a project that appears to have been realized partially in Northern Review.

Through the late autumn of 1944, Scott invited writers to attend the proposed conference and once again embroiled himself in a testy correspondence with E.J. Pratt over poetic principles. Denying any wish "to make the

organization too formal, and certainly no intention of launching an attack [sic] on other organizations", notably the Canadian Authors Association, Scott insisted that "in poetry...there is value in an association that is based on certain similarities of taste and interest." Pratt's association with the proposed Federation of Canadian Writers would give the group "a chance of raising the money necessary to hold a single conference",<sup>28</sup> a modest remainder from the original more comprehensive proposals. In declining this invitation Pratt attacked the Preview group of poets. Surprised that Pratt found these poets "so poisonous" Scott returned to the critical stumbling block of New Provinces:

Why the hell shouldn't keen young writers  
 imagine everything else before them is no good?  
 If they didn't they wouldn't have any stuff in  
 them. Smith was exactly the same when I first  
 knew him.

Yet as has been shown, Scott himself held ambivalent feelings about such a critical position. Trying another approach with Pratt, Scott emphasized the forward-looking nature of the proposed Federation of Canadian writers. The poets of Preview, First Statement, and Contemporary Verse represented "the signs of a poetry revival", leaving Scott to conclude that the times were "ripe for a literary advance comparable to that which has taken place in the arts with

the Federation of Canadian Artists." Given Scott's hopes for social peace in the post-war era, the artists had to be mobilized.

Labouring under a national cultural imperative, Scott explained to Pratt the need to put away the little magazine coteries of past decades:

little groups meeting in clans are all very well...Preview has been just that. But we belong to a nation, and we easily fall into cliques. The chief purpose of the federation would be to broaden the outlook of all, and to break down, not accentuate, the sectional differences.<sup>29</sup>

Inevitably, this national imperative led Scott away from the small groups of artists that he had enjoyed and profited by for so long. Certainly, "the artist...takes dead materials and, by selection and organization, makes them into a live unity", but the "colours...words...metal & stone" of the contemporary artist were no longer satisfactory. Convinced that "by associating [human beings] together...they [would become] potent and contributive",<sup>30</sup> Scott urged artists to turn their attention to the social milieu. The socially conscious artist could "symbolize the relationship between art and the public...the human audience which can respond at once to the invitation of art." The "little coteries of artists" symbolized the "whole disorderly society", Scott's

traditional enemy. Social life "especially City Life", demanded a contrasting coordination and cooperation among all citizens in order to "produce both utility and beauty" on a national scale which, in turn, could be a model for international peace. Accordingly, Canada needed artists who could elaborate the need for international peace, to which Canada could contribute only if animated by "a live national feeling and a strong cultural tradition. A nation stultified and frustrated is not strong in war or peace."<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, in the general election of 1945, Canadians turned back the electoral advance of the C.C.F., an obvious source of frustration, although Scott conceded only that "the reactionary forces have won a temporary victory by scaring the people"; the Quebec members of the C.C.F. simply intended "to reorganize".<sup>32</sup> In the same year, Scott joined the non-partisan Canada Foundation,<sup>33</sup> the successor to The Canadian Committee which was "set up in November 1942 with the objective of promoting wider knowledge and better understanding of Canada." The Canadian Committee, and the successor Canada Foundation, planned for "a permanent institution...to help Canadians gain knowledge...of their own country and to promote better understanding of Canada"<sup>34</sup> in other countries. The Canada Foundation was to support various of Scott's literary

and social projects over the coming years.

More importantly, 1945 brought the publication of Scott's first book of poetry, Overture, which contains poems written over the previous two decades. The volume served two major purposes: a summation of twenty years of poetry and a contemporary response to the war. The gestation of Overture began around 1932, when at the apparent request of W.E. Collin who was preparing The White Savannahs, Scott first put together a group of his poems. Although Scott considered publishing that selection of poems, he got "caught up in the 1930s political questions ... Instead A.J.M. Smith and [he] worked to bring out New Provinces." Later, Scott "wanted to collect... work written up to 1939", but "found that a lot of poems were missing", although he eventually remembered that Collin had had a poetry manuscript "which might still be in his possession."<sup>36</sup> As a result, Scott was able to compile the still unpublished, retrospective "Auto-Anthology". Cumulatively, the outbreak of World War II, Ralph Gustafson's "first little Penguin anthology of Canadian verse", Poetry (Chicago)'s Canadian issue in 1944, and the work of the Preview poets, influenced Scott's final decision to "bring out a volume"<sup>37</sup> of his own poems. During 1944, working with "Auto-Anthology" and the periodical

poetry of the early war years, Scott produced the manuscript "Dedication", which The Ryerson Press agreed to publish,<sup>38</sup> although shortly thereafter Scott renamed the manuscript Overture.<sup>39</sup> Presumably, the tentative mood of "Overture", written around 1934, better caught Scott's pensive mood in 1944, than did the determined confidence of "Dedication". In both 1934, and in 1944, Scott sensed "the feelings and sounds of...incoming historic change",<sup>40</sup> first signalled by the Depression and then by World War II. Scott dedicated Overture to Marian Scott and A.J.M. Smith<sup>41</sup> who himself later commended the "uniformly high standard maintained in spite of the magnitude"<sup>42</sup> of Scott's work.

Overture contains 61 poems that range back to Scott's first days as a poet, which he represents with early satires and Laurentian poems. As noted, in these Laurentian poems, he treats the landscape descriptively, pairs the regenerative cycles of the church and nature, and presents the Laurentian landscape as the embodiment of an impediment to a peaceable love relationship. Scott balances this retrospective selection of poems with contemporary poems on the war, the events that led up to it, as well as related questionings of his vocations as teacher and poet. But in both the retrospective and the contemporary poems,

the prominence of the regenerative element of the landscape and the redemptive element of Christianity point the way to Scott's tempered confidence in social renewal. Overture offers a tense portrait of a creative and critical intelligence divided between public, socialist ideals, and private, isolating anxieties, which derive only in part from the war. In the opening poems of the volume Scott confronts the unnerving, destructive power of man at war, fighting off his own profound despair at the failure of peaceful rationality. As Scott never finally forsakes his hope for the cooperative potential of man, Overture demonstrates conflicting moods of hope and despair. This renewed hope for a cooperative collectivism also clashes with the last poems in Overture which themselves illustrate abiding, strongly personal anxieties. Scott writes of the disquietingly homogeneous society; he recounts the death of one of his parents, both of whom died during the 1940s; and he intimates the distress of a private passion that flowers only, albeit tenaciously, in the chill Laurentian landscape, but which lies outside the social landscape to which he ultimately commits himself. The loneliness of these final personal poems contrasts bleakly with, and tempers, Scott's refound political confidence in the introductory social poems of Overture.

Three poems frame Overture and illustrate Scott's wavering sense of poetic vocation during the 1940s, the title poem, "Overture"; the introductory poem and original title poem, "Dedication", and the final poem, "Villanelle for Our Time". Written around 1934, "Overture" defines Scott's uneasy hopes for socially-aware artists, just as he began to immerse himself in the democratic socialist challenge to the Depression. In 1945, "Overture" conveys a more contemporary hope that artists will take an active part in shaping of post-war world. The poem introduces both the principal figure of Overture, the socially aware and prescient poet looking toward the horizon of the social landscape, which in other poems becomes the horizon of the northland. As well, "Overture" defines the principal tension between the utility and the beauty of art; throughout the volume, Scott continues to grapple with the impact of his social duty, which intensifies his personal desire, but also subjugates it. Throughout Overture, one hears the musing that lies at the heart of "Overture":

But how shall I hear old music?  
Of new beginnings, concepts warring for power,  
Decay of systems - the tissue of art is torn  
With overtures of an era being born.

As he makes patent in "Overture", Scott wishes little part of an exclusively aesthetic muse from whom he

cannot fully distance himself. Drawing on the image of his mother, Amy Scott, at the piano, he writes:

And this perfection which is less yourself  
Than Mozart, seems a trinket on a shelf,  
A pretty octave played before a window  
Beyond whose curtain grows a world crescendo.

Emphasizing that "...the tissue of art is torn/With overtures of an era being born",<sup>43</sup> Scott suggests the regenerative, organic cycle of social life. The torn "tissue of art" strongly suggests the physical act of birth, as well as the rending of the temple veil at the moment of Christ's death, out of whose agony emerges new life. But despite this essentially positive cycle of death and rebirth, in "Overture" Scott remains in contention with the overly-aesthetic muse. Moreover, as the muse embodies woman, too, her attraction is inescapable and she threatens to tempt Scott away from the public world of duty.

"Overture" embodies Scott's basic confidence in the possibility of new beginnings for social man, a confidence that "Dedication" spells out in explicit definition of the political faith that carried him through the 1930s. Scott wrote "Dedication" while "coming back on the ship from the British Commonwealth Relations Conference ...in 1938". Having neglected his poetry for some time, he forced

himself to write and "Dedication" was "entirely forced out".<sup>44</sup> This remembered act of deliberate creation accounts, perhaps, for the determined cadence and theme of the poem, although as noted, Scott believed that economic determinism would win the day for the socialist cause. The three short stanzas of "Dedication" successively evoke the major religious, political, and geophysical influences in Scott's life, while as a whole the poem serves as an adult, socialist philosophy that replaces the religious creed of his upbringing. In stanza one, speaking in a collective voice; Scott uses the sharp terms of socialist class analysis to harden the beat of the poem, as well as to underscore his anger:

From those condemned to labour  
For profit of another  
We take our new endeavour.

Similarly, in stanza two, in addition to challenging the class structure, Scott takes on the more general differences of "sect" and "pattern", according to which men discriminate against one another. He imparts to these concepts of prejudice, the strength of "the strata" of the northland, although the strength may perhaps be read as a brittleness that can be broken. At any rate, the strength of "sect" and "pattern" is counter-balanced by the collective voice of the challenging "we".

For sect and class and pattern  
 Through whom the strata harden  
 We sharpen now the weapon.

As summed up in "Dedication", Scott pursues an unambiguous social peace that owes less to revolution than to the natural equilibrium of the northern landscape:

Till power is brought to pooling  
 And outcasts share in ruling  
 There will not be an ending  
 Nor any peace for spending.

While the "pooling", or sharing, of power suggests Scott's final goal of democratic socialism, the phrase also suggests the final, still peace that Scott characteristically seeks from the Laurentian landscape. However, in these final lines of "Dedication", Scott displays an overwhelming political confidence that did not survive the onslaught of World War II, itself suggesting that mankind had lost all chance for a peaceful and responsible social order.

While Overture opens with "Dedication", it closes with "Villanelle for Our Time", which illustrates the extent to which the war tempered the political idealism of "Dedication". Although "Villanelle for Our Time" illustrates the underlying continuity in Scott's political commitment after the period of despair, the poem declares formally the near-biblical introspection that preceded the renewed sense of duty:

From bitter searching of the heart,  
 Quickened with passion and with pain  
 We rise to play a greater part.

Speaking in a collective voice on behalf of man,  
 recommitting himself to a dutiful and cooperative, social  
 doctrine, Scott refers evocatively to his rectory home and  
 the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation to describe the Job-  
 like trial of the war:

This is the faith from which we start:  
 Men shall know commonwealth again  
 From bitter searching of the heart.

In marked contrast to the bold declaration of "Dedication",  
 in "Villanelle for Our Time" Scott quietly repeats his  
 commitment to humanity. In stanza four of the poem, he  
 expresses his abiding contempt for discrimination and  
 prejudice, but does so in much gentler phrases:

The lesser loyalties depart,  
 And neither race nor creed remain  
 For bitter searching of the heart.

The introspection suggested by the formal repetition of the  
 last line contrasts strongly with the almost-naive  
 confidence of "Dedication". In "Villanelle for Our Time",  
 Scott characteristically casts his poetic eye to the future,  
 the temporal horizon. Although he can no longer muster the  
 cheerful socialist confidence of "Dedication", he pledges  
 his teaching and poetic vocations as tokens of his renewed  
 commitment to man, in the post-war era:

Reshaping narrow law and art  
 Whose symbols are the millions slain,  
 From bitter searching of the heart  
 We rise to play a greater part.<sup>46</sup>

In these final lines of the poem, Scott subordinates the descriptive and prophetic functions of his vocation to a self-appraisal, the depth of which is measured in the poems that separate the brash "Dedication" from the sober "Villanelle for Our Time". Although the title poem "Overture" introduces the image of the prescient poet, whose political and artistic intuition leads him to the political zeal of "Dedication", "Villanelle for Our Time" suggests that he must remain aware of the fragility of these same political goals.

Framed by "Dedication" and "Villanelle for Our Time" respectively, the sixty-one poems of Overture divide into disproportionate halves. In the twenty-five poems that follow "Dedication", the poem of confident commitment, Scott addresses principally the war, wavering between the hope that man will prove his cooperative nature and the fear that the war actually marks the death of democratic man. To convey these vacillating hopes and fears, Scott resorts to metaphors drawn from the waxing and waning seasonal northern landscape, which mark the advance or the retreat of democracy. The greening of the landscape in spring embodies

an improvement in the democratic condition of man, while the desolated landscape represents the failure of democracy. This desolated landscape may be variously fall/winter, an Eliotic wasteland, a war-torn terrain, or even Calvary.

Scott provides the clearest organic image of democracy in Overture, in "Spain: 1937", in which he mourns the Spaniards killed as the consequence of democratically choosing a socialist political culture. Speaking in his characteristic, collective voice, Scott laments the carnage that contrasts starkly with his own peaceful upbringing, his stable vocation as a teacher, and his cooperative political ideals:

...the homes burning,  
The schools broken and ended, the vision thwarted  
The youths, their backs to the wall, awaiting the  
volley,  
The child staring at the huddled form.

As in the more general "Dedication", Scott denounces in detail the coalition of conservative, religious principles, fascism, and economic interests, which bring ruin to Spain:

...the black crusade,  
Pious brutality, mass massacre,  
Sudden cohesion of class, wealth, and creed,  
Behind the gilded cross, the swastika,  
Behind neutrality, the will to kill.

Despite the mass deaths Scott takes hope from the sacrificial death of an individual, the committed artist, "...Lorca, rising godlike from fascist guns", who serves as a male muse and effectively complements the aesthetic, female muse whom Scott rejects in "Overture". Lorca rises Christ-like and organically, affirming Scott's belief that ultimately no coalescence of anti-democratic and anti-life forces can stifle the democratic will of the people.

Although Scott mourns the needless mass deaths, the resurrection of the committed muse sustains him in the pain that he attempts to share with the Spanish people. Unable to relinquish his belief that democracy will triumph, Scott seeks in the individual Lorca, and in the Spanish collectivity, confirmation of an unquenchable vitality that derives from that of the seasonal northern landscape:

In that spring of ideas they were, the rare  
 spring  
 That breaks historic winters. Street and field  
 Stirring with hope and green with new endeavour,  
 The cracking husks copious with sprouting seed.  
 Here was destruction before flowering,  
 Here freedom was cut in its first tendrils.

Convinced of the equally tenacious, organic spirit of democracy, which he details in "The Democratic Manifesto", in "Spain: 1937" Scott vows, "This issue is not ended in defeat."<sup>47</sup>

In most of the thirty-four poems that precede "Villanelle for Our Time" - the final, chastened poem in Overture - Scott studies the Laurentian landscape or considers a personal relationship. Frequently, he sets his love poems in the Laurentian landscape, which embodies some impediment to the full union of the lovers. Although spring is conventionally the season of love, Scott generally sets his love poems in the autumn when both organic and emotional growth have ceased. L.A. MacKay notes in The Canadian Forum that when Scott's "guard is down, it is to the remote, the lonely, the austere in the physical world about him that his spirit turns."<sup>48</sup> The final, lonely poems in Overture, describing personal loss, suggest Scott's conscious sacrifice of companionship to the social duty that he defines in both "Dedication" and "Villanelle for Our Time", perhaps so that he may share in the tragic loss of the war.

"Dedication" is followed immediately by "Flux", the title of which alone suggests the shifting and wavering thoughts that beset Scott during the early years of the war. Lacking the crisp lines and the firm cadence which in "Dedication" coincide with a clear political vision, "Flux" is instead composed of long lines of shifting and erratic, geophysical images. Ironically, those images of the

usually-strong northland deny the poet the firm footing  
 necessary to clear thought and his frantic movement over the  
 shifting landscape mirrors his deep distress over the war:

Under the constant impact, the swift response.  
 We leap from crumbling footholds, gulfs below,  
 Or like the Arctic male seeking a pole  
 Traverse the sea-lanes when the floes touch.

The poleward journey represents a characteristic search for  
 equilibrium and peace. Throughout "Flux" man is in motion,  
 yet he undertakes a mechanistic movement that both confuses  
 the poet and provokes his scorn. At a time of human tragedy  
 and despite his declared interest in urban society, Scott  
 now disdains the ephemera of urban man:

Trained to the tram-line and the office walk  
 The weekend outing and the game of bridge  
 Little avails us now the trim routine.

Scott similarly scorns those persons who flee their social  
 duty, however grim it may be, and as in "Vagrant" he rails  
 at the war-time vagrants who have abandoned their critical  
 intelligence in favour of materialistic custom that evokes  
 the routine outlined in "The Canadian Authors Meet":

Refugees of the mind load their loved  
 bric-a-brac  
 Glass gew-gaws and their little tea-set faiths  
 On the piled ox-cart of tradition; make for the  
 rear  
 This self-imprisonment obstructs the roads  
 And only the mobile heart allows escape.

Rising out of this mass of "vagrants", Scott defends the individual, socially-conscious citizen, now threatened by a mechanistic collectivism that promotes a confusion comparable to the confusion initially provoked by shifting landscape:

Now from each corner of their settled ways  
 Egos draw to the mass, millions move.  
 Robot men swarm in their steel shells  
 Over the crust of seven continents.  
 There's naught for me and you, only for us.

In the course of "Flux", Scott describes his personal and political confusion in terms of a welter of political, geophysical, and biblical images. Against the threat of this confusion, Scott struggles to assert the sanctity of the responsible individual, a principle that underpins his political commitment. Despite the danger of pitting any individual against the social organization, Scott again calls for the Lorca-like figure of committed struggle, "Strip for this venture forth, my pretty man". In contrast to his hopes for rational social change, Scott finds only evidence of political and geophysical tumult which, in turn, promise the complete ruin of bombs, cold capitalism, an even colder nature, and finally the apocalypse:

Props and property are caving in.  
 The roar of masonry and smothered towns,  
 Ice-cap solitudes on money-marts  
 And four winds out of untested skies -  
 This is the thunder of the still small voice.

Conceding the destructive power of man, Scott falls back alone to his last redoubt, the interior seasonal Laurentian landscape, itself an uncertain sanctuary during the night-like wasteland of war:

And if the ultimate I, the inner mind,  
 The only shelter proof against attack,  
 Sustain these days, carry this banner out  
 To the clumsy dawn: A green seed  
 Lies on the ground, under a leafless tree.<sup>49</sup>

Lacking Canon Scott's sustaining Imperial and religious conviction, in a similar time of war Scott sustains himself with the organic promise of the northern landscape, which he renders as a chivalric pennant. Himself a "green seed" of social reconstruction, Scott merges with the Laurentian landscape to become a detail of the tenacious promise of the stricken landscape.

In contrast to the anxiety outlined in "Flux", in "Recovery" Scott describes the strengthening of his faith in man and, ultimately, in his dutiful muse. "Recovery" portrays the emergence of the female figure, faith, from the rubble of the war-torn landscape, itself an inverted Laurentian landscape characterized by metallic and pagan rather than organic and Christian features. The re-discovery of this figure of faith heralds new political confidence, a fresh sense of poetic vocation, and possibly, the vital presence of a woman. The florid opening lines, as

well as the war-time images, not only recall the anxiety embodied in "Flux", but also lead Scott to assert his hope that the promise of co-operation will triumph over the experience of war:

Now thought seeks shelter, lest the heart melt  
 In the iron rain, the brain bend  
 Under the bombs of news.  
 Fearfully, the mind's hands dig  
 In the debris of thought, for the lovely body of  
 faith.  
 Is she alive after this shock, does she yet  
 breathe?

O say that she lives, she is ours, imperishable,  
 Say that the crypt stood.

Speaking once more in his collective voice, Scott engages in a tirade of self reproach for having failed to keep the peace. In this ritualistic confession Scott compares a decadent, Babylon-like landscape, where man supposedly lived his self-indulgent days, to the characteristic calm of the Laurentian landscape, "We had played in the hanging gardens, lain in the sun/On a roof of glass." Yet given Scott's own dutiful fight against the war during the 1930s, his florid, declaration of guilt rings false and subverts his usually focussed vision of society. Although this admission of guilt betrays Scott's determination to share in the human tragedy of the war, his vague language also demonstrates the negative impact of his personal and political uncertainty on his usually precise poetry. But having declared his self-imposed burden of guilt, Scott celebrates his final rediscovery of the figure

of faith in phrases that mock the language of war, "O clutch her to you, bring her triumphant forth./Stand by her side now, scatter the panzer doubts." Although the survival of faith embodies the continuity of Scott's belief in collective man, as well as the survival of his muse, his joyful response to the female figure of faith also defines a strong need for companionship, a need elaborated in the final personal poems in Overture.

