uOttawa

L'Université canadienne
Canada's university

FACULTÉ DES ÉTUDES SUPÉRIEURES ET POSTOCTORALES

uOttawa

L'Université canadienne
Canada's university

FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSDOCTORAL STUDIES

Thomas Patrick Hood

AUTEUR DE LA THÈSE / AUTHOR OF THESIS

Ph.D. (English Literature-spec: Canadian Studies)

GRADE / DEGREE

Department of English

FACULTÉ, ÉCOLE, DÉPARTEMENT / FACULTY, SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT

Unearthing the Enigma: Sir Charles G.D. Roberts and the Supernatural

TITRE DE LA THÈSE / TITLE OF THESIS

David Staines

DIRECTEUR (DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS SUPERVISOR

CO-DIRECTEUR (CO-DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS CO-SUPERVISOR

EXAMINATEURS (EXAMINATRICES) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS EXAMINERS

Gwendolyn Davies

Klaus Peter Stich

Janice Fiamengo

Gerald Lynch

Gary W. Slater

Le Doyen de la Faculté des études supérieures et postdoctorales / Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

Unearthing the Enigma: Sir Charles G.D. Roberts and the Supernatural

Thomas Patrick Hodd, M.A.

Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the Ph.D. degree in English, with specialization in Canadian Studies

Department of English
Faculty of Arts
University of Ottawa

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-25875-0
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-25875-0

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank David Staines, teacher, friend and mentor, who decided several years ago that a young man's ideas were worth nurturing.

To members of the English department at the University of Ottawa, especially Janice Fiamengo and David Rampton, thank you for recognizing that this topic was worth pursuing. I would also like to thank David Bentley at the University of Western Ontario, for without your early encouragement this project would never have become a reality. To my internal examiners, Janice Fiamengo, Gerald Lynch, and Peter Stitch, and to my external examiner, Gwendolyn Davies, thanks so much for your insightful comments and helpful suggestions on how to strengthen my argument. To John Ralston Saul, thank you for your patience and support, and for making me a better writer without even knowing it. Thanks also to Maurie Barrett, librarian at Rideau Hall, who was of immeasurable help during the early stages of my research.

Thank you to my family, who never stopped believing that I could succeed. And finally to Carrie, Sam, and Jeremy, thank you for keeping me grounded, and for reminding me that school is not the most important thing in life.

Abstract

Scholars approaching the work of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts face two problems: first, a critical mass that divides his work along genre lines and second, limited theoretical frameworks on which to build a discussion, namely, British Romanticism or American Transcendentalism.

An alternative critical lens through which to explore Roberts's oeuvre is supernaturalism. Chapter 1 offers a summary of Roberts scholarship and a discussion of current critical frameworks. Chapter 2 contextualizes Roberts's interest in the supernatural through an examination of occult currents of thought during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, as well as Roberts's friendships, letters, and related publications. Chapters 3 to 5 proceed chronologically through an examination of how the supernatural manifested itself in his prose fiction: Chapter 3 explores his earliest supernatural stories from *Earth's Enigmas*; Chapter 4 discusses his Acadian works; Chapter 5 explores his later prose fiction, beginning with *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* and ending with his last novel, *In the Morning of Time*. Chapter 6 acts as a corollary to the other chapters through a chronological examination of Roberts's major collections of verse.

A reexamination of Roberts's personal writings and acquaintances during key moments in his life reveals a bio-critical void in scholarship that has effectively obscured his affinity for esoteric ideas and for artists who held similar interests. An investigation of his works also reveals that the supernatural manifested itself in his poetry and prose fiction throughout his career. Evidence suggests that the supernatural was a pervasive influence on his life and that he found in esoteric traditions perspectives on the afterlife that could help him articulate his spiritual struggles.