She is more dear after this swift assault,  
More one and alone, an ultimate.  
In her sure presence only there is strength.

In the company of faith and with his trial now an inspiration, Scott rises like Lorca in "Spain: 1937", from the anarchic landscape of the war, strips for physical and, by extension, the spiritual action that precedes political action, "More roads are opened than are closed by bombs/And truth stands naked under the flashing charge."<sup>50</sup> Putting aside the vagueness of language and style, neither of which details Scott's rediscovery of faith, "Recovery" suggests that Scott's new calm is born more of a biblical and Laurentian equilibrium than of a clear social vision. This personal vision suggests at best the painful peace found in the earlier "Trees In Ice", although "Recovery" lacks the clarity of "Trees In Ice":

this cruelty is a formal loveliness  
on a tree's torn limbs  
this glittering pain<sup>51</sup>

The war poems in Overture rarely rise to the rather unfocussed, visionary pitch of "Recovery". More frequently, the conflict between Scott's rational democratic socialism and the authoritarian, mechanistic organization of the war, engenders a more specific doubt over his roles as teacher, poet, and politician. Such self-doubt permeates "For R.A.S." and "Examiner" in both of which Scott objectifies a need to share in and to gain release from the war, a release characterized by an imaginative flight beyond the northern horizon. In "For R.A.S." Scott elegizes a young nephew who died in the North Atlantic during a submarine attack, in whose elegiac figure Scott recasts the themes of aesthetic delight, social duty, and free choice that have long haunted him. Beginning in the Laurentian landscape, Scott follows the fatal climb of his nephew, the writer manqué, from the landscape of youth to the adult theatre of war. The young R.A.S. has struggled to go to war in a manner that parallels Scott's own struggle to share in the human tragedy of the war, from which political ideals kept him. Much like the course followed by his uncle, F.R. Scott, the young R.A.S.

...left the country that he loved so well,  
 Shawbridge, Piedmont, and the Tremblant runs,  
 And climbed to the centre of the war by his own  
 trail.  
 Barred from the easy virtue of enlistment  
 He fought a private battle for his chance to share  
 the world's crisis.

Balancing the initial climb to visionary heights, the youth plunges to his death in the Atlantic, taking Scott into a drowned, introspective state where both the relativism and conviction of politics give way to a sharper fact:

On his way to scenes of death, he met death.  
 Death reached out with an eagerness that matched his own.  
 Death violent, Atlantic, submarine.  
 The challenge so absolute was met absolutely.

In contrast to "Recovery" where Scott reproachfully shoulders a collective guilt for the outbreak of the war, in "For R.A.S." he voices a collective challenge to the human waste of the war. Kept by his own age, not to mention his political principles, from conventional participation in the war, Scott instead bears poetic witness to the waste of the individual, his nephew, and by extension, collective man.

It was as though there were special need to attend  
 To this boy's daring, as though if his will survived  
 We should survive too easily, win with too sudden success  
 Win without understanding the fulness of our penalty.

He bore in his single hand the essence of our tragedy.

In part, the legacy of defiant sacrifice which Scott settles on his nephew derives from the unshakeable chivalric, Christian heritage so well-described by the soldier-cleric, the patriarchal Canon Scott. Such questing courage transcends the conventional notions of bravery, from

which Scott finds himself alienated, noting that "Results are not the measure of these deeds." In the final lines of "For R.A.S.", Scott suggests that the blood sacrifice embodied in his nephew's death washes away the sin of the irrational, mechanistic impulse that has triumphed over the creative intelligence. In justification of his own vocations, Scott celebrates the impulse for service that led his nephew, Lorca-like, to put mankind ahead of life itself:

I write of him because he wished to write  
 And because he had time only to pour  
 The table of his contents upon the historic  
 water.<sup>52</sup>

Just as the young R.A.S. embodies Scott's own struggle to share in the agony of the war, the inquisitorial figure of "Examiner" embodies the war-time societal bonds that Scott, as teacher, felt that he represented. In the students, he objectifies his contemporary doubts in his poetic and teaching vocation that nevertheless prompt him to write in protest against the entrapment of his individual creative intelligence by his commanding social imperative.

Driven by they know not what external pressure  
 They pour out their hated self-analysis  
 Through the nib of confession, onto the accusatory  
 page.

Despite his loyalty to his social imperative, Scott chafes visibly at the destructive organizing principle of the war, at stultifying contemporary education, and presumably at age itself. In "Examiner" Scott presents this tension between the private artistic impulse and the public, social impulse

as the struggle by the human organism to overcome inhibiting social structures. Lost in reverie during the invigilation of an exam, Scott contrasts free growth to the stunted growth permitted by the educational system, of which he as teacher is ironically an agent. Much as Canon Scott abandons the material world in search of the divine element in his own reveries, Scott discards his allegiance to the deadening educational system and follows the imaginative path of reverie into a green landscape of freedom:

In the tight silence  
 Standing by a green grass window  
 Watching the fertile earth graduate its suns  
 With more compassion - not commanding the shape  
 Of stem and stamen, bringing the trees to pass  
 By shift of sunlight and increase of rain,  
 For each seed the whole life, for the inner life  
 The environment receptive and contributory.

Sensing his own constraints, his own "tight silence", as well as that of the students, Scott laments "...the narrow frames of our text-book schools/In which we plant our so various seedlings." Behind such regret stands Scott's abiding distaste for the conventions of the past that deaden the present and future:

The screw-desk rows of lads and girls  
 Subdued in the shade of an adult -  
 Their acid subsoil -  
 Shape the new to the old in the ashen garden.

Evoking the despair of the Eliotic wasteland, an old influence, "the ashen garden" now suggests Scott's war-time dismay at the failure of the edenic vision of cooperation and regeneration that had sustained him during the 1930s.

Seemingly disillusioned by the teaching vocation that he took up in the late 1920s after bitter debate with his eldest brother over his right to free choice, a disillusioned Scott turns from the social landscape to an imaginative landscape, which in its breadth suggests the peace of the northland:

Shall we open the whole skylight of thought  
To these tiptoe minds, bring them our frontier  
worlds  
And the boundless uplands of art for their field of  
growth?

In mocking phrases Scott laments the contrastingly limited horizons of the social landscape, of which he is a principal agent, which shapes the unique, imaginative individual into an automaton, just as World War II shapes masses of men into machines of destruction:

...shall we pass them the chosen poems with the  
footnotes,  
Ring the bell on their thoughts, period of their  
play,  
Make laws for averages and plans for means,  
Print one history book for a whole province, and  
Let ninety thousand reach page 10 by Tuesday?

Scott recognizes that in asserting the value of the collectivity, he must nonetheless guard against uniformity and conformity, which limit the human organism:

As I gather the inadequate paper evidence, I  
hear  
Across the neat campus lawn  
The professional mowers drone, clipping the  
inch-high green.<sup>53</sup>

"Trans Canada" and "Saturday Sundae" elaborate the tension between Scott's desire for the imaginative landscape and his commitment to the social landscape. "Trans Canada" grew out of a trip to Saskatchewan on behalf of the C.C.F. There the expansive prairies and the contrasting fatigue of the political mission combined to propel him once again into the imaginative landscape. On the return flight from Regina, the "pile of bones" of the poem, Scott escapes the tiring political dimensions in imaginative pursuit of a peace embodied in the northern landscape, itself imbued with both natural and social history. As in "For R.A.S.", the poet's imaginative search for this peace takes him on a climb to heights from which he once again plunges into a watery setting, transforming himself through the technology of the plane and his own imagination:

Pulled from our ruts by the made-to-order gale  
 We sprang upward into a wider prairie  
 And dropped Regina below like a pile of bones.

Delivered from the exhausting public world outlined in "Examiner", the poet leaps skyward, swims into a state of peaceful reverie, and finally achieves the northern horizon after which he aspires in "Examiner". Although in such poems as "Flux" fleeting images of the landscape measure the

personal confusion of the poet, in "Trans Canada" such buffeting images now focus his mind:

Sky tumbled upon us in waterfalls,  
 But we were smarter than a Skeena salmon  
 And shot our silver body over the lip of air  
 To rest in a pool of space  
 On the top storey of our adventure.

In this new landscape, Scott finds elements of the familiar Laurentian equilibrium, as well as of the unrestricted freedom of choice, by which he measures the democratic condition of man, "A solar peace/And a six-way choice." Mindful of his earthly nature, Scott accepts on the one hand the angel-like vehicle of his imaginative flight, "The plane, our planet", but on the other hand suggests a certain doubt about the value of these "...sure wings/...the everlasting arms of science", a doubt that he was to develop in his later poems on the development of the Canadian north. For the moment though, at the end of the war, Scott contents himself with the thought that man has found a new landscape for endeavour as "Man, the lofty worm, tunnels through the latest clay./And bores his new career." In his essentially hopeful vision of the marriage of technology and imagination Scott perceives the promise of a cooperative world, for "This frontier, too, is ours", an edenic promise that makes "...every country below...an I land". Yet, the poet gives form to this visionary landscape in images drawn from the

omnipresent north, "I have sat by night beside a cold lake/And touched things smoother than moonlight on still water". In turn, these geophysical images lead Scott to a final metaphysical landscape of endless possibility, albeit a landscape without individual or collective personality, "And here is no shore, no intimacy,/Only the start of space, the road to suns."<sup>54</sup> In the years to come, this companionless metaphysical landscape was increasingly to capture Scott's attention.

In the far from pristine urban landscape Scott finds the obstacles that man must surmount in the post-war era. "Saturday Sundae", despite its lively rhythm and its rather comic images, illustrates a society increasingly dominated by a burgeoning materialism that not only titillates the sense, but also numbs the critical intelligence, the pillar of a democratic society. Setting himself in the midst of the urban landscape, the poet assumes a prosaic barstool in a drugstore, in contrast to the magisterial heights of other poems. Although the condescension of the very early "Saturday Night"<sup>55</sup> is gone, in "Saturday Sundae" the poet barely conceals his disdain for what titillates the masses:

The triple decker and the double-cone  
I side-swipe swiftly, suck the coke-straws dry.  
Ride toadstool seat beside the slab of morgue -  
Sweet corner drug-store, sweet pie in the sky.

With the "slab of morgue" counter-top suggesting the dead heart of this wealth, Scott casts comic doubt on the dominant material values represented by the merchandise of the drugstore. Juxtaposing images of luscious treats to images of the disaffected worker who provides them, and adding the deceptive promise of ease in the after-life of religious spirituals, the poet presents a disjointed landscape dominated by the mindless juke box. With the poems of doubt in his own vocation now behind him and re-armed with his mocking humour, Scott voices a familiar didactic concern with the lot of the working man:

Him of the front-flap apron, him I sing,  
 The counter-clockwise clerk in underalls.  
 Swing low, sweet chocolate, Oh swing, swing,  
 While cheek by juke the jitter chatter falls.

Persistently distressed as in "The Barons", by the "...world the vested interests annex" in the interest of profit, Scott suggests a concern that dates back to "Vagrant". He muses on his increasing worry that life has been reduced to the uniform pursuit of commodities that titillate the senses, but do little to enhance man's critical faculties, "Perhaps with candy is the new world born/And cellophane shall wrap the heretic."<sup>56</sup> This "heretic" in "Saturday Sundae" suggests Scott's own questioning of his family's conservative, religious, and Imperialist values in the course of defining

his own socialist values. Well into the mid-1940s he remained fearful that any vestigial, critical faculty would suffer at the hands of the increasingly homogeneous society outlined in the poem.

Overture concludes with personal poems and love poems that intensify this sense of personal anxiety in the midst of the changing world. In "Union" the poet resorts to images of the north to illustrate a lonely and inevitably withdrawing love:

Come to me  
 Not as a river willingly downward falls  
 To be lost in a wide ocean  
 But come to me  
 As flood-tide comes to shore-line  
 Filling empty bays  
 With a white stillness  
 Mating earth and sea.

Just as the lines themselves rise and fall on the soft sibilants and hard "t", the "flood-tide" of passion waxes and wanes, leaving the poet inevitably alone. Only in this transient, asocial Laurentian world does the poet achieve a personal state of "Union/Exact and complete/of still separate identities"<sup>57</sup> that might otherwise impinge on his public life. "Passerby" offers a similar image of the inevitable break in personal relationships that defines the solitary poet. Although the landscape is now urban, rather

than Laurentian as in "Union", the poem illustrates a consistent human solitude defined by "Receding footsteps, the endless departure,/They are the years passing, the drip of tears." In this continual farewell to companionship the poet discerns "a pure form of going into the distance,/But human, and so irrevocable", which possibly serves as his contemporary sacrifice to the war. In "Saturday Sundae" the poet worries that capitalism, or any other social principle imposing uniformity, may finally overpower the "heretical" or forward-looking critical intelligence. But in "Passerby" he disconsolately and rather floridly suggests that the inevitable loneliness of life overwhelms the sustaining power of art, which here lacks an organic vitality, "We worship Beauty, goddess of reaction,/Freezing our vision into her hardened moulds." In phrases that evoke the inevitably receding "flood-tide" of passion in "Union", Scott suggests an analagous urban rhythm that isolates man:

But always the footsteps recede, the stone  
 crumbles,  
 The tide flows out and does not return,  
 And from this terror we find no safety in flight  
 But only in faces turned to the flood of  
 arrival.<sup>58</sup>

Inured to a loneliness that haunts his private, Laurentian as well as the public, urban landscape to which he is committed, Scott concludes Overture with the dedicatory "Villanelle for our Time". As noted, this poem sums up the sacrifice of the personal and imaginative impulses to the

apparently lonely duty of the public world as "From bitter searching of the heart/We rise to play a greater part."

In late 1945, the poets of the little magazines Preview and First Statement themselves rose to a short-lived collaboration in the form of Northern Review, which may be seen as an attempt to provide the national magazine proposed earlier by the embryonic Federation of Canadian Writers. The co-editors of Northern Review managed to publish three issues during 1945-46 and 1946-47, their collaboration ended with the sixth issue. Just as Scott closed Overture with a sober political eye to the post-war era, the poets of Northern Review looked ahead, for the new journal represented "the amalgamation of two wartime literary magazines." With the war behind them, they sought to portray Canada "as a country where political and economic changes" mirror "real...literary and artistic change."<sup>59</sup> This equation derives in large part from Scott's poetic witness to social change. In the first issue of Northern Review Scott muses on "the kind of new order which shall arise on the ruins of the old...Who will do the planning, by what methods and to what ends?" Reaffirming his belief in the social significance of art, as outlined in "The Democratic Manifesto", Scott acknowledges the failures to

date of the democratic socialist movement. He advocates a new search "for a synthesis between the traditional socialist doctrine, with its over-emphasis on...economic man, and contemporary science particularly as it discloses new motives of human behaviour."<sup>60</sup> Too aware of the recent war, Scott expresses his fear of "truly dreadful possibilities ahead for"<sup>61</sup> mankind, which must be combatted with all material, intellectual, and spiritual resources, poetry included.

Although Northern Review echoed the social interests of Scott, the group also echoed the aesthetics of A.J.M. Smith, declaring that "all work printed will be examined...not in the light of a dubious nationalism or regionalism...but in respect to that general cosmopolitan culture to which we all adhere." The same issue of Northern Review features "Nationalism and Canadian Poetry" by Smith who again attacks the question of first principles in poetry. He argues that the critic must "show in what the real or supposed Canadianism of our poets consists, and... must evaluate the national and universal elements in...poetry." "In our most admirable poets, it is not the national qualities but the universal ones that lend them true distinction", by which Smith means "those

qualities...in common with the great poets of the English tradition". True to form, he insists that "a national poetry means nothing more than a minute and accurate delineation of the natural landscape".<sup>62</sup>

One may infer Scott's reaction to "Nationalism and Canadian Poetry" from an address he gave to the Federation of Canadian Artists in March, 1946, "A Function for Poetry", in which he emphasizes the primary social duty of the poet. Although he employs Smith's critical terms, Scott refrains from reducing Canadian poetry into the "cosmopolitan" and "native" schools. Arguing the duty of the poet to "make us aware of life and of our place in it by discovering and expressing the significant and important relationships between man and his age", Scott insists that the poet "distills out the universal from the mass of particulars that surround us." Life is an historic and organic "flow of events and experiences [that] constantly meet up and [pass] behind", leaving "infinite choices and possibilities". The poet must "pick out of the total flow those special elements which are significant." Having selected these elements, the artist "expresses them, and steadies us on our slippery feet." The poet should address "contemporary experience" although it may be [that he] will get no further than

conveying [his] own bewilderment", a process that Scott calls "significant interpretation". Curiously, Scott ties the poet's potential bewilderment to the cosmopolitanism advocated by Smith. According to Scott

the impinging of the international upon the national movements of ideas, the intermingling of cultures and philosophies, produces what Smith calls the cosmopolitanism of our time...An anarchic world produces anarchic poetry. But the function of significant interpretation is being carried on.

Neither "bewilderment" nor "anarchic" accurately defines Scott's own poetic muse which he characterizes in an annotation to his address. According to the notation, poetry means "imposing order on anarchy./Giving names to mystery." Although using Smith's "native" and "cosmopolitan" terms to express his own sense of changing and confusing social conditions, as witnessed by his own troubled war-time poems, Scott portrays Smith's terms as complementary impulses. The poet is duty-bound to "relate [Canadians] to the total world; also to our local environment",<sup>63</sup> be it geophysical or social, be it historical or contemporary.

Despite an initial friendliness and sense of political purpose, Northern Review did not meld the original groups of poets, who "were united in [their] love of poetry but in little else"<sup>64</sup> and early in 1946, the future of

the magazine began to darken. In July, 1946, Scott described "the last meeting of the...editors [as] a bit gloomy. The problem is easy to state: "money". Nevertheless, Scott felt that the project "simply must be done; we cannot stop now."<sup>65</sup> But despite his determination, Scott, the "responsible" elder poet, was beginning to hear portentous doubts about the ability of John Sutherland to run the magazine.<sup>66</sup> Finally, Sutherland's stinging objections to giving the Governor-General's Award for poetry to Robert Finch, split the already fragile alliance of poets. The poets from Preview found Sutherland's criticism "rather severe"<sup>67</sup> and resigned from Northern Review, although Scott later insisted that the issue was more properly a question of "whether [they] were an editorial board or just a group of advisors to"<sup>68</sup> John Sutherland.

But despite the break-up of the coterie, Scott diligently supported Northern Review, publishing the eloquent "Laurentian Shield",<sup>69</sup> an historically-minded portrait of the potential relationship between conscious man and the northland, in the December/January issue of 1946-47. Perhaps more helpfully, Scott also sought financial aid for Northern Review, with the result that in March, 1947, The Canada Foundation offered to channel donations to the

magazine, noting its wry conviction that "in its initial stage Northern Review is a non-profit venture!"<sup>70</sup> Ignoring the break-up, Scott assured The Canada Foundation that the magazine endeavoured "to publish nothing but creative literature...of a high order." Ever mindful of the need to relate poets and poetry to contemporary social issues, Scott felt that the association with Northern Review would increase the position, and influence, of the educationally-minded Foundation within the Canadian cultural community.<sup>71</sup> In 1949, although thinking that Northern Review would have "folded up",<sup>72</sup> Scott again recommended the magazine to the Foundation and in 1950, himself contributed to the magazine through The Canada Foundation. The Foundation was itself short of funds for potential donors were withholding funds pending the report of the Massey Commission,<sup>73</sup> which eventually led to the establishment of The Canada Council.

In contrast to the refound political purpose that marked the middle part of the decade, the late 1940s were vexing years for Scott. In 1947, he was attacked by the administration of McGill University over his membership in the C.C.F., which he served as National Chairman.<sup>74</sup> At the same time Scott was receiving serious invitations to leave Quebec in order to pursue an active political career with the C.C.F. in promising constituencies, but "dearly as

[he loved] the political battle", he would not abandon the province of his birth or his "post at McGill [for] full-time active politics." As well, the greater the success that the C.C.F. enjoyed in English Canada, the more that he sensed that his "mere presence in Quebec, and all the work...outside and inside the party, is of some value in strengthening the feeble links our organization has with this province."<sup>75</sup> In 1948, the administration of McGill University ignored Scott's seniority as a professor and refused to appoint him Dean of the Law Faculty, making his decision to stay in Quebec rather poignant. Thwarted in his academic career, Scott announced with no small bitterness, "since the road to one kind of academic advancement is blocked...I shall concentrate my energies on following other roads."<sup>76</sup>

While the horror of World War II and the tiring post-war period of recovery did not exhaust Scott's political confidence, these trials put an effective end to the didactic, overtly economic poetics of the 1930s. Throughout the poems of the 1940s one finds Scott turning increasingly to the northern landscape, initially as a source for images to share up his shattered faith in mankind, then as the private imaginative retreat for his bruised persona, and finally as the new social horizon that

would measure the cooperative potential of mankind.

Whatever the road Scott was to follow during the succeeding decade of the 1950s, this road was inevitably to lead him deeper into the geophysical and cultural heartland of Canada.

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<sup>1</sup>F.R. Scott, "Boston Tea Party: 1940", in his Overture (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1945), p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>F.R. Scott, "The Democratic Manifesto", 1941

<sup>3</sup>F.R. Scott, "Canadian Nationalism and the War", The Canadian Forum, XXI, no. 254 (March, 1942).

<sup>4</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal; 1941" F.R. Scott to H.A. Moe, September 26, 1941.

<sup>5</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", A.J.M. Smith to F.R. Scott, January 13, 1942.

<sup>6</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", A.J.M. Smith to F.R. Scott, January 22, 1942.

<sup>7</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", F.R. Scott to A.J.M. Smith, November 30, 1942.

<sup>8</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", F.R. Scott to Father, November 30, 1942.

<sup>9</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, 1943", F.R. Scott to Dr. R.C. Wallace, February, 1943.

<sup>10</sup>F.R. Scott, Interview by Anne Scotton for the Douglas-Coldwell Foundation, 1977-78, p. 94.

<sup>11</sup>Neil Fisher, First Statement: 1942-1945 An Assessment and An Index (Ottawa: The Golden Dog Press, 1974), pp. 8-9.

<sup>12</sup>Note, Preview, no. 6 (August, 1942), 1.

<sup>13</sup>Scott Papers, "New Provinces I", A.J.M. Smith to F.R. Scott, March 30, 1942.

<sup>14</sup>Statement, Preview, no. 1 (March, 1942), 1.

<sup>15</sup>F.R. Scott, "A Note on Canadian War Poetry", Preview, no. 9 (November, 1942), 3-5.

<sup>16</sup>F.R. Scott, "War and the Universities", Preview, no. 11 (February, 1943), 3-4.

<sup>17</sup>Scott Papers, "Federation of Canadian Artists", F.R. Scott to John Grierson, February 4, 1943.

<sup>18</sup>Scott Papers, "Federation of Canadian Artists", Address by Fritz Brandtner, 1943.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., annotation.

<sup>20</sup>David Lewis and F.R. Scott, Make This "Your" Canada (Toronto: Central Canada Publishing Company, 1943), p. 93.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>23</sup>F.R. Scott, "The Barons", Preview, no. 13 (May, 1943), 6-8.

<sup>24</sup>David Lewis and F.R. Scott, Make This "Your" Canada, pp. 89-90.

<sup>25</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1940-44", Dorothy Livesay to F.R. Scott, May 23, 1944; Wreford Watson to F.R. Scott, May 25, 1944; Dorothy Livesay to F.R. Scott, May 27, 1944.

<sup>26</sup>Scott Papers, "Federation of Canadian Writers", Proposal for the Federation, July 29, 1944.

<sup>27</sup>Scott Papers, "Federation of Canadian Writers", F.R. Scott to Professor A. Bailey, October 27, 1944.

<sup>28</sup>Scott Papers, "Federation of Canadian Writers", F.R. Scott to E.J. Pratt, November 20, 1944.

<sup>29</sup>Scott Papers, "Federation of Canadian Writers", F.R. Scott to E.J. Pratt, December 5, 1944.

<sup>30</sup>Scott Papers, "Federation of Canadian Writers", Notes for an address by F.R. Scott, n.d.

<sup>31</sup>Scott Paper, "Federation of Canadian Artists, 1944", Notes for an address by F.R. Scott, n.d.

<sup>32</sup>Scott Papers, "C.C.F., General, 1945", F.R. Scott to C.C. Ames, June 13, 1945.

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<sup>33</sup>Scott Papers, "The Canada Foundation", W.B. Herbert to F.R. Scott, July 27, 1945.

<sup>34</sup>Scott Papers, "The Canada Foundation", Review of Activities of The Canadian Committee, December 31, 1944.

<sup>35</sup>Scott Papers, "F.R. Scott talking about poems", August 27-28, 19623, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1974", F.R. Scott to G. Warkentin, March 11, 1974.

<sup>37</sup>Scott Papers, "F.R. Scott talking about poems", p. 1.

<sup>38</sup>Scott Papers, "Overture", Lorne Pierce to F.R. Scott, December 1, 1944.

<sup>39</sup>Scott Papers, "Overture", F.R. Scott to Lorne Pierce, December 4, 1944.

<sup>40</sup>Scott Papers, "F.R. Scott talking about poems", p. 4.

<sup>41</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, 1945", F.R. Scott to A.J.M. Smith, June 15, 1945.

<sup>42</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1945", A.J.M. Smith to F.R. Scott, June 23, 1945.

<sup>43</sup>F.R. Scott, "Overture", Overture, p.<sup>2</sup> 12.

<sup>44</sup>Scott Papers, "F.R. Scott talking about poems", p.1.

<sup>45</sup>F.R. Scott, "Dedication", Overture, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup>F.R. Scott, "Villanelle for Our Time", Overture, p. 79.

<sup>47</sup>F.R. Scott, "Spain: 1937", Overture, p. 11.

<sup>48</sup>L.A. MacKay, Review in The Canadian Forum, XXV, no. 294 (July, 1945), 97.

<sup>49</sup>F.R. Scott, "Flux", Overture, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup>F.R. Scott, "Recovery", Overture, p. 7.

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- <sup>51</sup>F.R. Scott, "Trees in Ice", Overture, p. 47.
- <sup>52</sup>F.R. Scott, "For R.A.S.", Overture, p. 10.
- <sup>53</sup>F.R. Scott, "Examiner", Overture, p. 15.
- <sup>54</sup>F.R. Scott, "Trans Canada", Overture, p. 17.
- <sup>55</sup>Sax, "Saturday Night", The McGill Fortnightly Review, I, no. 7 (February 20, 1926), 58.
- <sup>56</sup>F.R. Scott, "Saturday Sundae", Overture, p. 56.
- <sup>57</sup>F.R. Scott, "Union", Overture, p. 71.
- <sup>58</sup>F.R. Scott, "Passerby", Overture, p. 75.
- <sup>59</sup>Editorial in Northern Review, I, no. 1 (December/January 1945-46), 2.
- <sup>60</sup>F.R. Scott, Review in Northern Review, I, no. 1 (December/January, 1945-1946), 46-48.
- <sup>61</sup>Scott Papers, "C.C.F., General, 1946", F.R. Scott to M.J. Coldwell, February 17, 1946.
- <sup>62</sup>A.J.M. Smith, "Nationalism & Canadian Poetry", Northern Review, I, no. 1 (December/January, 1945-1946), 33.-42.
- <sup>63</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1946", "A Function for Poetry", F.R. Scott to the Federation of Canadian Artists, March 15, 1946, pp. 1-3.
- <sup>64</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, July, 1972", F.R. Scott to Mrs. Keitner, August 30, 1972.
- <sup>65</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1946", F.R. Scott to Patrick Anderson, July 8, 1946.
- <sup>66</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1946", Earle Birney to F.R. Scott, October 6, 1946; Louis Dudek to F.R. Scott, April 19, 1947; Earle Birney to F.R. Scott, July 21, 1947.
- <sup>67</sup>F.R. Scott, Scotton Interview, p. 88
- <sup>68</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, January, 1971", F.R. Scott to Miriam Waddington, September 30, 1971.

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<sup>69</sup>F.R. Scott, "Laurentian Shield", Northern Review, I, no. 4 (December/January, 1946-47), 12.

<sup>70</sup>Scott Papers, "The Canada Foundation", W.B. Herbert to F.R. Scott, March 12, 1947.

<sup>71</sup>Scott Papers, "The Canada Foundation", F.R. Scott to W.B. Herbert, March 17, 1947.

<sup>72</sup>Scott Papers, "The Canada Foundation", F.R. Scott to W.B. Herbert, October 11, 1949.

<sup>73</sup>Scott Papers, "The Canada Foundation", W.B. Herbert to F.R. Scott, November 10, 1950.

<sup>74</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, 1947", Memorandum re: National Chairman of the C.C.F. to Dr. Cyril James, February 14, 1947.

<sup>75</sup>Scott Papers, "C.C.F. General, 1948", F.R. Scott to David Lewis, July 25, 1948.

<sup>76</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, 1949", F.R. Scott to Honourable Mr. Justice Gerald Fauteux, June 3, 1949.

CHAPTER V

## THE MIDDLE YEARS, 1950-62

During the 1950s one such "other" road drew Scott deeper into the culture and politics of French Canada. Already committed to the issue of civil liberties in Quebec, Scott also founded the socialist study group "Recherches Sociales". As well, he began to translate the poets of French Canada. Another road drew Scott to Asia and to the United Nations headquarters in New York City as a member of an aid program, an experience that intensified his already strong sense of need for cooperation amongst nations, amongst working peoples, and of course between the two Canadas. Moved by his vision of political cooperation and having ended his term as National Chairman of the C.C.F., during the 1950s Scott devoted much time to a restructuring of the democratic socialist movement in Canada. This restructuring saw the New Democratic Party emerge from the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, an event that marked the end of Scott's political career and coincided with his first volume of translations. Perhaps in response to his

retirement from active socialist politics, McGill University finally appointed Scott Dean of the Law Faculty, assuaging the professional insult that had once made "other" roads look so attractive.

Between 1950 and 1962, in response to these various pressures and interests, Scott produced four volumes of poetry that illustrate his hope for a social, as well as a metaphysical, personal balance. These volumes of poems further define Scott's dutiful public and collective muse, who challenges outdated national, ahistorical, and romantic visions of the world, but also consigns the private and personal elements of Scott's life to a chill Laurentian landscape. Events and Signals (1954) features poems written after 1945, as well as poems influenced by Asia and French Canada, in which Scott reflects upon the place of the single person and single event in the universal organic cycle. In the attending satires Scott attacks the persons and the social circumstances that impede mankind's collective expression of responsible free choice that might lead to a cooperative state of life. In the later Eye of the Needle (1957), a satiric selected poems, Scott restricts himself to lampooning the short-sighted and mutually hurtful actions of mankind. Approximately two-thirds of these poems appear in earlier published form and only one-third are new.

Similarly, The Blasted Pine (1957) offers socially critical satirical poems by a variety of Canadian writers. In part, The Blasted Pine fulfills the earlier hopes of Scott and A.J.M. Smith for an anthology of social verse to succeed New Provinces (1936). However, in contrast to the largely retrospective The Eye of the Needle and The Blasted Pine, St. Denys Garneau - Anne Hébert (1962) springs from Scott's contemporary interest in French Canada, "the puzzle, threat, and challenge"<sup>1</sup> to meaningful social change in Canada which was to haunt him through the rest of his life.

In 1950-51, Scott helped to organize "Recherches Sociales", a study group in the tradition of the League for Social Reconstruction. Unlike the L.S.R. which produced studies on national planning, "Recherches Sociales", addressed itself to "social studies relating to French-English relations and to the impact of the contemporary social ideas upon them."<sup>2</sup> Despite this focus on French Canada, and after a debate over the wisdom of accepting research funds from sources in the U.S.A.,<sup>3</sup> "Recherches Sociales" found a benefactor in an Albertan, Mrs. Bobbie Dyde, the widow of Alan Plaunt, Scott's ally in the pre-war campaign for neutrality.<sup>4</sup> Through the early 1950s Mrs. Dyde donated money to The Canada Foundation and

then to "Recherches Sociales" through which Scott met many of the intelligentsia of French Canada. A professor from Laval University, J.C. Falardeau, worked with the group<sup>5</sup> and introduced Scott to Anne Hébert at a time when he wished to publish translations of her poems,<sup>6</sup> two of which appeared in the June/July, 1952, issue of Northern Review.<sup>7</sup> Scott cites his discovery of Anne Hébert as a seminal event that confirmed his interest in the poets of French Canada.<sup>8</sup>

Drawing together a complement of French Canadian thinkers, "Recherches Sociales" set to work on a book about the Asbestos Strike of the late 1940s, which had helped to radicalize the labour movement in Quebec; at one point, Anne Hébert agreed to type the manuscript of the text. However, the book did not proceed quickly, as Scott left Canada during 1952, to accept "a job with the U.N. as head of a Technical Assistance mission to Burma",<sup>9</sup> a trip that infused his poetry with a variety of Asian subjects, but which he was forced to cut short upon contracting an amoebic illness. Convalescing in New York City, Scott continued his work at the U.N. headquarters where he saw the whole aid programme "from the world point of view",<sup>10</sup> a favoured political and philosophical perspective. Due in large part to Scott's absence, "Recherches Sociales"'s book on the

Asbestos Strike did not progress, prompting doubt on the part of Mrs. Dyde and The Canada Foundation as to the value of "Recherches Sociales",<sup>11</sup> doubt which Scott was able to allay only until 1954, when Mrs. Dyde withdrew her support.<sup>12</sup> The book on the strike was not to appear for another two years and then under the editorship of Pierre Trudeau.

During 1953, Scott agreed to lecture at the University of Toronto Law School,<sup>13</sup> which gave him the opportunity to submit to The Ryerson Press his new manuscript, "Mid-Season",<sup>14</sup> later to appear as Events and Signals. This volume contains poems written after 1945, poems inspired by the trip to Asia, as well as translations of poems by Hébert and Garneau, which were meant to serve as an aesthetic invitation to English Canada to acquaint itself with the culture of French Canada.<sup>15</sup> Pleased by the inclusion of her poems, Anne Hébert asked of Scott only that "le poème français accompagne le texte anglais",<sup>16</sup> the format that Scott was to use in the later St Denys Garneau - Anne Hébert. Events and Signals is a personal, yet reflective, volume in which, as one reviewer put it, the "universality of the particular is achieved through the transformation of the specific into a symbol that each reader must apply to his own experience."<sup>17</sup> The alien

seasonal landscapes of Asia call to mind Scott's abiding interest in the organic relationship between man and the Canadian landscape, while the translations of Garneau and Hébert provide a poetic statement on the anxious maturation of French Canada. James Reaney perceived the "main cohesive subject" of Events and Signals to be "the big bilingual city in which it was written - Montreal. The culture contrasts in such a city must produce a constant intellectual tic, an awareness of things below surfaces".<sup>18</sup> In pursuit of an equilibrium that derives from the balanced Laurentian landscape, many of the poetic figures in Events and Signals do indeed move, often in death, beneath the surface of the landscape or into water. In such poems as "The Spring Virgin Cries At Her Cult", "For Bryan Priestman", and "For Cathy Fiscus", the active figure is a woman who represents the ceaseless cycle of life and death as she moves earthward. In such other poems as "For Pegi Nicol" and "Eden" this muse figure represents the power of the critical intelligence to reconstruct the world in approximation of an edenic garden setting. With regard to the personal poems, the muse becomes a lover only in an isolated garden in the northern landscape where the pair of lovers become temporary soul-mates. Events and Signals illustrates the primacy of the poet's public social imperative, which leaves the personal element to flower

only in an isolated, northern garden.

The two landscapes of "A Grain of Rice" and "Eden" frame Events and Signals, offering complementary portraits of man's unconscious and conscious relations with his social landscapes, and illustrating the predominant social concern of the 1950s. Written in Asia where Scott was advancing the cause of cooperation, "A Grain of Rice" "brings together" memories of "the majestic rhythms of nature which [Scott] saw as a young man in the Laurentian country". The Asian monsoons reminded him of "the movements of the glaciers and the streams and the erosion of the hills", and in both Canada and Asia "these great natural movements" reveal even social man to be ~~only~~ a "tiny...disturbance"<sup>19</sup> in the ceaseless natural cycle.

As revealed in the gently balanced phrases of "A Grain of Rice", the langorous and capricious power of nature threatens to overwhelm man in his Asian landscape, as described in the gently rhythmic first line, "Such majestic rhythms, such tiny disturbances." In succeeding lines, with comparably balanced phrasing, Scott details man's fragile place in the natural cycle where life flowers "Only because of the certainty of the season/The turn of the wind." As

Scott gently reminds the apparently self-obsessed social man, mankind exists within vaster geophysical cycles that are ultimately embodied by the northern landscape:

The frame of our human house rests on the motion  
Of earth and of moon, the rise of continents,  
Invasion of deserts, erosion of hills,  
The clapping of ice.

Man is the discordant element in this cycle and his appearance in the poem breaks the gentle rhythm that supports Scott's description of a harmonious natural cycle. Specifically, in stanza three, line one is clipped and line two is over-extended, although the brevity of line three matches the final, short lines of the other stanzas.

Evoking the fratricidal struggle between Cain and Abel, and suggesting his own distress over two world wars fought for national pride, Scott characterizes man's alienation from a state of natural and political harmony in terms of a blind dedication to national goals:

Today, while Europe tilted, drying the Baltic,  
I read of a battle between brothers in anguish,  
A flag moved a mile.

In comparison to such disharmony, Asia embodies an organic, if unconscious, balance between nature and mankind. The poet has observed here "...the creation/Of a great Asian moth, radiant, fragile./Incapable of not being born, and trembling/To live its brief moment." This minute moth and

the awesome monsoon, the small and the large facts of nature that encompass mankind, suggest the "...ordered purpose in cell and galaxy" which the poet hopes to illuminate as a model for behaviour. The seasonal landscape of Asia possesses the same stimulating quality as the Canadian northern horizon, for both demonstrate "...a glory in life-thrust and mind-range/Such widening frontiers to draw out our longings." Reminded afresh of the inspirational model of regenerative nature, be it Asia or the northland, Scott opens Events and Signals with "A Grain of Rice" in order to provide an evocative affirmation of his unifying social purpose as an artist, "We grow to one world through/Enlargement of wonder."<sup>20</sup>

"Eden", the wry poem with which Events and Signals concludes, itself suggests Scott's belief that mankind may yet consciously achieve the harmony described in "A Grain of Rice" through the exercise of a discriminating intelligence. Discovered beside "...a sleeping lion/feeling its fur with his toes", Adam serves as the compliant accomplice of the muse, Eve, as he seeks to understand her purpose in eating the apple. In eating the fruit, Eve offers a three-fold purpose that adroitly sums up Scott's own integrated sense of moral obligation to serve mankind, aesthetic delight, and intellectual curiosity:

'It is good to eat,' she said,  
 'And pleasant to the eyes,  
 And - this is the reason I took it -  
 It is going to make us wise!"

Titillated yet intimidated by this defiant act, Adam concludes that "She was leading him into trouble/But he could not say she was wrong" and notes enviously that Eve "...could not have all the wisdom./He'd have to eat and be cursed." In their defiant melding of aesthetic taste and critical choice, the Edenic pair produce a discriminating intelligence that effaces their "ignorant innocence". "Taste began shaping the crude" and the mythical expulsion from the Garden becomes a fortunate fall. "For although the Terrible Voice/Condemned them to sweat and to labour,/They had conquered the power of choice." Such a victory for free, critical, but always responsible choice, has long been one of Scott's goals. He notes, "'If we keep on using this knowledge/I think we'll be back,'"<sup>21</sup> to the state of grace embodied in the ever-renewing landscape of Canada and Asia, as well as the redemptive Christian myths, in "A Grain of Rice" and "Eden", respectively. In the poems of Events and Signals which come between these two key poems Scott repeatedly underscores his belief that man possesses an Eve-like conscious potential to achieve grace in a frequently unforgiving world, the ambiguous elements of which Scott outlines in "Stone". Considering one by one the

evocative biblical, metaphorical, geological, and liturgical meanings of the stone, Scott concludes that this prosaic element of the landscape embodies the choice for mankind between conscious or unconscious life, by which man may enhance his condition or destroy himself. "When an atom of stone bursts/Hiroshima falls."<sup>22</sup>

In "The Spring Virgin Cries At Her Cult" Scott searches the landscape of the inner earth for the ambiguous boundaries between life and death. His nature-born muse here "swims" into the earth in death, marking the historical progress from a nature cult to Christianity, a progress suggested by the religious connotations of "sun" and "son". The spring virgin begins her own transformation as an explicitly organic figure, "The sonlight of her sun shone through her pain/As she knelt on curling shoots in the wounded earth." Now abandoned, the spring virgin's "...crowds of worshippers were come to christening" and she dies, her death a final merging with the earth as "...in the warmth and farther down she swam/Till black was darker than the framing soil." Sinking, the dying spring virgin sparks the explosive seasonal renewal, for "...fruits were swelling upwards as they burst/Underneath, overhead, rooted in seeds and birds." Quite literally embodying the autonomous cycles of ever-renewing nature first identified in the stark

Laurentian landscape of Scott's youth, his nature born muse reminds man of her omnipresence, for "... the arches of my seasons are taller than the hands of your priests." Although diminished in importance in the minds of man, the influence of the virgin remains subliminally paramount, as she shapes the landscape that has so inspired Scott:

Her bodiness grew solidier than stone,  
 More central than where spinning poles must meet.  
 Her skin was land, her eyes the full-bloodseas  
 And the rapture she would contain was the round,  
 red world.<sup>23</sup>

The subsuming of the representative spring virgin into the organic whole of nature mirrors Scott's vision of political relations in "On the Death of Ghandi" where "...a bullet, large as an army..." strikes Ghandi. His death provokes a natural act of mourning that parallels the procreative death of the spring virgin, "The chord that broke loosened the holy rivers/And all the teeming lands were flooded with tears." The assassination demonstrates the troubling inability of social man to live cooperatively and although the death enhances the austere northern landscape, the death also reveals the organic excellence of the life of Ghandi who shares the grandeur of the northland. "Far away among the Canadian snows/The white of my landscape was tinged with his colour,/My mountains were taller." In searching for the

redemptive element of Gandhi's death Scott elegizes Gandhi's life in order to celebrate his own visionary commitment to a responsible, socially-conscious art, "Or be condemned in our darkness to cower/Behind the walls of our little religions/Shrinking from the shadow of our own untouchables." Just as Gandhi's individual life and sacrifice enhance the collective life of India, his contribution to universal man's democratic potential is even greater, for Gandhi's "...spirit/Leaps in an instant over the Himalayas",<sup>24</sup> pointing to the one world of "A Grain of Rice."