Table of Contents

Prologue: A Brief Biography of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts (1860-1943)

Charles George Douglas Roberts was born on January 10, 1860 in Douglas, New Brunswick, the first-born son of a conservative Anglican family. His father, Reverend Goodridge Roberts, was an Oxford scholar and Anglican priest, and at the time of Roberts's birth was serving as pastor for the parish of Douglas. His mother, Emma Bliss, came from a similar educated background: her father, the Honourable George Pidgeon Bliss, was a former receiver-general of New Brunswick and a descendent of United Empire Loyalists; her great-grandfather, the Reverend Daniel Bliss, was also the great-grandfather of the American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson. When Roberts was only a few months old, the family moved to Westcock, near Sackville, New Brunswick where the Reverend Goodridge Roberts took up duties as Rector of Westcock parish. Four years later, Charles's sister Jane was born, followed by his second brother, Goodridge, in 1870. While living in Westcock, Roberts would also discover one of his most enduring muses: the Tantramar River.

For the first thirteen years of his life, Roberts's time was spent under the watchful eye of his father, who instilled in him a passion for reading and the outdoors. In 1873, the family moved to Fredericton where the Reverend Goodridge Roberts began his new position as rector of Saint Ann's Church. Within a year of their arrival, Roberts's second brother, William, was born, followed by the youngest brother, Theodore, in 1877. Shortly after their move, Roberts was enrolled at the Fredericton Collegiate School, which he attended from 1874-76 along with his cousins, Andy Straton and Bliss Carman. During this time, Roberts and Carman came under the mentorship of Sir George R. Parkin, a gifted teacher and Oxford scholar who took the two pupils under his wing and imparted to them a passion for poetry

and learning. After graduating as a gold-medallist from the Collegiate school, Roberts spent three years at the University of New Brunswick, where he received his Bachelor of Arts with honours in Mental and Moral Science, and Political Economy. In the fall of 1879, he accepted the principalship of the Chatham High School and Grammar School and moved north-east to the small town of Chatham, New Brunswick.

The year 1880 marked two significant events in his life: on December 29 he married Mary Fenety, an attractive but petulant daughter of the Queen's Printer for New Brunswick. That same year he published his first collection of verse, *Orion, and Other Poems*, which garnered favourable reviews in Canada and abroad. He also sent copies of his newly published book to Tennyson, Arnold, Swinburne, Longfellow, Holmes, and Whitman, and much to his delight, received encouraging responses from Arnold and Holmes. Roberts later learned that his collection deeply influenced fellow Canadian poet Archibald Lampman who, after being lent a copy of the book, had "sat up most of the night reading and re-reading 'Orion'" ("Two Canadian Poets: A Lecture").

Roberts felt increasingly isolated in Chatham, so in January, 1882, he accepted the principalship at the York Street School in Fredericton and he and Mary returned to the comfort of family and friends. Later that spring, his first son Athelstan was born. After only a year at the York Street School, Roberts left his duties as school principal to become an editor in Toronto for Goldwin Smith's new paper, *The Week*. Unfortunately, this venture also fell short of Roberts's expectations: long hours and editorial disagreements with Smith, coupled with Smith's constant championing of annexation with the United States over Canadian independence, left Roberts with little choice but to resign his position after only twelve issues. The family returned to Fredericton during the summer of 1884, and a few months later Roberts's second son, Lloyd, was born. With few long-term job prospects and a

growing family, he spent the next year doing free-lance work. In the spring of 1885, he was offered a position at King's College in Windsor, Nova Scotia as Professor of English, Economics, and French Literature. He accepted and moved to Windsor, followed by his wife and two sons a year later. The Roberts family would remain in Windsor for the next nine years.

Roberts's Windsor home became the literary centre of the college and a meeting place for aspiring writers such as Bliss Carman, Carman's friend Richard Hovey, and many others from the United States and Great Britain. From a writer's perspective, Roberts's ten years at King's College proved to be some of the most productive of his career, not just in terms of volume but also in type of publication: he published a range of different texts, including a translation of Aubert de Gaspé's 1863 romance *Les Anciens Canadiens* entitled *The Canadians of Old* (1890), travel guides such as *The Canadian Guide-Book* (1891) and *The Land of Evangeline and the Gateways Thither* (1895), his second and third collections of verse, *In Divers Tones* (1886) and *Songs of the Common Day and Ave!: An Ode for the Shelley Centenary* (1893), and three novelettes--*The Raid from Beauséjour and How the Carter Boys Lifted the Mortgage* (1894) and *Reube Dare's Shad Boat* (1895).