In the three elegies that follow "On the Death of Gandhi", Scott probes further into the excellence of life that only death reveals. In "For Bryan Priestman" he honours a professor who died while attempting to save a child who "...floated away, her time briefer than foam." Bryan Priestman whose name alone suggests his symbolic act "...plunged with searching hands into his last experiment" to perish in the fluid caprice of nature, the river, which remains a constant threat to man. Like the Asian moth in "A Grain of Rice", Priestman responded instinctively to the promise of life embodied in the child whom he attempted to save. / The instinctive defense of life is clearly an organic function; Scott notes, "...a formula he had carried from

childhood./That can work but once in the life of a man."<sup>25</sup> Conversely, in "For Cathy Fiscus", Scott mourns a muse-like child who has died after a fall, not into a river, but like the spring virgin "...down, down, down the hole in the ground,/the terrible hole, the deep, moist wonderful hole." The child's ambiguous progress into the earth mirrors the regenerative death of "The Spring Virgin Cries at Her Cult", for in her tragic death the girl swayed the collective imagination, much as Scott suggested that the socially conscious muse should do. "Millions drew to her rescue, dug in their hearts/For that which far, far down lay beyond reach/Of their surface lives, never to be brought out." Moved by the inspirational power of death, as well as by an instinctual defense of life, Scott reminds the unconscious muse, who is literally buried in the landscape, of her ability to sway the collective imagination:

...your family that weeps  
Is all the men and women of the world  
That have awakened into the pitiless day  
And long for you, who are their buried hope,  
Your death their dream, your cave their vanished  
cove.<sup>26</sup>

In "For Pegi Nicol", Scott elegizes the conscious muse, here the painter. Scott writes that the approaching death of the woman "...lay on our eyes/and clouded all our days' work", his sorrow intimated in the admission that "...when it was

final/it was as though we had not been forewarned."

Unwilling to dwell on his personal loss, Scott honours Pegi Nicol for her ability to recreate the world, much as Eve does in "Eden", for "everything that was ordinary became extraordinary/Through her vision and touch/And what she approached grew bright colours." Like Ghandi and Scott himself, Pegi Nicol confirms the place of the creative intelligence, in the betterment of mankind through the re-creation of the world, although Scott here celebrates a national creative intelligence rather than the more universalist effect of the artist:

She was a Canadian of these difficult days  
When greatness is in our thoughts  
And our hands are numb.  
Only part of her died  
Her alive is alive.<sup>27</sup>

Many of the poems in Events and Signals refer to the seasonal Laurentian landscape in order to illuminate Scott's imaginative journey northward in definition of an edenic state for man. In "Laurentian Shield", Scott turns to familiar sharp rhythms and a crisp phrasing to describe the social transformation about to take place in the silent and previously inaccessible landscape, "hidden in wonder and snow, or sudden with summer", where collective man is presently unknown. Despite the cold and silence which hides the land, Scott recognizes that the northland possesses an

as-yet-unexpressed will, the expression of which depends upon the collective ability to communicate and to produce:

This waiting is wanting.  
It will choose its language  
When it has chosen its technic.  
A tongue to shape the vowels of its productivity.

The poet recounts the meagre, largely individual settlement of the north in terms of the evolution of language. This new tongue both signals the potential end of the pristine northern silence and blends the poetry itself with terms of class analysis:

Now there are pre-words,  
Cabin syllables,  
Nouns of settlement  
Slowly forming, with steel syntax,  
The long sentence of its exploitation.

As in "Dedication", this linguistic history of northern settlement illustrates how the cacophony of commercial man taints the pre-existent, silent Shield, a landscape that elsewhere embodies the democratic and edenic future of mankind:

...the hunter, hungry for fur,  
And the digger for gold...  
Then the bold commands of monopoly...  
And now the drone of the plane.

The airplane "fills the emptiness with neighbourhood", creating a new community in the north that is noisy, discordant, and exploitative. Even so, Scott satisfies himself with the thought that those persons working the

resource industries constitute a new voice rising from the heart of the Laurentian Shield, "...a deeper note is sounding, heard in the ruins/The scattered camps and the mills, a language of life." One day, turning the bounty of nature to common benefit, man may achieve "...the full culture of occupation" and the now-barren Shield will flower, thanks to the "...millions whose hands can turn this rock into children".<sup>28</sup> For the moment, these labourers turn it to profit for the monopolists, although Scott invites one to believe that this situation will be reversed.

In the love poems of Events and Signals, too, Scott examines his ideal of a fruitful relationship, here between man and woman, against the background of the northland, but with ambiguous results. Mirroring the inscription of collective man on the "Laurentian Shield", in "Signature" Scott depicts on analagous, passionate inscription of lovers on the northern landscape. He strikes an obvious contrast between the passion of these lovers and the chill of encompassing nature, "On the cold, the November ground/We bared the warmth of our wound". The isolation of the tryst gives the love an asocial value, while the self-described passionate "wound" adds a doomed quality to the union, despite the defiant hardiness drawn from the Laurentian

flora, "And on a leafless scene/Poured forth our evergreen."  
 This wounding tryst mirrors the grandeur of the northland,  
 as the human element wages an epic struggle with the natural  
 element, evoking the collective struggle of man to manage  
 the northland in "Laurentian Shield":

Our love clashed with the wind,  
 Carved tokens on ice, and signed  
 Over that northern fact  
 The consummate, personal pact.<sup>29</sup>

These lovers meet in the asocial Laurentian landscape as well as during the autumn, all of which militates against a full and public confirmation of their private passion. Analogously, in "Departure" a pair of lovers regretfully separate in the city, their love now embodied by an image of the stoic Laurentian loneliness previously described in the "Passerby". In "Departure" muse, lover, and landscape fuse in an important image of stoic sacrifice, as the poet recalls his parting lover, "Utterly and forever frozen in time and solitude/Like a tree on the north shore of Lake Superior." The separation reduces the parting lovers to images of fast-separating streams that flow from the temporary, passionate whole of the Laurentian landscape, "down the smooth, granite slope of our watershed." In order to explain this estrangement, the poet suggests that the sacrifice of the personal, passionate world inevitably joins the lovers in a metaphysical union that

derives from the geophysical relation that mankind enjoys with nature. The two lovers supposedly will

...find, each, the deep sea in the end,  
A stillness, and a movement only of tides  
That wash a world, whole continents between,  
Flooding the estuaries of alien lands.

If love is not possible in the material, urban present, in sacrificing one another, the lovers may yet meet again. Even so, the poet can only project this reconciliation into a landscape that bears little resemblance to the original Laurentian landscape where the lovers found passionate, if temporary, peace. "And we shall know, after the flow and the ebb, Things central, absolute and whole." As seen in various poems, the imaginative Northern landscape is an essentially private landscape and to permit passion to flower only there is to declare its transitory nature, "Events shall pass like waves, and we shall stay."<sup>30</sup> Seemingly, the poet finds personal respite only during a solitary, imaginative excursion into the Northern horizon, a voyage that does not permit companionship.

"Message" further details the conflicting personal and public loyalties which in "Departure" restrict the passionate celebration of lovers to the Laurentian landscape. In "Message" love and the seasons gently entwine in this northern setting, leading Scott to muse:

If words can drop like rain from trees  
 And speak of love, as rain can speak,  
 Then these my words shall fall from trees  
 And speak our love as rain once spoke.

The lovers occupy a "drowned" and characteristically temporary, bower in the northern landscape that must inevitably "pass like waves". Clearly, the Laurentian landscape is the setting for a passionate, though transitory, relationship in which "...tenants of one room, we take/A sky of love, immense, that fills/Heart to the brim, too brief to break". This passion is troubled by an undefined choice that invites the male figure alone to follow pathways that "...lead outward from the wood" to another, social landscape "Where houses stand whose quiet mood/Of love is seasoned. He would lose/in choosing, what he did not choose."<sup>31</sup>

In refusing to choose the private, passionate northern landscape, the poet implicitly chooses the duty-filled public landscape. Invariably, such social commitment overshadows, and yet intensifies, the deep longing for companionship by the poet who strives to resolve the conflict between personal desire and social duty. But having forsaken the personal northern landscape for the social landscape, Events and Signals suggests that the poet has found little proof of social justice. In "Prison" which

appears in the midst of the love poems, Scott considers the ineffectual treatment accorded mentally-disturbed women and accepts the blame for their ineffectual incarceration. This self-reproach more accurately gauges a profound personal frustration on the part of Scott himself, as well as a desire to revitalize the muse:

I too scream in my cell,  
 For my own inattention  
 Built their gaol, my prison,  
 In the far reaches of the inner mind.<sup>32</sup>

As in "Prison", much of Events and Signals suggests a new, inward cast to Scott's eye at the same time as he was seeking new public experiences. In Events and Signals Scott moves deliberately to map out the imaginative, usually northern, metaphor for the landscapes in which both individual love and collective cooperation might succeed. In so doing, Scott follows the ever-dying muse into the earth in order to trace her impact on the individuals and on the masses who inhabit the landscapes that she governs. But firmly dedicated to the partisan social landscape that was still to be detailed in The Eye of the Needle and The Blasted Pine, the inward cast of the poetic eye in Events and Signals suggests an important advance by Scott toward the often troubling introspection implicit to age and passing time.

Aside from the new poetry of A.J.M. Smith and P.K. Page, Scott sensed little artistic growth during the mid 1950s; every little magazine seemed to have folded "with the exception of Northern Review which [had] turned Catholic." The future seemed bleak save for "the very active group of young French Canadian artists",<sup>33</sup> and Scott took cheer from their inclusion in A.J.M. Smith's forthcoming Oxford Book of Canadian Verse. From his characteristic poetic and social perspective, Scott hoped that "printing the two kinds of poems together [would] have its effect on the way people think about this country", for a demonstration of unity was needed in the wake of the riots in Montreal over the suspension of hockey star "Rocket" Richard. Buoyed by A.J.M. Smith's apparent interest in French Canada, Scott counselled him to seek out his "young friends around the Cité Libre magazine"<sup>34</sup> for further advice. As a tonic for his own low spirits, Scott devoted his attention to the cultural isolation in Canada that resulted from geography and regionalism,<sup>35</sup> casting his poetic eye ever more critically over the inadequacies of the social landscape of modern Canada. In addition to his continuing teaching and political duties, Scott worked on a conference for Canadian writers, the manuscript for The Eye of the Needle, and the manuscript for The Blasted Pine.

The latter project began in the spring of 1954, with a discussion between Scott and an interested representative of Oxford University Press.<sup>36</sup> Although Scott regretted that the public knew him best as a satirist, he decided nonetheless to capitalize on his reputation by compiling satiric poems with "the best anthologist in Canada...A.J.M. Smith", whose knowledge Scott intended to supplement with his own familiarity with the Canadian little magazines.<sup>37</sup> By September, 1954, Smith had offered two possible titles for the manuscript, "The Disgruntled Beaver" and "The Blasted Pine".<sup>38</sup> In November, 1954, Scott sent Smith a preliminary draft of the anthology<sup>39</sup> which was refined during the winter partly in anticipation of a broadcast on C.B.C. Radio,<sup>40</sup> further whetting the appetite of Oxford University Press.<sup>41</sup> During the autumn of 1954, acting on a long-standing wish for a conference of Canadian writers,<sup>42</sup> Scott also met with an agent of The Rockefeller Foundation, worrying only that he lacked "the time and energy to organize"<sup>43</sup> the proposed conference. But by mid-January, 1955, Scott had secured "warm support from several Toronto friends",<sup>44</sup> as well as the interest of individuals at Queen's University, particularly the Principal who agreed to sponsor a request to The Rockefeller Foundation for conference funds.<sup>45</sup> About this time, perhaps diverted by this new project, Scott

became vague about his commitment to Oxford University Press, admitting only that he and Smith would "doubtless be making some decision later in the year when [The Blasted Pine] is nearer publication."<sup>46</sup> By mid-February, 1955, the application to The Rockefeller Foundation for conference funds was complete, defining the theme of the conference as "the whole process by which literature is written, published, and distributed to the reading public". This meant that there would be three sections: "The Writer", which would detail his social function; "The Writer's Media"; and "The Public".<sup>47</sup> In May, 1955, The Rockefeller Foundation approved the request for funds which "delighted and excited"<sup>48</sup> Scott. Equally pleasing, A.J.M. Smith proposed that he and Scott should complete the manuscript of their anthology during the early summer of 1955,<sup>49</sup> in marked contrast to the slow pace of the "Rejected Preface" of New Provinces. But despite such literary progress, a world-weary Scott mused, "What in the world shall I say about this petty life, which I live in around McGill...We seem to go on doing the same thing as we did before. †How long can this be endured?" Despite his ennui, Scott could find no reason "to seek out a country more undeveloped"<sup>50</sup> than Canada and he admitted the need to continue the activism that so informs his

poetry. Accordingly, the Writer's Conference took place in Kingston between July 28-31, 1955, with Scott serving as Chairman, but even though he ranked it "a great 'internal' success", he felt that it "failed in its purpose of giving more publicity to writers and their problems",<sup>51</sup> since the newspapers ignored the proceedings.

More satisfactorily, in the late autumn of 1955, Scott and Smith submitted the completed manuscript of The Blasted Pine to Macmillan<sup>52</sup> which elicited a contract for publication the following January.<sup>53</sup> Early spring of 1956, found Scott and his colleagues in The Canada Foundation again petitioning The Rockefeller Foundation for funds to establish four literary fellowships each year for three years. Convinced that The Rockefeller Foundation would look more favourably on this new grant request if the proceedings of the Writer's Conference were published, Scott appealed to Mrs. Bobbie Dyde, the benefactress of "Recherches Sociales", for a small sum to help publish what became Writing in Canada,<sup>54</sup> with an Introduction by F.R. Scott. In May, 1956, The Rockefeller Foundation approved funds for the period ending in June, 1959,<sup>55</sup> by which time The Canada Council was fully operational. In Scott's mind, the literary fellowships would provide Canadian writers with "time as free as possible from distractions

other than those which the artistic activity, and artistic living, inevitably produce",<sup>56</sup> which he himself had found at McGill University. And, during the summer of 1956, Scott and Pierre Trudeau travelled down the MacKenzie River, a voyage that sparked the MacKenzie River poems, as well as a poetic image of Trudeau that was to shape Scott's appraisal of the future heir to the detested Mackenzie King.<sup>57</sup> In the poem "Fort Smith", Scott recounts:

We climbed down to the Slave  
To the rock polished by ice  
...

Pierre, suddenly challenged,  
Stripped and walked into the rapids,  
Firming his feet against rock,  
Standing white, in white water,  
Leaning south up the current  
To stem the downward rush,  
A man testing his strength  
Against the strength of his country.

In the years to come, Scott was to refer to this image of perceived strength in Trudeau when consulting with him on matters personal and political.

In the autumn of 1956, Scott offered his third manuscript, The Eye of the Needle: Satires, Sorties, Sundries (1957) to Penguin Books (Canada)<sup>58</sup> which declined the collection as unprofitable,<sup>59</sup> but Contact

Press of Montreal agreed to publish the volume which Louis Dudek privately characterized as "a wonderful book. Consistent. Hilarious. Will be your most talked of book."<sup>60</sup> The reviews of The Eye of the Needle amplify Dudek's early praise, encouraging Scott's uneasy, but nevertheless self-perpetuated reputation as a satirical poet. Desmond Pacey commended his "deadly accuracy of aim at the soft under-belly of our complacency",<sup>61</sup> Douglas Lochhead noted that "Scott is the acknowledged satirist",<sup>62</sup> and Louis Dudek publicly praised Scott's "passionate moral conviction pertaining to real issues".<sup>63</sup> In contrast, Alec Lucas complained that Scott "begins and ends as an iconoclast...his poems are simply variations on one theme, the folly of man."<sup>64</sup>

The Eye of the Needle contains a large number of poems which by 1957, were well-known dissections by Scott of modern society; for example, the second poem is his signature piece, "The Canadian Authors Meet". The volume contains several groups of poems that illustrate the various elements of his critical social perspective. In such poems as "Tourist Time", "Saturday Sundae", and "Picture in Life", he wryly describes the changing face of contemporary society, condemning uninformed mass taste. In such other poems as "Burlap Graduates", "Teleological", "Mural", and

"Eden", Scott attacks those individuals who harmfully shirk their duty as citizens, although in "Eden" he urges mankind to develop a critical intelligence in order to pursue a new Eden. In another large group of such poems as "Ode to a Politician", "Lest We Forget", "The Barons", "Social Notes", and "Company Meeting", with a strong socialist perspective Scott savagely attacks the social inequities and human misery that he sees as the results of a capitalist economy. And, in such poems as "To Certain Friends" and "Boston Tea Party", which spring from World War II, Scott condemns the passive interest in world affairs that saps the vitality of a necessarily universal, democratic culture. In addition to these well-known poems which implicitly deal with Scott's social and political experience in Canada, The Eye of the Needle also contains new poems that explicitly treat comparable experience in Canada, underscoring his belief that capitalism brings much unhappiness to mankind. These new poems overtly concerned with Canada include "The Founding of Montreal", "W.L.M.K.", "The Call of the Wild", "Ode to Confederation", "Orderly Decontrol", "Brebeuf and his Brethren", and "All the Spikes but the Last", all of which detail Scott's enduring exasperation with the slow social progress of Canada.

In "The Founding of Montreal" which opens The Eye of the Needle, Scott effectively reasserts that social history is a fit concern for the poet, painting an uncomfortable portrait of the past that haunts modern man. For, Scott uses the founding of Montreal as a metaphor for exploitation and conquest throughout the world and across the centuries. As well, the poem occupies the prominent place of introduction to the volume, suggesting the place of French Canada in Scott's thoughts, as well as his growing concern with the plight of the Indians. The poem recounts "the moment of [Montreal's] violent founding, when the white man came and stole the country from the original owners by sheer violence, justifying his theft by the planting of a cross",<sup>65</sup> the moment that shaped the culturally anxious contemporary city. At the centre of "The Founding of Montreal" lurks the prescient poet who follows the historical encounter between the white man and the Indian, "A moment hung prolific in the air./Culture was straining at its leaden leash."

Ironically, in the conquest of the Indians by France Scott detects the seeds of the later French colonial empire at "...Dienbienphou around the globe". The historical conquest of New France becomes the ominous symbol of colonial, anti-democratic history, although the colonial

relationship is concealed by the affirmation of a guiding religious motive, "A pistol went bang bang for Christ and France/Another Indian died a Christian death."<sup>66</sup>

Scott's antipathy to the socially aggressive role of the Church has been well illustrated. Undoubtedly aware of the attempts of French Canadians to escape the burden of their own clerical history, in "The Founding of Montreal" Scott implicitly suggests that the struggle to escape the homogeneity of modern capitalist society constitutes a struggle against an anti-democratic social condition and properly belongs to the organic struggle for democratic rights outlined in Overture.

This belief in the organic legitimacy of democratic culture underpins Scott's venom in "W.L.M.K.", which complements the more veiled "Ode to a Politician", the attack on the Conservative Prime Minister, R.B. Bennett. Reflecting on the death of King and the supposed end of a duplicitous political era in "W.L.M.K." Scott resorts to the personal dimension to mock the unstatesmanlike, public conduct of "The Mother's boy in the lonely room/With his dog, his medium and his ruins." As in "To Certain Friends", Scott scorns the intellectual and political passivity fostered in Canadians by King who "...blunted us". More

specifically, Scott attributes to King a political softness that contrasts with the adamant rectitude of the Laurentian landscape. In "W.L.M.K." Scott insists that Canadians have lost political and social rights due to the blurring of significant choice by King who "...never let his on the one hand/Know what his on the other hand was doing."

Just as in "General Election 1935", Scott laments most the political naiveté of Canadians. In reference to the ruins built by King at his estate in the Gatineau Hills, Scott bitterly exhorts Canadians to construct "...a temple/To the cult of mediocrity," to "Do nothing by halves/Which can be done by quarters."<sup>67</sup> Scott's deep frustration with the uninformed masses, particularly the electorate, has endured and matured since the rather sneering poems of the 1920s. In "Orderly Decontrol: 1947", Scott goes on to dissect King's loyalty to the capitalists, to whom he surrendered the war-time economic controls that had seemed so promising in their regulation of the Canadian economy. With the support of the accommodating electorate, the King government was able to let "...the forces of anarchy return one by one/Through orderly decontrol." In the spirit of "The Democratic Manifesto" and Make This "Your" Canada Scott sadly observes that the post-war deregulation of the Canadian economy will further the exploitation of the workers who actually undertook the war effort. The

return of "...all assets of war", the organized economy, to the "...monopolies/...will most surely exploit..." the workers and soldiers, and impede "...a more democratic society", which from Scott's perspective needs to be defended by government subsidies, by decent labour laws, and by decent wages for workers. Moved by his didactic and socialist instincts, Scott protests the abnegation of federal responsibility to the provinces. As a poet and a constitutional scholar, he prophesies justly that this steady course of "orderly decontrol" will fragment the country and bring Canadians to "...the altar of divided jurisdiction, and thus/we shall honour/The Compact of Confederation".<sup>68</sup> Having savaged the political naiveté of Canadians who continue to elect this Liberal government, in "The Call of the Wild" Scott goes on to mock their cultural naiveté as well as a supposed fear of a modern perspective. The poem recalls the literary debates of past decades for as in "The Canadian Authors Meet", in "The Call of the Wild" Scott demands that Canadians be more exacting in their cultural expectations. In so doing, he attacks their loyalty to the edenic state of ignorance that he scorns in "Eden". In stanza one of "The Call of the Wild" Scott mocks most savagely the naiveté of the Canadian nature poets who represent a retreat into a northern landscape of intolerable ignorance. Parodying Bliss Carman, Scott

invokes a nature muse who is as asocial as the scorned aesthetic muse of "Overture":

Make me over, Mother Nature,  
Take the knowledge from my eyes,  
Put me back among the pine trees  
Where the simple are the wise.<sup>69</sup>

As illustrated by The Eye of the Needle, asocial poetics, be they based on a dedication to nature or an extreme aestheticism, represented to Scott a threat to the emergence of a responsible and democratic culture, for such poetics permit the critical faculty to atrophy. In "Brebeuf and his Brethren" and "All the Spikes but the Last", for example, Scott criticizes E.J. Pratt for the definition of heroism that he advances in his two long signature poems. In "Brebeuf and his Brethren", Scott compares the tortures inflicted on the European clergy by the Indians in Canada to the inquisitions conducted by the clergy in Europe, insisting that "For both the human torture made a feast:/Then is priest savage, or Red Indian priest?"<sup>70</sup> As in "The Founding of Montreal", in "Brebeuf and his Brethren" Scott affirms the kinship of the Indian with the white man, here describing with irony their mutual ability to suffer and to inflict pain, and inviting the reader to question Pratt's portrait of the Indians as the single source of barbarism. Similarly, in "All the Spikes but the Last" Scott queries Pratt directly and familiarly for

praising the capitalist builders of the railways while ignoring the collective heroism of the Chinese labourers who built them. Scott succinctly asks, "Where are the coolies in your poem, Ned?/ Where are the thousands from China who swung/their picks with bare hands at forty below?" In no way tempering the suggestion that Pratt should have known better than to ignore the contribution of the working men, Scott enlarges his individual inquiry of Pratt into a general questioning of the racially-exclusive nature of Canadian history, which in his poem Pratt appears to support. Scott suggests that by neglecting the historical contribution of these immigrant labourers, Pratt has defaulted at the task of social witness that Scott himself has so long upheld. Scott asks rhetorically, "Is all Canada has to say to them written in the Chinese Immigration Act?"<sup>71</sup> Standing on his own record of defense for civil liberties, collective cultural rights, and economic justice, Scott responds with an implicit, "No."

During 1957, in addition to the socially-critical The Eye of the Needle, Scott and A.J.M. Smith published The Blasted Pine: An Anthology of Satire, Invective, and Disrespectful Verse. The historical selection of satirical poetry in the "delightedly and potently sour"<sup>72</sup>

anthology matches Scott's own fight against outdated literary and cultural values in Canada, as noted by Louis Dudek who deduced that "the motive for Canadian satire lies not only in the barrenness and the waste, but in the traditions of which this country is composed."<sup>73</sup>

According to the Introduction to The Blasted Pine, the collective poetic voice of the anthology is "unsentimental" and speaks against "the diapason of praise with which Canadian poets have hymned the glories of the True North Strong and Free." In the vein of Scott's "New Poems for Old" in The Canadian Forum, the "Introduction" states "that the malcontent is almost invariably a realist, with his eye fixed steadily in a concrete grievance." Suggesting their early grievance against the desiccated cultural traditions of Imperial Britain, Scott and Smith argue that Canada is "a new country asserting its individuality against the traditions of the past" that impose a deadening conformity on the evolving culture. Both explicitly and implicitly suggesting alternatives to such traditions, the collected satirists produce poems that are "social, political, or moral engagements." To Scott and Smith, the satirist performs a "destructive" or corrective function and resembles the socially conscious "heretic" whom Scott ardently defends in "Saturday Sundae". Yet despite such confidence in the satirist, the co-editors close their

Introduction to The Blasted Pine uncertain of the ability of Canadians to shake off their stultifying history. Certain only that some poets will continue to speak with the preferred heretical voice, Smith and Scott bleakly ask, "Will anyone listen?"<sup>74</sup> This rather grim, open-ended question would seem to update the isolation expressed by Scott in "Prison" in Events and Signals, where he notes that, "I too scream in my cell".

The publication by Scott during 1957, of two collections of satiric poetry suggests an essentially constructive outlet for the personal disaffection that beset him during much of the decade. But 1957 was also a year of public achievement and recognition. Desmond Pacey featured Scott in Ten Canadian Poets, parts of which made him "particularly happy";<sup>75</sup> In early 1957, The Canada Foundation awarded the first literary fellowships.<sup>76</sup> As well, despite the continuing refusal of McGill University to make him the Dean of the Law Faculty, Scott was courted by other law schools,<sup>77</sup> and he lectured at Michigan State University, the professional home of his friend A.J.M. Smith. Even so, to various friends and colleagues, Scott revealed a deep personal disquiet that contrasted with his public successes.<sup>78</sup> The following year, 1958, was marked by equally propitious events. The Canada Foundation

gave a second group of "Creative Writing Awards", two to French Canadian writers;<sup>79</sup> Scott published nine translations of "Five Quebec Poets" in The Tamarack Review,<sup>80</sup> with whom he was involved during the late 1950s. And, McGill University honoured A.J.M. Smith on whose behalf Scott addressed the Convocation.<sup>81</sup> As well, in September, 1958, Scott's friends in Vancouver, the McConnells, founded Klanak Press in order to publish several deserving volumes each year.<sup>82</sup>

During the late 1950s, Scott also worked for the new Canada Council and by October, 1959, he had become an important part of the adjudication process, serving on the Poetry Committee, a duty that he undertook for many years.<sup>83</sup> Still tempted by various university appointments outside Quebec, Scott thought not infrequently of leaving McGill University, but remained unable to tear himself away.<sup>84</sup> As the "Quiet Revolution" unfolded in Quebec and spilled over on Canada he took increasing pride in the importance of constitutional law, his chosen vocation. In a constitutional essay of the day Scott warns that "unless a federal system of government adapts itself to changing social conditions...it creates confusion, slows progress and contributes to social tensions."<sup>85</sup> In the

spring of 1960, Scott received a grant from The Canada Council,<sup>86</sup> which permitted him to take a year's sabbatical, to travel and to gain a refreshing distance from McGill University and Quebec, without formally abandoning his native province. He could also take cheer from the knowledge that the New Party was "slowly forming out of the joint CCF-CLC committee" which hopefully would produce "the kind of CCF...aimed at in 1933 - broad, based on many groups and individuals".<sup>87</sup> In the summer of 1961, the New Democratic Party was founded, marking the end of Scott's formal political career.<sup>88</sup> But 1961, was also a year of important beginnings, for in January Klanak Press asked Scott to publish the "translations of representative poems by some of the younger French Canadian poets".<sup>89</sup> As well, in March, 1961, McGill University finally appointed Scott Dean of the Law Faculty for the period "1 July 1961 to 30 June 1963",<sup>90</sup> which introduced a welcome note of justice into his professional life. He accepted the appointment in order "to clear up a ridiculous situation" and plunged into "administrative work", "new staff, new building, new ideas all around",<sup>91</sup> although he still found time for the manuscript of translations for Klanak Press.

In the autumn of 1961, Scott and Klanak Press settled finally "upon Garneau and Hébert as the only poets to be included in the book", with Scott insisting that the book "must have both the French and English versions", as Anne Hébert had suggested years earlier. Scott first proposed "'Three Poets'"<sup>92</sup> as the title for the volume, but later sought "something simple and direct...Anything fancy would be out of place."<sup>93</sup> Fastidious in his translations and editing, it was not until January, 1962, that he submitted "the final revisions"<sup>94</sup> of the manuscript. Curiously, he did not inform Hébert of the manuscript of translations until late February, 1962.<sup>95</sup> These translations with which Scott hoped to introduce French Canada to English Canada, correspond with significant elements of his own poetry. Even though Garneau and Hébert do not speak with Scott's socially critical, socialist voice, they do speak against the inhibiting values of French Canadian society, an attitude that Scott undoubtedly found attractive. On a technical level, the crisp lines and firm images of the two poets also drew Scott. Less directly, the two poets occasionally investigate sepulchral poetic settings which, while suggesting the stagnant society of French Canada, evoke the poetry of A.J.M. Smith, itself a major influence on Scott.

In such poems as "Accompaniment" and "Spectacle of the Dance", Garneau presents a persona caught in an ambiguous state of metaphysical isolation, much like the inevitable personal isolation that Scott describes against the austere Laurentian landscape. In "Accompaniment", Garneau objectifies one joyous portion of his personality, noting, "I walk beside a joy/Beside a joy that is not mine/A joy of mine which I cannot take". Dreaming "...that one day, transposed, I may be carried along by the dance of these steps of joy", Garneau accepts the quixotic nature of his dream, for in becoming the joyous other, he would lose the essential separateness that marks his poetic persona. Torn between his desire for the joyous other and his contrasting need for the loneliness that fires his poetry, Garneau like Scott in "Passerby" hears an eternal farewell:

...the fall of my own lost step,  
 fading to my left  
 Under the feet of a stranger  
 who turns down a side street.<sup>96</sup>

To alleviate such solitude, Garneau occasionally turns to an imaginative landscape in which he offers tentative social criticism, as in "Spectacle of the Dance" where the dance represents an imagination freed from debilitating social conditions. The children of the city are restricted in their movement, "...without any space which is the whole of

the dance." With unusual candor, Garneau argues the cause and effect relation between an impoverished society and the impoverished imagination, asking the children, "How can you hope to dance I have seen the walls/The city cuts your vision at the start". Despite this socially-aware inquiry, Garneau concerns himself less with the urban landscape that inhibits the imagination and more with the imaginative landscape that is denied to these children, which is embodied in the ability to dance. As a poet he pushes himself "...to recapture/From its source an enveloping enchantment",<sup>97</sup> which the socially conscious Scott actively labours to bring to the common man, in the guise of equitable social conditions.

The poems by Anne Hébert are more consistently critical of inhibiting social traditions and conventions than are the poems by Garneau. She, too, offers a persona caught in an ambiguous tension between organic cycles and the rituals of the Church, themselves symbolic of larger social rituals. Both drawn to and repelled by the rituals of the Church which exalt death rather than life, Hébert frequently enters the sepulchre to embrace death in an inversion of sexual union and love. Similarly, arcane tradition shrouds both the psychology of the society and the individual, as in "Manor Life", where history has reduced

the ancient "manoir" to a dangerous artifact. Like the overly aesthetic muse in "Overture", the "manoir" repels and attracts the poet for whom "The perverse enchantment of these rooms/Lies wholly in their polished mirrors."<sup>98</sup> As in Scott's own "Vagrant", Hébert describes a society paralysed by the crime of self-obsession. The larger and modern world is abandoned and Hébert's poetic figures frequently go down into the tomb to embrace death, or to observe themselves dead or embalmed by an unknown hand. In these sepulchral landscapes, organic and inanimate life exchange places as in "As If For A Holiday":

Down pours the sun  
Down pours the sun  
The earth is fulfilled  
The garden is round.

In defiance of the fecundity of nature, the ritualized garden of the Church, "Two wax fires/Like two yellow flowers", overwhelm the poet. Ritual rather than organic life holds sway and pushes the poet into an immobility, itself suggesting the transitional uncertainty of French Canada, "The dead bore me,/The live kill me". The candles of the Church ritual threaten the eyes of the poet whose individual vision also serves her people, themselves long inarticulate and politically disoriented, "...idiot steps/Around my tears/As if for a holiday."<sup>99</sup> Acting out of hope for a political and cultural entente,

Scott published St Denys Garneau-Anne Hébert as a modest bridge between English Canada and the French Canada that was increasingly to see itself as simply "Quebec", much to Scott's dismay.

During the 1950s, seeking diversion from the professional slight of having been denied the appointment of Dean, Scott threw himself into various public demonstrations of his belief in the need for cooperation. He completed his term as National Chairman of the C.C.F., helped to push the party into a reformulation, instituted a new study group concerned with French Canada, "Recherches Sociales", and went abroad with the U.N. in support of his cooperative principles. His poetry of the 1950s illustrates a singularly critical eye turned not only to his national society, but also to the international community of which he considered himself a citizen. Yet this intensely social and public commitment pushed his private and personal poetic personality further into an isolated Laurentian landscape, where companionship might only temporarily flourish. Scott's poetry of the 1950s suggests a significant separation between his private persona, as represented in Events and Signals, and his public persona, as represented in The Eye of the Needle and The Blasted Pine. Although each persona occupies either a uniquely social or a

uniquely natural landscape, both personae voice a haunting loneliness or isolation that perhaps mirrors Scott's search through the decade for new and satisfying experiences. It is appropriate that the publication in the early 1960s of the comparably ambiguous and haunted St Denys Garneau - Anne Hébert coincided with Scott's deliberate retirement from the partisan public landscape so long represented by the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, now become the New Democratic Party. Once Scott had retired from the active political life of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, it was to become possible for him to begin to review the nature of his poetic achievements.

<sup>1</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1962", F.R. Scott to KK, June 25, 1962.

<sup>2</sup>Scott Papers, "Recherches Sociales, December, 1955", F.R. Scott to Walter Herbert, January 18, 1951.

<sup>3</sup>Scott Papers, "Recherches Sociales, December, 1955", Raleigh Parkin to F.R. Scott, November 27, 1950.

<sup>4</sup>Scott Papers, "Recherches Sociales, December, 1955", F.R. Scott to Walter Herbert, January 18, 1951.

<sup>5</sup>Scott Papers, "Recherches Sociales, December, 1955", F.R. Scott to Walter Herbert, January 29, 1951.

<sup>6</sup>Scott Papers, "Recherches Sociales, December, 1955", Jean Charles Falardeau to F.R. Scott, July, 1951; F.R. Scott to Jean Charles Falardeau, August 8, 1951.

<sup>7</sup>Anne Hébert, Two Poems, trans. F.R. Scott, Northern Review, V, no. 5 (June/July, 1952), 26-29.

<sup>8</sup>Scott Papers, "F.R. Scott talking about poems", August 27-28, 1962, p. 19.

<sup>9</sup>Scott Papers, "Recherches Sociales, December, 1955", F.R. Scott to Pierre Emmanuel, November 24, 1951.

<sup>10</sup>Scott Papers, "Rangoon Office", F.R. Scott to Ailsa Hirst, January 13, 1953.

<sup>11</sup>Scott Papers, "Recherches Sociales, December, 1955", F.R. Scott to Mrs. Dyde, April 14, 1953; "The Canada Foundation", Walter Herbert to F.R. Scott, November 27, 1953.

<sup>12</sup>Scott Papers, "Recherches Sociales, December, 1955", F.R. Scott to Jean Charles Falardeau, April 24, 1954.

<sup>13</sup>Scott Papers, "F.R. Scott talking about poems", p. 14.

<sup>14</sup>Scott Papers, "Events and Signals", Lorne Piercé to F.R. Scott, March 25, 1954.

<sup>15</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1953-54", F.R. Scott to Anne Hébert, February 15, 1954.

<sup>16</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1953-54", Anne Hébert to F.R. Scott, February 15, 1954.

<sup>17</sup>A.R.B., Review, The Dalhousie Review, XXXV, no. 1 (Spring, 1955), 94-96.

<sup>18</sup>James Reaney, "Canadian Writing", Queen's Quarterly, XVI (Winter, 1954-1955), 554-555.

<sup>19</sup>Scott Papers, "F.R. Scott talking about poems", p. 14.

<sup>20</sup>F.R. Scott, "A Grain of Rice", in his Events and Signals (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1954), p. 1.

<sup>21</sup>F.R. Scott, "Eden", Events and Signals, p. 57.

<sup>22</sup>F.R. Scott, "Stone", Events and Signals, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup>F.R. Scott, "The Spring Virgin Cries at Her Cult", Events and Signals, p. 8.

<sup>24</sup>F.R. Scott, "On the Death of Ghandi", Events and Signals, p. 9.

<sup>25</sup>F.R. Scott, "For Bryan Priestman", Events and Signals, p. 10.

<sup>26</sup>F.R. Scott, "For Cathy Fiscus", Events and Signals, p. 11.

<sup>27</sup>F.R. Scott, "For Pegi Nicol", Events and Signals, p. 12.

<sup>28</sup>F.R. Scott, "Laurentian Shield", Events and Signals, p. 16.

<sup>29</sup>F.R. Scott, "Signature", Events and Signals, p. 28.

<sup>30</sup>F.R. Scott, "Departure", Events and Signals, p. 31.

<sup>31</sup>F.R. Scott, "Message", Events and Signals, p. 32.

<sup>32</sup>F.R. Scott, "Prison", Events and Signals, p. 33.

<sup>33</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1955-56", F.R. Scott to the Honourable T.W.L. MacDermot, February 14, 1955.

<sup>34</sup>Scott Papers, "Blasted Pine", F.R. Scott to A.J.M. Smith, March 20, 1955.

35 Scott Papers, "Canadian Writers Conference; Queen's University", F.R. Scott to John Marshall, August 10, 1955.

36 Scott Papers, "Blasted Pine", I.M. Owen to F.R. Scott, April 15, 1954.

37 F.R. Scott, Interview by Anne Scotton for the Douglas-Coldwell Foundation, 1977-78, p. 97.

38 Scott Papers, "Blasted Pine", A.J.M. Smith to F.R. Scott, September 7, 1954.

39 Scott Papers, "Blasted Pine", F.R. Scott to A.J.M. Smith, November 28, 1954.

40 Scott Papers, "Blasted Pine", A.J.M. Smith, prior to December 11, 1954.

41 Scott Papers, "Blasted Pine", I.M. Owen to F.R. Scott, January 26, 1955.

42 Scott Papers, "Canadian Writers Conference; Queen's University", F.R. Scott to George Whalley, March 2, 1956.

43 Scott Papers, "Canadian Writers Conference; Queen's University", F.R. Scott to John Marshall, November 6, 1954.

44 Scott Papers, "Canadian Writers Conference; Queen's University", F.R. Scott to John Marshall, December 20, 1954.

45 F.R. Scott, "Canadian Writers Conference; Queen's University", F.R. Scott to J.A. Corry, January 17, 1955.

46 Scott Papers, "Blasted Pine", F.R. Scott to I.M. Owen, February 4, 1955.

47 Scott Papers, "Canadian Writers Conference; Queen's University", draft of proposal to The Rockefeller Foundation, February 18, 1955.

48 Scott Papers, "Canadian Writers Conference; Queen's University", F.R. Scott to John Marshall, May 2, 1955.

49 Scott Papers, "Blasted Pine", A.J.M. Smith to F.R. Scott, May 1, 1955.

<sup>50</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, July, 1955", F.R. Scott to Ruth and King Fordon, July 18, 1955.

<sup>51</sup>Scott Papers, "Canadian Writers Conference; Queen's University", F.R. Scott to W.A. Deacon, August 11, 1955.

<sup>52</sup>Scott Papers, "Blasted Pine", John Gray to F.R. Scott, November 29, 1955.

<sup>53</sup>Scott Papers, "Blasted Pine", F.R. Scott to John Gray, January 16, 1956.

<sup>54</sup>Scott Papers, "Recherches Sociales, Finance", F.R. Scott to Mrs. Dyde, March 26, 1956; F.R. Scott to Kildare Dobbs, June 12, 1956; "Literary Fellowship", W.B. Herbert to John Marshall, April 10, 1956.

<sup>55</sup>Scott Papers, "Literary Fellowship", F.M. Rhond to W.B. Herbert, May 25, 1956.

<sup>56</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1955-56", F.R. Scott to Professor Stedmond, November 23, 1956.

<sup>57</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, January, 1956", F.R. Scott to R.C. Powell, June 26, 1956; F.R. Scott to R.C. Powell, September 5, 1956; F.R. Scott to J.F. Virtue, September 29, 1956; "Personal, January, 1968", F.R. Scott to Pierre Trudeau, January 28, 1968; F.R. Scott to Rosemary Walters, April 22, 1968; Pierre Trudeau, "A Toast to F.R. Scott", Seventieth Birthday Celebration, September 19, 1969; "Personal, January, 1971", F.R. Scott to the Right Honourable P.E. Trudeau, Prime Minister, February 26, 1971.

<sup>58</sup>Scott Papers, "Eye of the Needle", F.R. Scott to S.P. Kite, October 23, 1956.

<sup>59</sup>Scott Papers, "Eye of the Needle", A.S.B. Glover to F.R. Scott, October 30, 1956.

<sup>60</sup>Scott Papers, "Eye of the Needle", notes by Louis Dudek, n.d.

<sup>61</sup>Desmond Pacey, Review, The Canadian Forum, XXXVI, no. 434 (March, 1957), 28-286.

<sup>62</sup>Douglas Lochhead, Review, The Dalhousie Review, XXXVII, no. 3 (August, 1957), 310-312.

<sup>63</sup>L.D., "The Eye of the Needle - of no Use to Camels", Delta (Canada), no. 1 (October, 1957), 17-18.

<sup>64</sup>Alec Lucas, Review, The Fiddlehead, no. 32 (May, 1957), 34.

<sup>65</sup>Scott Papers, "F.R. Scott talking about poems", pp. 26-27.

<sup>66</sup>F.R. Scott, "The Founding of Montreal", in his The Eye of the Needle (Montreal: The Contact Press, 1957), p. 9.

<sup>67</sup>F.R. Scott "W.L.M.K.", The Eye of the Needle, p. 21.

<sup>68</sup>F.R. Scott, "Orderly Decontrol: 1947", The Eye of the Needle, p. 61.

<sup>69</sup>F.R. Scott, "The Call of the Wild", The Eye of the Needle, p. 44.

<sup>70</sup>F.R. Scott, "Brebeuf and his Brethren", The Eye of the Needle, p. 63.

<sup>71</sup>F.R. Scott, "All the Spikes but the Last", The Eye of the Needle, p. 64.

<sup>72</sup>Carlyle King, The Canadian Historical Review, XXXIX (1958), 337-339.

<sup>73</sup>Louis Dudek, Review, The Canadian Forum, XXXVII, no. 444, (January, 1958), 337-339.

<sup>74</sup>F.R. Scott and A.J.M. Smith, The Blasted Pine: An Anthology of Satire, Invective and Disrespectful Verse (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1967), pp. xiii-xvii.

<sup>75</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1957", F.R. Scott to Desmond Pacey, January 9, 1957.

<sup>76</sup>Scott Papers, "Literary Fellowship", F.R. Scott to Roy Daniells, March 23, 1957.

<sup>77</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, January, 1957", F.R. Scott to Dean E.N. Griswold, February 25, 1957; F.R. Scott to The Honourable Gerald Fauteux, June 21, 1957; F.R. Scott to C.T. Bissell, June 21, 1957.

<sup>78</sup>Scott Papers "Personal, January, 1957", unknown to F.R. Scott, March 5, 1957; Grace to F.R. Scott, July 12, 1957; J. Marshall to F.R. Scott, July 21, 1957; J. Marshall to F.R. Scott, January 9, 1958.

<sup>79</sup>Scott Papers, "Literary Fellowship", W.B. Herbert to F.R. Scott, March 5, 1958.

<sup>80</sup>"Five Quebec Poets", trans. F.R. Scott, The Tamarack Review, no. 7 (Spring, 1958), 44-52.

<sup>81</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1958", Convocation presentation by F.R. Scott, May 28, 1958.

<sup>82</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1958", A. McConnell to F.R. Scott, September 28, 1958.

<sup>83</sup>Scott Papers, "The Canada Foundation", W.B. Herbert to F.R. Scott, October 3, 1958; F.R. Scott to W.B. Herbert, October 9, 1958; "The Canada Council", F.R. Scott to The Secretary, n.d.; F.R. Scott to The Secretary, December 22, 1958; A.W. Trueman to F.R. Scott, October 2, 1959; P.M. Dwyer to F.R. Scott, October 2, 1959.

<sup>84</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, January, 1959", F.R. Scott to Dean A. Leal, January 21, 1959; F.R. Scott to A.D. Dunton, February 12, 1959; F.R. Scott to The Honourable Mr. Justice J.C. MacDonald, April 6, 1959.

<sup>85</sup>F.R. Scott, "Federal Jurisdiction over Labour Relations: A New Look", in his Essays on the Constitution (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 337.

<sup>86</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, January, 1960", F.R. Scott to J. King Gordon, March 21, 1960.

<sup>87</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, January, 1960", F.R. Scott to J. King Gordon, March 1, 1959.

<sup>88</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, July, 1961", F.R. Scott to Reverend John Darlington, August 8, 1961.

89 Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1961", W. McConnell to F.R. Scott, January 2, 1961.

90 Scott Papers, "Personal, January, 1961", J. Holton to F.R. Scott, March 17, 1961.

91 Scott Papers, "Personal, July, 1960", F.R. Scott to J. King Gordon, July 20, 1961.

92 Scott Papers, "Garneau and Hébert", F.R. Scott to W. McConnell, October 1, 1961.

93 Scott Papers, "Garneau and Hébert", F.R. Scott to W. McConnell, October 21, 1961.

94 Scott Papers, "Garneau and Hébert", F.R. Scott to W. McConnell, February 2, 1962.

95 Scott Papers, "Garneau and Hébert", F.R. Scott to Anne Hébert, February 21, 1962.

96 St Denys Garneau, "Accompaniment", trans. F.R. Scott in his St Denys Garneau - Anne Hébert (Vancouver, Klanak Press, 1962), p. 15.

97 St. Denys Garneau, "The Spectacle of the Dance", St Denys Garneau - Anne Hébert, p. 19.

98 Anne Hébert, "Manor Life", St Denys Garneau - Anne Hébert, p. 37.

99 Anne Hébert, "As If for a Holiday", St Denys Garneau - Anne Hébert, p. 35.

CHAPTER VI

## THE LATER YEARS, 1962-83

Since the early 1960s, Scott has devoted a great deal of his attention to the survival of the Canadian Confederation, a contemporary concern that has balanced his largely retrospective poetic activities during these same years. As a member of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Scott sought a "formula for a creative co-existence of the two cultures"<sup>1</sup> and concluded early that Canada must embody "willing association or it is nothing" for "any degree of separatism is better than any degree of compulsion", a tolerant political perspective that was put to the test by the invocation of the War Measures Act in October, 1970. Confederation has represented an important step toward Scott's cherished goal of international cooperation, for "between World Government and small nation states are intermediary unions"; Canada is one and "can help by remaining one." But Confederation also has been endangered by the entry of Quebec into "the new age faster than English Canada", partly because Quebec "is a

minority and hence more pressured and harassed." Perhaps thinking of his own harassing satirical poetry, Scott observed that "people think faster when uncomfortable", although many thinking Canadians have been reluctant to follow his political and economic vision of cooperation. Since the early 1960s the fate of Confederation has increasingly forced Scott to continue to look ahead, "We have a common danger in American absorption. Let us avoid it together."<sup>2</sup> Even so, the historical causes of the debate on Canadian unity, as well as his own advancing age, have compelled him to look back. The result of this retrospection has been a careful series of largely summary volumes, Selected Poems (1966), Trouvailles (1967), The Dance is One (1973), Poems of French Canada (1977), and Essays on the Constitution (1977), that led finally to Scott's valediction, Collected Poems (1981).

In March 1963,<sup>3</sup> Scott first proposed "a definitive collection"<sup>4</sup> of his old poems, new poems, and translations, a collection which he hoped that Klanak Press of Vancouver would publish. But at the urging of the Press, he recognized that the proposed collection would vary "greatly in seriousness and style", and concluded that "a smaller volume of more uniform quality would make a better"

book".<sup>5</sup> Due to this editorial wrangling, Scott did not complete the manuscript of this first attempt at a "collected" poems until February, 1964, when he suggested that William McConnell of Klanak Press "must want to shoot" him for delaying the completion of the manuscript and dragging out "the total perfection of"<sup>6</sup> what was to be Signature (1964).

In Signature Scott reflects upon the social and personal effects of passing time, confirming his faith in a muse who addresses the needs of social man, although this strong emphasis on a social art often has relegated the private life to a lonely Laurentian landscape. In the key poem, "Cloth of Gold", Scott examines the necessary but dangerous, social regulation by which mankind orders itself. The figure of a feudal king who wields temporal power as a spiritual function, embodies both this regulatory power and the threat that it poses to democratic rights. In affirming the spiritual base of the temporal ruler, Scott suggests the spiritual values behind his own vision of responsible equality, which have led him to resist the subjugation of man to exploitative power. Historically held in spiritual fee to the king, "...every man paid homage at his feet./Some fought his battles and shed ransom blood,/Some slew their rights to magnify his claims." As a consequence of exploiting the susceptibility of man to such spiritual

power, the historical figure of the king has perished, leaving Scott to note, "It was our centuries that cut him down." Even so, the exploitation by the feudal king continues in the contemporary exploitation of social man by "The unknown kings that filter through the laws" and "Make baron plans to multiply their fiefs." Ironically, Scott, poet and lawyer, suggests that contemporary law offers no certain protection from these contemporary "barons" of commerce and their institutional allies who exploit the spiritual and emotional needs of society, for "...new kings are close./We smell them in the churches and the schools./ We see their garter on the righteous judge." Inevitably, modern-day "...corporate kingdoms raise their flags" and like the feudal king before them use "marriage-contracts" to extend their influence "...into foreign lands." But in the enigmatic final three stanzas of "Cloth of Gold" Scott alludes to an Eastern figure of spiritual power who counterbalances the Western figure of the king, "The single master who is history's dream/Holds up his hand to daze the patient throngs." Whether Christ-like or Mao-like, this figure embodies and seems to legitimize the enduring mix of spiritual and temporal power, throwing "some shadow of a king that will not fade", again suggesting its tenacious organic character. Symbolizing the historical fact of regulatory power as well as its potential abuse, the historical king and his contemporary descendants suggest

the hardy flora of the northland. In the comparison of the troubling figure of the king to this northern flora, one senses Scott's own uneasy attraction to and rejection of his own spiritual and Imperial heritage, "The tumbled limbs of monarchy are green./A hundred heads survive our mightiest stroke./These broken dreams, these fragile interludes."<sup>7</sup> Here, the historical process of social evolution stands as the seasonal ebb and flow of nature itself. Nevertheless, in affirming the fact of social power, however much in transition it may be, Scott demands that such power be put to the improvement of the common man.

In complement to this serious consideration of potentially dangerous social power, in the rather lighthearted "Incident at May Pond" Scott ponders his own king-like trifling with the life of an ant, which he subjects to the victimization that he opposes in "Cloth of Gold", "I put an ant upon a stick/And put the stick into the pond." A "captive" of his own exploitative impulse, Scott attempts to excuse himself by recognizing the individual reason of the ant which attempts to escape over the water, "I felt exempted from the guilt/Of playing God with someone's life". Inevitably, a minnow "...lurking furtive

underneath" and embodying the larger natural context, devours the ant and Scott finds that he himself is an organic agent enabling nature to build upon itself. Seemingly, the irresponsible act of the individual, the poet, overwhelms even the self-preserving act of the individual, the ant, which again suggests the need for responsible behaviour on the part of the individual who is both citizen and organic component. However, this political argument remains implicit to the poem, which teaches by parable as "...little rings of widening waves/Expanded outward to this poem".<sup>8</sup>

The temptation by man to impose himself both individually and collectively on the landscape figures prominently in "Flying to Fort Smith" and "MacKenzie River", two products of the voyage down the MacKenzie River during 1956. In these poems Scott comes close to the northern horizon after which he yearns in the earlier "Examiner" and "Trans Canada". In "Flying to Fort Smith", his vision altered by the height of the plane and the prism of the window, Scott considers the harmonious blend of water and land:

The plain is of lakes below  
 Is bound with bonds of green  
 Fringed by darker green  
 Pocked with drops of ponds.

In the earlier "Trans Canada" the airplane reveals an apparently approachable landscape, "...every country below...an I land." In "Flying to Fort Smith", however, the airplane reveals a less ego-centric, much more forbidding landscape, "Everywhere/A huge nowhere/Underlined by a shy railway". The supposedly bashful railway notwithstanding, its encroaching presence and that of the airplane herald the advance of commercial man on the north, an advance that contrasts with Scott's personal search for the peace embodied in the balance of water and land. In the earlier "Laurentian Shield" Scott attributes to the north an edenic future when there "will come, presently, tomorrow, /...millions whose hands can turn this rock into children". However, "Flying to Fort Smith" suggests the more ambiguous presence of commerce, whereby "Underground/In the coins of rock/Cities sleep like seeds",<sup>9</sup> threatening the peaceful landscape "...obeying its own laws" in "MacKenzie River". Ignoring the implications of the commercial changes, in "MacKenzie River" Scott addresses himself to the autonomous northern river which also functions like a prism, "Its wide brown eye/softens what it reflects/from sky and shore." The prism-like water draws Scott's eye to the final peace of the "...cold sea", of "The Arctic shore", which for the moment balances the commercial threat implicit in the "...single plume of smoke/...a scroll

of history"<sup>10</sup> to come. Clearly, in the course of the 1950s and early 1960s, the northern landscape ceased to embody the edenic potential of man, for the reality of exploitation could not be ignored. Instead, the northern landscape came to represent the lonely imaginative retreat of the poet, weary of struggle, lonely in love. The exploitation of the north was to become even clearer in The Dance Is One (1973) in which the full series of poems on the MacKenzie records the sad social landscape of the north.

Despite the ambiguity of the social landscape in the north, Scott tacitly accepts the subjugation of the individual to the whole. Assailed by a consequent loneliness that contrasts with his confident dedication to social man, throughout Signature Scott invokes the flux recorded in the earlier "Passer-by" where

...always the footsteps recede, the stone  
 crumbles,  
 The tide flows out and does not return,  
 And from the terror we find no safety in flight  
 But only in faces turned to the flood or arrival.

Scott freezes and enlarges upon one such joyous arrival in "Girl Running Down Hill" where he begins with his vision of the girl, who evokes the muse figures in the elegies of Events and Signals (1954) and invites the imaginative escape

that leads to the poem itself. This girl sweeps away the stationary, but willing Scott:

All of a sudden my world gave way  
 as she pulled me into her field of force  
 a slide of houses tore up the hill  
 whirled along by her treadmill steps

Suggesting the enduring wish for union found in the love poems, Scott celebrates the sudden conjunction of two polarities as "...she flung all her rush in my wrap-around arms/and our two worlds crashed with hurrah hurray."<sup>11</sup> However, the joyous encounter and the conjunction of the elements stand isolated amongst such poems as "Was" and "Days", which confirm the more usual, inevitable loneliness described in "Passer-by". In the tense lines of "Was" Scott describes the irretrievable loss of a relationship that "...would not stay in its niche of time" and has been vitiated by the events lived after the relationship:

One day we shall look back  
 into those staring eyes  
 and there will be nothing left but  
 Was.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, in the sonnet "Days" Scott compares passing time to the varying moods suggested by "...faces passing", which in the octet range between bleakness and joy. In the sestet, perhaps thinking of the demands of the Deanship and the Royal Commission, Scott denies any joyous possibility for a life that is seemingly defined by "...corridors and formal guidelines". Bound to social man by his own

dutiful choice, Scott passively suggests that only death shall free him from the numbing "...tick of days",<sup>13</sup> although in subsequent poems death exists as a distinctly uneasy prospect.

In "On Watching Margaret Dying" Scott synthesizes the joy of "Girl Running Down Hill" with the unease of "Was" and "Days", merging both himself and the figure of Margaret with the stern autumn season. Bidding farewell to the dying woman, Scott successively compares her waning vivacity to the vitality of a flower, the evening light, and finally the setting sun. In her final moment, the woman "Beautiful in death, as the still enveloping flame/Glows into darkness", her death now a part of the autumn landscape as she "Fulfills a Canadian day". "Torn by the love in your eyes", Scott himself turns with "...our turning world" from the pain of personal loss to "Bury the blaze of this our private sun."<sup>14</sup> As in the epigrammatic and penultimate poem, "Eclipse", Scott appropriates the fixity of the sun to protect himself from the isolating effect of passing years, as well as to define his steadfast and sometimes hubristic, socially-critical vision:

I looked the sun straight in the eye,  
He put on dark glasses.<sup>15</sup>

Springing from an initial wish to prepare the "definitive" text of poetry, Signature illustrates Scott's growing wish to reconcile the divergent impulses that inform his public and private visions. In "Cloth of Gold", for example, Scott accepts the objective and enduring fact of social regulation rooted as it is in the spiritual and emotional needs of mankind. Nevertheless, Scott insists that such social regulation must not abuse the vulnerabilities of mankind and instead must improve the human condition. However, in "Incident at May Pond" Scott himself trifles with the analagous fragility of an ant, only to find that in his self-indulgent trifling he has become an element of nature, and a potentially dangerous one, too. Scott invites one to accept that the individual person must act with a full awareness of possible collective consequences. In Signature Scott also suggests that the north is taking on an ambiguous visage under the force of commercial man, losing its edenic potential, and embodying more exclusively the landscape of the poet's private, often passionate, retreat.

As suggested in the admittedly self-centred "Eclipse" the fixed vision of the sun serves as the model for Scott's unflinching examination of society's ills, which stood him in good stead as he became increasingly involved in the evolving history of Quebec. As a member of the

Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Scott insisted that he was working in the interests of all Canadians, helping to integrate group rights and the British tradition of individual rights.<sup>16</sup> But as an anglophone poet living in Quebec, Scott felt isolated from his anglophone compatriots; they "do not appear to feel that it is their revolution which is taking place."<sup>17</sup> Despite the urgent sense of need to address the social and cultural tensions threatening Confederation, by April, 1965, Scott also sensed that his "involvement with Royal Commission work leaves...little time to meditate",<sup>18</sup> suggesting both the isolation of the personal by his dedication to the collectivity, as well as his lessening ability to remain active on all fronts at the same time, in itself a signal awareness of age. Even so, Scott found time to continue the retrospective look at his poetry that came into focus with Signature, although he also remained mindful of the larger human context in which he worked. "A poet's impact is measured by how much he has to say that is important about man and his essential being, not by innovations of style, though these may lead to a new dimension of thought and feeling." Upon reflection, Scott even conceded the personal

vanity of the seminal days of The McGill Fortnightly Review, "no one but ourselves had ever written good poetry! It is charming, but...we were not as revolutionary as we thought"; World War I did not invalidate "99% of the existing literature".<sup>19</sup>

Spurred on by the retrospective impulse of Signature, Scott found time to prepare a manuscript of "Collected Poems"<sup>20</sup> which by May, 1965, both his editor at Oxford University Press and A.J.M. Smith referred to more restrictively as "the best possible selection...of your poems."<sup>21</sup> Just as the "definitive" collection of the early 1960s became the narrower Signature, the "Collected Poems" of the late 1960s became Selected Poems. Although in terms of content, the volume is not a valedictory text, Scott did intend this retrospective manuscript to convey the essence of his poetry, going so far as to praise the type for its "sharp, clean look",<sup>22</sup> evoking the sharp and clean images of his poetry. For a time, Scott composed a retrospective Preface for the manuscript, meaning to explain that "poetry has been a form of seeing, learning and recording, things great and small, solemn and comic, as the moods came and went." Selected Poems was to convey the historical context of his poems, for "new activities...".

brought...new experiences which all this verse reflects in some degree." These poems cover the busy years when Scott found "little time between the last and the next event...to find the tranquility in which to recollect the emotion." The material in Selected Poems is not "the product of what is called a literary life", perhaps like that of A.J.M. Smith, although "the substratum of poetry" gave to Scott's "other activities...continuous meaning and reality".<sup>23</sup> But this draft Preface did not appear in Selected Poems, perhaps because Scott could not resolve the question of whether poetry has been a central or a subordinate concern.

Selected Poems covers forty years of Scott's poetic career, recording his political activities and teaching vocation. "The struggles of political life are relieved and relived in poetry that tells of nature as their inspiration...and as a temptation to forsake" these struggles, suggests the reviewer in Saturday Night.<sup>24</sup> Naim Kattan in Liberté more generally suggests that Scott's Selected Poems illustrate "les diverses facettes de sa riche personnalité",<sup>25</sup> which presents itself in the adamantine, regenerative images of the seasonal Laurentian landscape, itself enriched by the sacrificial, resurrectional promise of Christianity. The double source of organic and Christian metaphor preceded and shaped

Scott's vision of the rhythms of collective man who, when increasing his democratic condition, approaches an organic, moral, but always elusive social eden, much as Scott himself yearns after, but never reaches the chill peace of the northern horizon.

Scott divided the 115 titles in Selected Poems into four sections that illustrate his descriptive, satiric, and reflective impulses. Drawn from previously published volumes, Selected Poems strongly resembles a "Collected Poems" and an examination of the pattern of the text would be informative. Section I, for example, contains nineteen poems that show how the Canadian landscape sustains Scott's creative intelligence, providing the key images of organic regeneration, austerity, and endurance. Section I opens with "Lakeshore" in which Scott measures the metaphysical distance travelled by man from his unconscious beginning, incorporating the various themes that sustain much of Selected Poems. Provoked into reflection by both a biblical sense of potential rebirth, as well as by the regeneration of the landscape, Scott uses the distorting prism of the still and falling water to clarify his vision. In turn, the water entwines harmoniously with the land to produce a landscape where drowned lovers may consummate their relationship, although tellingly they inevitably

withdraw from this watery harmony to the dry land of social responsibility. In the six poems that follow "Lakeshore", "New Names", "Old Song", "March Field", "Trees in Ice", "North Stream", and "Snowdrift", Scott elaborates on the austere quality of this northern landscape, highlighting the stoic promise of its elemental beauty. In "March Field" and "Trees in Ice" he renders the seasonal elements as emblems of Christian endurance and resurrection. Similarly, in "North Stream" and "Snowdrift" he personifies and addresses the seasonal elements, exposing their sharp and imperious character. Inspired by the landscape, these six short poems cumulatively suggest the early definition by Scott of a magisterial and sharp-edged poetic personality, which the later poems of social criticism were to confirm.

In "Picnic" and "Autumnal", also in Section I, Scott elaborates on the organic rhythms that underlie all social and individual, human activity, as in "Below Quebec" and "Laurentian" where his attraction to the northern horizon and its promise of a solitary peace, conflict with a comparable desire for companionship. Section I concludes with "Flying to Fort Smith", "MacKenzie River", and "Trans Canada", in the first two of which Scott investigates this northern landscape on behalf of social man who may yet fully occupy it. In "Trans Canada" Scott himself craves the

imaginative personal freedom of the infinite northern horizon which, in "Abstract", he can only describe as a balance of water and land.

In the first two poems of Section II, "Laurentian Shield" and "Mount Royal", Scott reaffirms the entwined rhythms of nature and of social man or the collectivity. In "Laurentian Shield", for example, Scott addresses the mutually affecting forces of the northland and collective man, although in "Mount Royal" he concedes the ultimate power of nature which capriciously sweeps everything away. Having affirmed the pre-eminent natural rhythms which man ignores at his peril, in Section II Scott turns to the social landscape. In the early "Overture" he provides the key image of the prescient self at a window, again the clarifying prism, anticipating social change, and wondering if the poet should retreat from or participate in this change. This anticipation of change shapes the selected satires where, moved by a moral vision of better social conditions, Scott himself refuses simply to observe current social disarray and instead calls for its change. In "To Certain Friends", the first overtly political poem in Selected Poems, Scott defines his belief that principled, collective intelligence must motivate necessary political action for peaceful change. In "Dedication" Scott commits

himself on behalf of like-minded activists to social man, whose deprivation he outlines and denounces in the remaining poems, "Social Notes" through to "Orderly Decontrol: 1947". Similarly, beginning with "All the Spikes But the Last" Scott returns to the dilemma outlined in "Overture", questioning the ahistorical vision of E.J. Pratt and, in "The Canadian Authors Meet", the anti-modernist sentiment in Canada. However, the war-time "Examiner" stands out starkly amongst these more or less confident critiques of Canadian society, stating Scott's dismay at the increasingly uniform social landscape and his consequent imaginative retreat to the northern horizon. In closing Section II of Selected Poems with two of his translations; "Polar Seasons" and "Time Corrected", in which the two French Canadian poets grapple with the shifting equation between collective man and nature, Scott sandwiches his poems on the social rhythms of man between poems on the larger rhythms of nature. ♦ The vision of the social eden is always encompassed by the redemptive and regenerative promise of the geophysical landscape of the Canadian north, first identified by Scott in the Laurentian landscape that surrounded his childhood home in Quebec City.

Whereas in the social poems of Section II Scott angrily demands effective change on a social scale, in the social poems of Section III he speaks with an introspective and frequently sad voice, lamenting the tendency of mankind to reveal its baser character. In recounting the social decay of "Degeneration" and "Finis the Cenci" Scott invites the reader to consider a finer life for mankind in general. In "Enemies" and "Conflict" he insists upon the mutual damage inflicted by ally and enemy. Implicitly, Scott insists upon the need for cooperative social relations, as in "Armageddon", "War News", and "Flux", where he agonizes about the massing of individual men into a destructive, mechanistic force that casts a metallic pallor on the potentially edenic, green world, itself invoked with references to the regenerative spring. Similarly, in "Water" and "A Grain of Rice" Scott considers the alien seasonal landscape of Asia which nonetheless reminds him of the autonomous cycles of the Canadian northland, all of which govern the universal man. Given this emphasis on the universally dominant and near-divine power of nature, Scott aptly concludes Section III with "Creed". Although lacking wit and irony, "Creed" sums up the spiritual underpinning of Scott's political faith in, and commitment to, collective and universal man:

This world is my country  
The human race is my race  
The spirit of man is my God  
The future of man is my heaven

Section IV contains the most varied and yet the most personal poems in Selected Poems. In "Poetry", "A l'Ange Avant Gardien", and the translation "The Game" Scott illustrates how a commitment to social needs shapes art. More strikingly, however, in Section IV he offers a series of love poems that suggest how the same commitment to social needs interferes with the personal and private elements of life. "A Hill for Leopardi" features the poet, once more alone, contemplating the horizon, and the imaginative freedom that it embodies, into which love intrudes not only as a temptation from social duty, but also as an inhibition to the solitary visionary vocation of the poet. Similarly, in "Union", "Meeting", "Departure", "Message", and "Signature" the Laurentian landscape embodies the stoic love that the poet finds only in the autumn northern landscape when ironically all life is dead. Ultimately, after parting in the material world, the poet and his lover reunite in a metaphysical landscape that approximates the cold equilibrium of the Arctic sea. "Passer-by", "Girl Running Down Hill", and "Was" only serve to intensify the poet's suggested lack of, but desire for, a companion, as do the

final poems of Section IV, in which Scott resists the isolating pain of personal loss through death. In the elegaic poems "On Watching Margaret Dying", "For Pegi Nicol", and "Bedside", he strives to balance such loss with the regenerative or resurrectional element of death, inevitably finding a redemptive organic element at the heart of the death and the poem. Analogously, the final poem in Selected Poems, "Caring" transforms the distractions of the individual love into a selfless devotion to mankind. This tender devotion derives from the tempering of the political confidence of "Dedication" by Scott's inheritance of pastoral concern for mankind of whom he writes:

Centre of all we mourn and bless,  
Centre of calm beyond excess,  
Who cares for caring, has caress.

As Selected Poems makes clear, Scott's dedication to caring, to the welfare of mankind, derives from the poet's acceptance of the regenerative promise of the seasonal landscape and the redemptive promise of Christian myth. Yet, in this chill seasonal landscape redemption only follows a profound pain, which has imbued the caring poet with a stoicism appropriate to musing, "...alone, on Ararat."

In addition to the warm critical reception accorded Selected Poems, the government of Quebec bestowed

on Scott a welcome literary award.<sup>26</sup> In acknowledging the congratulations of Premier Daniel Johnson, Scott described the literary award as an act of political generosity, "C'est une autre preuve, de l'estime que le Québec a toujours démontré à l'égard des lettres -- et des minorités."<sup>27</sup> Throughout 1967, French Canada, the French language, and "Expo 67" figured prominently in Scott's mind. Committed to a two year term as Visiting Professor of French Canadian Studies at McGill University, French Canada lay heavily on Scott's next volume, a collection of "found" poems that he first thought to name "Poems from Prose". Deciding finally that this title was "a little too ambitious for the...material" which he did not think he "should claim...as poems at all",<sup>28</sup> Scott chose Trouvailles. As Louis Dudek notes in the "Introduction", these "found" poems fit well into the body of Scott's satiric work, particularly The Eye of the Needle, in which the social contradictions exposed by Scott stand as an implicit call for change. Ironically, during the centennial of Canada's Confederation, the satiric poetry in Trouvailles exposes the "absurdity" and inequity present in Canadian society, as Scott aims "at enlightenment and imaginative improvement." As Louis Dudek suggests, Trouvailles proves Scott's enduring commitment to social improvement. Here, he addresses himself particularly to the Indian population

on whose behalf he speaks much as he has done for working people in his own satiric poems. In enabling the Indians to protest their exploitation through these "found" poems, Scott has pushed the genre into the domain of social responsibility. The simple illustration of contradictions does not suffice, for in these protesting "found" poems the Indians of Canada demand recompense.

In the first poem in Trouvailles, "The Indians Speak at Expo 67"<sup>29</sup> Scott illustrates the dispossession of the Indian population by the white man. He offers the Indians' first person account of the historical event, which adds both an artistic and political immediacy that his own earlier poem, "The Founding of Montreal", lacks due to his attempt to use the dispossession as an objective, universal metaphor for conquest. In the poems following "The Indians Speak at Expo 67", Scott enables the Indians to explain the sources of their bitterness toward the white Canadians. Successively, "The Robinson Treaties"<sup>30</sup> argues the historical duplicity of the white; "Treaty"<sup>31</sup> documents the unfortunately complementary ingenuousness of the Indians; and in both "Pavillion Misrepresents Outlook"<sup>32</sup> and "And Now I Close"<sup>33</sup> Scott lets the Church itself describe the inhibiting paternalism that has afflicted the Indians; in these poems one again senses Scott's own antipathy for the established Church. Cumulatively,

these "found" poems legitimize the Indians' rising anger with the Canadian Confederation that still denies them their rights. The native people are at the mercy of "The Beaver", a creature "of unvarying instincts and Old World traditions" who "...does not improve, /and becomes extinct /rather than change his ways."<sup>34</sup>

Scott balances these angry "found" poems about the exploitation of the Indians with another, characteristic series of poems, that illustrate the enervating social and cultural conventions that he feels have handicapped Canada. Drawing on newspaper extracts from 1867, to illustrate the relative level of change by 1967, Scott compares conventional expectations of virtue with the grimmer facts of urban Canada in 1867, which yields several comic sketches. Similarly, in "Poetry Lecture"<sup>35</sup> Scott attacks the subject of conventional romantic poetics and the poet's reportorial account of the lecture conveys his own long standing opinion that such poetics have deadened the creative intelligence of Canadians, as illustrated in "The Canadian Authors Meet". In other related poems Scott laments the tolerance of Canadians for outmoded social institutions, querying their affinity for political and religious values that confound their own best interests.

Much as the Church impeded the growth of the Indian peoples, in "The Archbishop Speaks" the cleric musters the authority of the Church in what can be seen as a class defense of the established political order:

To refuse submission to it  
 Would be to upset the established order of God  
 and to resist His will;  
 It would be to tend toward anarchy, treason,  
 revolt,  
 And all the evils in their train.<sup>36</sup>

In such other poems as "Ottawa Becomes Civilised"<sup>37</sup> and "Social Life in Montreal",<sup>38</sup> Scott enables the larger social and political culture of Canada to speak for itself. Scott maps out an enduring wasteland of enervating routine and archaic institutions that defend regressive social conditions, in seeming refutation of the social progress embodied by the Centennial celebration. In summation of the generally regressive nature of Canada, Scott offers a droll translation of the "RCMP Mottô", "Maintien le droit". As in "Cloth of Gold", he translates this motto as "Uphold the/Right",<sup>39</sup> suggesting the continuing collusion between the regulatory social institutions in order to suppress the democratic potential of the common man.

The "found" poems of Trouvailles bear a strong resemblance to the satiric poetic epitaphs of the early 1930s, for Scott uses the language and images of social

institutions to suggest the power of anti-democratic culture. In larger application, Trouvailles gathers together salient, if unconscious, self-commentary by Canadian society at the moment of national celebration, only to show the hollowness of much of this proclaimed achievement.

By 1970, with the uneasy, epitaph-like implications of Selected Poems behind him and with Trouvailles standing as proof of his still vital, socially-critical eye, Scott had experienced a poetic renewal. In part, this poetic burst derived from his gradual retirement from the demands of public life, reflected the implacable peace of the ancient Laurentian landscape, and drew on the serenity found in Scott's seminal memory of his mother, Amy Scott, lulling him to sleep with piano sonatas. Well into late life, Scott mused, "As for me, all ten fingers work painlessly on the piano. I have set myself the year 2000 for burial; this will mean I shall have lived in three centuries."<sup>40</sup> But with the continuing political tension in Québec, Scott continued to worry about the fate of Confederation, which he felt was beset by "basically spiritual problems". Drawing on the moral values of his family and the C.C.F., as well as in the vein of Make This "Your" Canada and "Cloth of Gold",

Scott insisted that "the issue of values, on which our welfare ultimately depends, is in danger of being forgotten in our struggle for power",<sup>41</sup> which by October, 1970, centred on "the Cross-Laporte case". Dedicated to the principle of "peace, order, and good government", Scott presciently advised that "the sooner we get a mini-War Measures Act the better"<sup>42</sup> and the Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau agreed.

Scott's support of the invocation of the War Measures Act in 1970, should be examined in the context of his political experience. In the kidnappings he perceived not only the enduring antagonism between French and English Canada, but also the potential for violence that he had seen in the Conscription unrest of World War II, in the earlier visit by the delegates of the Spanish Republican government in 1936,<sup>43</sup> and in the Conscription Riots of 1917, all of which threatened the integrity of the Canadian social fabric. As a specialist in constitutional law, as well as a firm advocate of the peaceful, rational resolution of problems, Scott upheld the duty of the federal government to provide stability. "The War Measures Act provided a shock treatment that...restored a sense of self-government in Quebec to six million people",<sup>44</sup> a vision of the

function of the state shared with Canon F.G. Scott. In The Great War As I Saw It, written fifty years previous, Canon Scott suggests that in the future the army would perform "the necessary and unpleasant task of policing the world, in order that the rational occupations of human life may be carried on without interruption."<sup>45</sup> In the mind of F.R. Scott the War Measures Act of 1970, and the presence of the army in Quebec ensured "the continuance of civil government in the province."<sup>46</sup> Even so, as the years passed and as Scott qualified his support for the invocation of the War Measures Act, he came to see the action as having prevented such ever-greater violence as the shootings at Kent State University in the U.S.A.,<sup>47</sup> as well as the violence in Northern Ireland.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps at its most personal level, the political unrest in Quebec strengthened Scott's resolve to publish his translations of the poets of French Canada as a bridge over the widening gulf between the two Canadas.

By January, 1972, Scott was prepared to bring out a new manuscript of his own poems and approached the House of Anansi, only to learn that its finances and prior commitments prevented publication. Graciously acknowledging the situation, Scott offered a portrait of himself as an elder statesman of Canadian letters, with obligations to

the younger poets. He wrote, "If the problem were solely financial it could be resolved, but I can see the look on the eager faces of the young poets in your queue if F.R.S. were to shoulder them out of the way."<sup>49</sup> In March, 1972, Scott sent the manuscript "New Poems and Translations" to both Klanak Press and Oxford University Press, intending it to be "the last book of poems...before...Collected Poems". This manuscript was to "fill the long gap" since Selected Poems, bringing together "in one place a number of new poems and others which are scattered among magazines and anthologies".<sup>50</sup> As Klanak Press could not promise an early publication, in July, 1972, "with a trace of regret"<sup>51</sup> Scott sent the manuscript to McClelland and Stewart, which published it in late 1973, as The Dance Is One.

The volume divides into three groups of poems, the first of which is strongly valedictory, the second of which is retrospective, and the third of which contains Scott's translations of the work of nine French Canadian poets. The first group contains a broad selection of poems with social and personal themes, as well as poems that evoke the landscape, all of which illustrate how Scott's eye turns to the historical roots and future implications of contemporary events. In the second group of poems, the ten

"Letters From the MacKenzie River", Scott comprehensively covers his voyage down the MacKenzie River during the summer of 1956, finally putting to rest the edenic hopes for the social landscape of the north. Previously published, the first and last poems, "Flying to Fort Smith" and "MacKenzie River", are conventionally allusive and illustrate Scott's quest for the peace of the northern horizon, while the intervening eight poems actually place him in the northern landscape, document the river journey in unusually colloquial prose, and illustrate the ambiguous effects of the settlement by the white man. Even so, the broad northern horizon and the speculation of "Letters From the MacKenzie River" suggest an expansive vision that contrasts sharply with the intense focus of the third group of poems in the volume, the translations of the nine poets from French Canada, whose strong social voices mirror Scott's own social sensibility, if not his breadth of social vision.

The Dance Is One opens with the valedictory "On Saying Good-bye to my Room in Chancellor Day Hall", in which the removal of the belongings embodies a farewell to the active public past and a turning toward the private imaginative landscape of late life. For as the "rude and rough men" pack away the files and memorabilia of his past, Scott ponders his long public service and, implicitly, his

more private future. In reaction against the dislocating move, he suggests that he is the victim of gratuitous violence by the movers. In an Eliotic parody he cries out, "There is murder in my cathedral", humorously masking the anxiety over breaking with the symbols of the confident past:

The precious files, filled with yesterday's  
writing,  
The letters from friends long dead, the irreparable  
evidence  
Of battles now over, or worse, still in full combat  
Where are they going? How shall I find them again?

Several times Scott reproaches the movers, "miserable vandals, stuffing me into your cartons", creating a tension between the supposed ill-intent of their uninformed labour and his own informed but now past, activity. Defining himself according to his public parts, he worries that the unifying thread of his life has been lost and he tumbles into the vague imagery of contemporary self-doubt earlier seen in the war poems of Overture. As the images of his life are packed, Scott worries:

These are all cells to my brain  
Each filament thought feeds them into the process  
By which we pursue the absolute truth that eludes  
us.  
They shared my decisions.

Pulling back from self-pity to consider the future of his creative intelligence, Scott assumes the prescient stance of "Overture". He "...tightens the nerve;/bares limbs for

movement and the forward march" as in "Recovery", and again he muses "...alone, on Ararat" as in "Lakeshore".

Appropriately, Scott concludes "On Saying Good-bye..." by turning from the era of public service embodied in the memorabilia, to another private excursion into the imaginative northern horizon of late life when his imagination may range more freely:

...I stand again on new frontiers.  
 Forgive this moment of weakness, this backward  
 perspective  
 Old baggage, I wish you good-bye and good housing.  
 I strip for more climbing.<sup>52</sup>

In "On the Terrace, Quebec" Scott returns again to this northern landscape. From the terrace of Quebec City, his birthplace, he reviews the geographical polarities of Canada, "Northward, the ice-carved land,/"les pays d'en haut", the place of imaginative relief, and "South, the softer continent,/river-split", where the geophysical and social landscapes mix. This geophysical polarity itself suggests the frequent contention in Scott's poems between the public intellect and the more private heart. Spurred by this excursion into his personal past, Scott quickly moves to the collective social past. There he silently watches the historic fight between "...the English troops/imprisoned in the broken city" and the French "...army, under de Levis/victorious at Ste. Foy", who are contending for the

future Canada. Scott imagines each army waiting for the first ship with reinforcements, each wondering "Whose flag would it fly?" Ironically, the capricious rhythm of spring, the freeing of the ice-bound St. Lawrence River, creates history:

Suddenly, round the bend,  
masts and sails  
begin to finger the sky.  
The first question was answered.<sup>53</sup>

The ice and the military stalemate have been broken by a caprice of nature and Scott presents the subsequent arrival of the English as the answer to "the first question", although he leaves unstated any subsequent question. Implicitly, any such subsequent question addresses the ability of the English and French to live in harmony, a question brought into focus by the political events of the 1970s.

The poem "Dancing" turns on a similar retrospective element as Scott reviews a relationship with a woman, be she the muse or a lover, the relationship between the two embodied by the dance. Once, the poet imposed an order on this relationship, this woman or muse, whereby "she was best/when she was/least herself/lost herself". Without explaining the change, Scott outlines a new balance between

what he now suggests are disparate but autonomous elements. Possibly a couple has achieved a new harmony. or possibly the poet has come to accept a muse less dominated by his social imperative, "I no longer dance/with myself/we are two/not one/the dance/is one."<sup>54</sup> As a whole, The Dance is One embodies this same equipoise as the poet turns to the Laurentian and northern landscapes for new metaphors for the interpretation of social history and natural history.

In the ten "Letters From the MacKenzie River: 1956" which form the second group, Scott elaborates on his hopes, as well as on his fears for the evolving presence of man in the north. Framed by "Flying to Fort Smith" and "MacKenzie River", each of which offers a conventionally metaphoric, "bird's eye" view of the Arctic landscape, the eight intervening epistolary poems emphasize the separation of the northern community from southern society and the destructive impact of commercial man on the land itself and the inhabitants. As his plane lands, Scott begins his account of commercial man's presence in "The Camp At Bell Rock". He notes that "Bull-dozers were widening/A strip of weeds and grass", a contention between mechanistic, commercial man and nature that repeats throughout "Letters From the MacKenzie River". Intensifying his concern over this overt

exploitation of the north, Scott discerns a basic contradiction in the relationship between man and nature, whereby the land itself seems to be recoiling from yet trapped by man:

The Slave river rolled past  
Downhill to the North,  
Running away from America  
Yet bringing America with it.

Even so, there remains the implication that collective, technological man is himself an organic phenomenon that cannot be halted. Such an implication leads Scott to hope that technological man will be able to realize the state of consciousness suggested in the "...language of flesh and of roses" of the earlier "Laurentian Shield", whereby man and nature would enhance one another. However, in "The Camp at Bell Rock" the syllabics of the new northern tongue are explicitly commercial:

The cargoes speak the language of life:  
Muckers for mines, acids for ores,  
Barrels of oil and gas, timber and pipe  
Bull-dozers and cranes, fork-lifts and drills

Scott chooses the unique symbol of an animal to represent this transformation of the north under the force of commerce:

No husky, but mixed with the breed.  
Behind him his ugly mother  
...an import,  
Half his size, but source of his power.

Embodying both the nineteenth-century emphasis on Canada's nordic character and the twentieth century fact of the commercial exploitation of the north, this dog demonstrates the reconciliation between man and nature that Scott searches after in his poetry. The dog represents "...the North/Where opposites meet and mate",<sup>55</sup> although the final result remains in doubt due to the ravenous appetite of the commercial partner.

As in "Social Notes" and "An up-to-date anthology..." from the 1930s, in "Fort Smith", Scott illustrates the dreadful results of subordinating the welfare of mankind to profit and commercial development. Whereas in the poems of the 1930s Scott focusses on economically disadvantaged Canadians in general, in "Fort Smith" he focusses on the dispossessed Indians:

There was the 'native quarter'  
Shacks at every angle  
For Slave Indians and half-breeds,  
And overlooking the river  
The trim houses of the civil servants  
With little lawns and gardens  
And tents for children to play Indian in.<sup>56</sup>

Similarly, in the ironically titled "Fort Providence" Scott offers a comparably grim description of the northern social landscape as embodied in the schooling given the Indian children, whose dispossessed lives are anything but providential:

Priests from France, nuns from Quebec,  
 Taught Slavies (who still speak Indian)  
 Grades I to VIII, in broken English.

Despite this focus on the welfare of the Indians,  
 "...now...outcast and dying", Scott's socialist perspective  
 reveals a larger state of dispossession, for "even the  
 whites are in thrall"<sup>57</sup> to the oil companies, "The  
 Barons" of the northland. A comparable economic sense of  
 spiritual ruin animates the nameless "A New City: E3".  
 Here, Scott blames the valueless commercial goals of the  
 white settler for the condition of the Indians who can only  
 "...watch/The slow, inescapable death/Of this land which has  
 waited so long for the sentence already pronounced." By the  
 time of the publication of the ten "Letters From the  
 MacKenzie River: 1956", the hope embodied in "Laurentian  
 Shield" had diminished in proportion to the exploitation of  
 the northland, here represented by the construction of the  
 mechanistic city so abhorred by Scott, "Blue-printed,  
 pre-fab, precise./A model, a bureaucrat's dream."<sup>58</sup> The  
 full series of the "Letters From the MacKenzie River: 1956"  
 reveals the sad face of the northern social landscape, which  
 Scott kept from his published consciousness prior to The  
Dance Is One. This full series of poems assigns a markedly  
 different significance to the tenth and final poem  
 "MacKenzie River". Concluding the portraits of the

despoiled landscape and Indians, in this poem Scott suggests that the "single plume of smoke/...a scroll of history"<sup>59</sup> signals a dubious future for the landscape, the source of his poetry, as well as for the working people and Indians of a Canada still under the thumb of the capitalists and their governmental allies.

Even so, The Dance Is One exudes a sober personal confidence. As Desmond Pacey notes in The Fiddlehead, "The major strain in this volume...is nostalgia", a "regret for things past". Even so, Pacey praises Scott for his "capacity to use the past not as a cushion but as a springboard" into continuing creative and intellectual activity.<sup>60</sup> The vigour of The Dance Is One also signals the resolution of the troubling autobiographical impulse with which Scott had grappled since the early 1960s, beginning with Signature. In 1973, the year in which The Dance Is One appeared, Scott finally and regrettably decided against writing his memoirs, "there is a kind of finality about an autobiography which makes me feel that once I start on that I've had it."<sup>61</sup> However, in the autumn of 1973, he announced puckishly, "I am getting ready for my collected poems; about time, don't you think?"<sup>62</sup>

By January, 1975, Scott was busy amassing his retrospective collection of poems and turned once again to his old mentor A.J.M. Smith for advice, "I hope that once more, as so often, you can show me the difference between Right and

Wrong, but whether I shall always do the right thing is another question!"<sup>63</sup> Mindful of Smith's longstanding emphasis on the perfection of the individual poem, Scott was torn between producing a full, perhaps aesthetically-flawed, poetic history and a more selective, refined "Collected Poems". Reluctant as always to ignore the complete history of his poetic development, Scott considered for a time the possibility of publishing two volumes, a "Collected Poems"<sup>64</sup> and a "miscellany, containing some prose as well as poems not quite suitable...yet worth preserving."<sup>65</sup> But Collected Poems (1981) was still to be pre-empted by both the retrospective collected Essays on The Constitution (1977), which won the Governor-General's Award, as well as by Poems of French Canada (1977), which won the Canada Council's translation prize. Scott's concern for the future Confederation weighs heavily on both volumes.

The introductory translation in Poems of French Canada, "Farewell To The Frenchmen Returning From New France to Gallic France", contains "the roots of the nationalism that is causing...such grave concern"<sup>66</sup> for Confederation. The political unrest in Quebec moved Scott to write, "A dumber and more frightened crowd than the English minority in Quebec it would be hard to find...We don't deserve to survive as we have no collective will to live",<sup>67</sup> a sad judgement from a poet, lawyer, and

politician who has worked to incorporate collective cultural and economic rights into the Canadian constitutional tradition. Sensing that the restrictive education and language legislation of successive Quebec governments had "shredded" the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Scott wondered if "a creative co-existence"<sup>68</sup> was possible. More sanguinely, though, he admitted to his tendency "to see the worst in everything" which in paraphrase of Matthew Arnold, has meant "seeing life steadily, and seeing it whole."<sup>69</sup>

Analogously, through the 1960s and 1970s Scott has tried to integrate disparate interests in order to illustrate a vision of mankind living in harmony with itself and the landscape it occupies.

Collected Poems (1981) appeared after a gestation period of some twenty years, if one considers Signature (1964) to be Scott's first explicit attempt to sum up his career. While Collected Poems contains most of the poems written during the past sixty years, it does lack a certain number of titles, which suggests that Scott perhaps mindful of A.J.M. Smith, finally permitted aesthetic choice to shape the history of his poetic development. Collected Poems possesses a unique thematic order of poems that minimizes the chronological impact of the earlier published volumes,

for the individual poems no longer appear in the order in which they appeared as part of a volume. One might wish that Scott had chosen, or had been advised, to group his poems according to the chronology of his published volumes, adding if necessary a section of previously unpublished or uncollected poems. Nevertheless, the summary thematic groups in Collected Poems do provide a base for further study of Scott's work, as well as the pleasure of his creative intelligence. Ideally, this thematic collected volume will draw the reader back in order to consider afresh Scott's earlier volumes as elements in a series, in which the total effect of a single volume often exceeds the effect of the individual poems contained therein. By reading Scott's poems in their published context and chronology, one may more successfully trace the development of his vision of an organic and moral universe, a vision that grew out of the regenerative landscape, the Christian myth of resurrection, and the possibility that mankind could perfect itself through reason. As well, by reading Scott's poems in juxtaposition to one another in the original volumes, one becomes aware of the enduring tension between the public and rational, and the private and passionate elements of Scott's career, a tension minimized by the thematic groupings in Collected Poems.

In the "Acknowledgements" with which Collected Poems ends, Scott notes, "I have divided the poems into categories within which the thematic and chronological relationships are generally followed." He has chosen eleven categories of varying lengths, into which he places most of the poetry in his previous volumes. "Indications", drawn largely from the periodical poetry of the 1920s, defines Scott, both young and old, as a poet alive to a variety of sensual, intellectual, and increasingly political challenges. "Laurentian", drawn from various periods of his life, directs the reader principally toward the inspirational power of the regenerative landscape, although this emphasis blurs the interwoven, sustaining power of the Christian myth of resurrection which frequently blends with the seasonal cycle. "Overture", named after the politically tentative poem of the same title, features a number of poems of contrasting political conviction which document Scott's didactic and moral, social perspective. "Conflict" deals with the horror of World War II and decries the fratricidal ruin of war in general. But in the volume Overture, many of these same poems derive additional impact from the juxtaposition of their collectivist faith to the brooding loneliness of the personal poems. "Journeys" records Scott's trips abroad in general and to Asia in specific, but also takes these poems out of their original balance with

domestic poems. "Insights", perhaps the most powerful section in Collected Poems, carries one to the heart of Scott's organic vision of life, as he contemplates the frequently autumnal and sad face of the social and geophysical landscape. But despite such sad surroundings, determined to turn loss into an advance, Scott constantly strives on his own behalf and that of mankind toward the green landscape of regenerative spring. "Observations and Occasions" offers a miscellany of epiphanic poems, a number of which stand as merely topical when taken out of their published, historical context. "Letters From the MacKenzie River" replicates the original series of poems from The Dance Is One, but as complete as this series is, it ignores the fact that Scott published only "Flying to Fort Smith" and "MacKenzie River" in Signature, concealing the deprivation of the Indian population, the continuing exploitation of the working man, and the despoilation of the landscape. The poems of "Satire and Light Verse" a rather non-political, but still critical group, are unnecessarily set apart from the other social poems with which they would illustrate more fully the evolution of Scott's political perspective. "Trouvailles" draws largely but not completely, on the volume of the same title, lacking Trouvaille's balance between the deprivation of the Indian population and the visionless white society.

"Translations", the final group in Collected Poems, significantly reduces the impact of the two separate volumes of translations, discarding the finely chiselled focus of St Denys Garneau - Anne Hébert and the force of the Poems of French Canada. Even so, this final group of translated poems underscores Scott's lifelong search for a formula for cooperation between not only the working peoples, but also the two cultures of Canada, in hope that such national cooperation could serve as a model for international cooperation. Collected Poems, Scott's valediction, brought him the Governor-General's Award for Poetry for 1981.

As noted in the beginning of this chapter, since the early 1960s, Scott has addressed himself largely to the preparation of a poetic summary, all the while remaining actively concerned with the future of Confederation. Signature suggests the dimming of Scott's edenic social vision as the landscape of Northern Canada changed under massive commercial exploitation. As well, this volume suggests the tenacious nature of exploitative social relations. Trouvailles published at the time of national celebration, confirms the enduring nature of such inequities, particularly where they have touched the native population. In turn, The Dance Is One details the

exploitation of the North and the deprivation of the native inhabitants. Similarly, Poems of French Canada and Essays on the Constitution testify to Scott's simultaneously historical and prophetic cast of mind, for over the years he has both sought out the source of Canada's cultural and constitutional tensions, and tried to intuit where they would yet lead Canadians. One senses that in collecting his constitutional critiques and translations, Scott hopes that Canadians might yet make a conscious effort to cooperate, confirming the social reality of the regenerative organic metaphor as frequently shown in Collected Poems.

<sup>1</sup>Scott Papers, "Poems of French Canada", F.R. Scott to Kathy, May 26, 1978.

<sup>2</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, January, 1963", Thoughts on English-French relations by F.R. Scott, March 23, 1963.

<sup>3</sup>Scott Papers, "Signature", F.R. Scott to William McConnell, March 25, 1963.

<sup>4</sup>Scott Papers, "Signature", William McConnell to F.R. Scott, November 1, 1963.

<sup>5</sup>Scott Papers, "Signature", F.R. Scott to William McConnell, August 24, 1963.

<sup>6</sup>Scott Papers, "Signature", F.R. Scott to William McConnell, February 23, 1964.

<sup>7</sup>F.R. Scott, "Cloth of Gold", in his Signature (Vancouver: Klanak Press, 1964), p. 9.

<sup>8</sup>F.R. Scott, "Incident at May Pond", Signature, p. 19.

<sup>9</sup>F.R. Scott, "Flying to Fort Smith", Signature, p. 26.

<sup>10</sup>F.R. Scott, "MacKenzie River", Signature, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup>F.R. Scott, "Girl Running Down Hill", Signature, p. 30.

<sup>12</sup>F.R. Scott, "Was", Signature, p. 33.

<sup>13</sup>F.R. Scott, "Days", Signature, p. 34.

<sup>14</sup>F.R. Scott, "On Watching Margaret Dying", Signature, p. 39.

<sup>15</sup>F.R. Scott, "Eclipse", Signature, p. 15

<sup>16</sup>F.R. Scott, Interview by Vincent Tovell, pp. 19-20.

<sup>17</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, 1964", "The Role of the Poet in Quebec Today", n.d., p. 6.

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<sup>18</sup>Scott Papers, "Personal, January, 1965", F.R. Scott to George Whalley, April 23, 1965.

<sup>19</sup>Scott Papers, "Poetry, January, 1966", F.R. Scott to Raymond Souster, July 30, 1966.

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### CONCLUSION

The six preceding chapters of the dissertation have documented the evolution of the relationship between F.R. Scott's poetry and his social vision, a relationship that mirrors his steady progress away from a position of self-conscious aestheticism and toward a position of artistic responsibility for both the spiritual and material condition of man. The relationship that has been examined evokes Scott's roots in the ordered values of the nineteenth century and shows how the best of these values have been dedicated to the fate of Canada, and mankind, during the twentieth century. Scott's poetry and his perspective on man have been informed by the regenerative cycle of the austere Laurentian landscape, as well as by the redemptive promise of the Christian myth. In his poetry and in his expositions on man, Scott depicts a world in which the individual element, or the single person, exists in a constant and productive tension with the organic whole, to which Scott is loyal. Not surprisingly, Scott's poetry demonstrates a tense balance between this profound commitment to the collectivity and the demands of the individual creative intelligence, however socially conscious it may be.

Chapter I, "The Early Years, 1899-1923", shows the prominence of Scott's father, Canon F.G. Scott, in the formulation of Scott's vision of an organic and mutually responsible world. An Anglican priest, an Imperialist, and a poet, Canon Scott instilled in his son a strong sense of duty to serve man, the Christian hope for redemption, a respect for the civil order, and a love for literature and the Laurentian landscape. These orderly, religious, and Imperial values guided Scott's upbringing and early education, for his pastoral existence was interrupted only by World War I. Although the War took Scott's father and three brothers to Europe, where one brother died, the full significance of the War did not strike Scott until almost ten years later. Moreover, even while at Oxford during the early 1920s, Scott devoted himself to his already strong interest in history and a new-found interest in the art and antiquity of Europe. The socialist principles of R.H. Tawney intrigued Scott, but did not fully capture him, for he was most concerned with his artistic interests.

Chapter II, "The Montreal Years, 1923-29" documents Scott upon his return to Canada, largely ignorant of his own country and uncertain of his own professional and intellectual direction. His mind was most occupied by the

artistic heritage of Europe and the absence of any comparable excellence in Canada. Only with his enrolment at McGill University did Scott begin to find his path, for through his eventual meeting with the poet-critic A.J.M. Smith, Scott became acquainted with modernist poetry. As illustrated by his contributions to The McGill Fortnightly Review and The Canadian Mercury, Scott simultaneously explored the new poetry, cultivated an interest in the constitutional future of Canada, and focussed his eye on the social nature of the aesthetic ugliness that had so offended him on his return to Canada. The ancient Laurentian landscape began to compensate for the missing antiquity of Europe and Scott abandoned his self-regarding poetic landscapes in favour of portraits of the autonomous Laurentian landscape, the elements of which soon dominated his poetry. Although Scott was becoming increasingly aware of the social and cultural structures that governed the lives of Canadians, only as the Depression settled over Canada did Scott acquire the critical economic perspective with which he refined his previously aesthetic and cultural discontent with Canada.

Chapter III, "The Depression Years, 1930-39", traces the politicization of the dutiful, critical intelligence that Scott had acquired under the influence of Canon Scott and A.J.M. Smith. Inspired by the model of J.S. Woodsworth, Scott fought politically and in his writings against the misery inflicted on the common man by the Depression. Through the L.S.R. and the C.C.F. he campaigned for and taught about the rational social order that could be shaped from the chaos of the Depression. He turned to the ordering principles of socialism and to satiric poetry to describe the economic and human problems, as well as to illustrate the possible solutions. Despite this heavy social interest, Scott's major poetic project during the 1930s, New Provinces, offers a more historical and even-handed portrait of his development as a poet. Although occupied by the Depression, the Spanish Civil War, and the threat of World War II, in New Provinces Scott downplayed his stringent social verse, itself expressing a great confidence in the future of socialism. The outbreak of World War II profoundly distressed Scott, for the socialists seemed to have failed to reshape the disorder of the 1930s, and Scott's once confident poetry was invaded by a petrifying sense of confusion.

Chapter IV, "The War Years and Beyond, 1940-49", focusses on Overture, itself both a retrospective text and a contemporary statement on the war. The text presents a portrait of Scott swinging between the fear that man has lost his way and the hope that man can triumph over his irrational and destructive nature. But as demonstrated in Chapter IV, Scott eventually convinced himself that collective man might yet transcend the destruction of the war and build anew in the post-war era. Accordingly, Scott turned his artistic and political attentions to the post-war era, often represented in his poems by the enticing, but elusive northern horizon. Scott passed much of the later 1940s trying to persuade artists to participate personally or in groups, in the necessary social reconstruction. After World War II, Scott's poetry lost the confident didacticism of the 1930s and he voiced a more subdued sense of organic renewal. Personally disappointed in the late 1940s by his professional rebuff at McGill University, Scott vowed to nourish his socially-conscious artistic temperament elsewhere.

Chapter V, "The Middle Years, 1952-62", documents Scott's various efforts to move artistically and intellectually beyond McGill University, without leaving

Quebec permanently. He became an active translator of the French Canadian poets, an activity that was to yield St Denys Garneau - Anne Hébert, founded the study group "Recherches Sociales", and went to Burma as a Technical Assistant on behalf of the United Nations. Under these new influences, Scott became increasingly introspective and in Events and Signals sought to define the elusive muse who led him in aesthetic and social directions. As demonstrated in Chapter V Scott was still possessed by an active socially critical sensibility that found expression in the two satiric volumes, The Eye of the Needle and The Blasted Pine. Even so, during these same years Scott was preparing his retirement from the partisan political landscape of Canada, an event marked by the transformation of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation into the New Democratic Party in 1961.

Chapter VI, "The Later Years, 1962-82", charts Scott's later years during which he has addressed two general subjects, the preparation of his valediction and the future of the Canadian Confederation. His characteristic blend of the retrospective and prophetic impulses has yielded the series of summary volumes, Signature,

Selected Poems, Trouvailles, The Dance Is One, Essays on the Constitution, Poems of French Canada, and Collected Poems.

In these summary texts, Scott has called upon Canadians to reconsider their cultural, historical, and constitutional roots, in order that they might make a responsible contribution to the future of the national and international communities to which Scott has been committed for decades.

Over the past sixty years, Scott's poetry has sprung from the often uneasy conjunction of his aesthetic and social imperatives, matching images of inevitable organic renewal to images of necessary social reconstruction. These cumulative regenerative images themselves suggest that collective man may yet attain a new Eden to be built by citizens believing in co-operative enterprise and working on rational social schemes. Such rationalized materialism has served only as the means by which Scott would enhance the creative human spirit, in order that the individual and the collectivity might advance each other. Inspired by this vision of social responsibility, Scott has significantly influenced the artistic and political culture of Canada. Born in the nineteenth century and drawn inevitably to the northern landscape, Scott has consistently evoked the organic, conservative social roots of Canada.

Simultaneously, he has urged Canadians to replace exploitative capitalism with a democratically-organized socialist society. Throughout his career as teacher and politician, as well as poet, Scott has pointed toward a vision of responsible freedom best defined in the poems on the Laurentian landscape, where the northern horizon offers limitless and yet elusive freedom.

As illustrated in the six chapters of the dissertation, Scott's poetry has grown from and illuminated his evolving social consciousness. The Depression, World War II, and the post-war period of reconstruction have intensified his inherited sense of need to educate Canadians about their potential for change.

Despite this long concern with the artistic and political potential of Canada, Scott has grown stronger in his commitment to a universalist perspective. He has worked to improve and to preserve Canada which in its ideal state would serve as the organic social symbol of the co-operative relations to be pursued by international man. Scott has drawn from the Canadian landscape clear and hard images of an often austere natural balance that he has advocated for

man at the national and international level, reminding the reader of the collective and individual sacrifices necessary for mutual well-being. When teaching or campaigning, at home or abroad, F.R. Scott has offered clear images of a personal and social equilibrium that derives from the regenerative Laurentian landscape into which he himself was born and into which universal man may yet grow.

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Scott's papers are now the property of the Public Archives of Canada. During the acquisition of the papers, the titles of some files were changed and there is now some slight variation from the original titles.

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