In contrast to Roberts's literary success were the mounting stresses in his personal life. Soon after their move to Windsor, the Roberts family grew from four to six with the birth of Edith in September, 1886, followed by Douglas in 1888; while at King's College, Roberts also became involved in a string of extra-marital relationships, a behaviour that followed him throughout his entire adult life. Compounding the situation was the tragic death of his younger brother, Goodridge, from influenza in February, 1892. Roberts also believed that he deserved a better appointment than King's College, and from early on in his tenure began writing to friends and acquaintances in the hopes of securing a more prestigious

position; but the appointment never came. After ten years of financial and emotional frustration, Roberts resigned from King's College in the spring of 1895.

The year following his departure from King's College, Roberts published four books, three of which were fiction: *Around the Campfire*, a group of adventure stories for boys; *Earth's Enigmas*, a collection of nature stories; and *The Forge in the Forest*, a romance set in eighteenth-century Acadia. The fourth publication was a collection of verse entitled *The Book of the Native*, although much of the manuscript had been prepared while he was still at King's College. Significantly, included in *Earth's Enigmas* were some of his earliest animal stories, a literary genre whose creation is attributed to Roberts and Ernest Thompson Seton. Later that year he was asked by his friend, Frank Bellamy, to come to New York City and be his assistant for the New York weekly, *The Illustrated American*. Roberts obliged, and departed for New York City in February 1897.

Although his family was now far away in Fredericton, Roberts was not alone in New York: soon after his arrival, he reunited with Carman as well as Richard and Henrietta (Russell) Hovey. He also helped find work for his brothers later that year: Will joined the *Illustrated American* in the summer of 1897, while Theodore obtained a position on the *Independent* in November. But tragedy struck once more: Athelstan contracted typhoid fever and died of complications on October 16. Roberts never recovered from the shock, and several years later would dedicate his *Selected Poems* (1936) to his eldest son.

Roberts spent only eleven months at *The Illustrated American* before turning to writing full-time, and over the next several years his list of publications grew considerably. Between 1898 and 1904 he published three Acadian titles: *A Sister to Evangeline* (1898), a companion novel to *The Forge in the Forest*; *By the Marshes of Minas* (1900), a collection of short stories; and *The Prisoner of Mademoiselle* (1904), his third and last Acadian romance.

After 1898, Roberts also began to write animal stories in earnest, and during the New York period he published three such collections, including *The Kindred of the Wild* (1902) as well as an animal novel, *Red Fox* (1905). Also published during this time were *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* (1900) and *Barbara Ladd* (1902), a novel about the American War of Independence that sold over 80,000 copies in the United States alone. In the midst of this success came the news that his father was dying: in October 1905 Canon Roberts contracted pneumonia and died soon after. Fittingly, one of the main characters in Roberts's next novel, *The Heart that Knows* (1906), would be modeled after his father.

In terms of poetry, Roberts's output during the New York years was meagre compared to his prose: *New York Nocturnes* was published in 1898, followed by his collected *Poems* in 1901. Two years later he published a second collection of love poems, *The Book of the Rose* (1903). Between 1903 and 1919, however, Roberts would not publish any new books of poetry, with the exception of an updated edition of *Poems* in 1907. His least popular publications during this period were in the genre of non-fiction: his *History of Canada*, originally submitted to the Dominion History Contest during the Windsor years, was published in 1897. Unfortunately, it was quickly superseded by better researched and more balanced histories. Similarly, *Discoveries and Explorations in the Century* (1903) is a lengthy and laborious work that served as Volume XIV of a history of the nineteenth century.

While living in New York City, Roberts began to take frequent trips abroad. In 1899, he spent several months in England accompanied by his son, Lloyd, and brother, Will. In March, 1903 he visited his friend Francis Sherman in Havana, and then spent the summer of 1904 visiting parts of continental Europe while writing the manuscript for *The Prisoner of Mademoiselle*. Three years later he returned to Europe, this time to visit Italy. He returned to

North America in late summer, but left again for Europe only a few months later. His departure from New York in November 1907 would signal a new chapter in his life, for he would spend the next eighteen years living in various parts of Europe.

After brief stints in Paris and Munich, Roberts finally settled in London in 1912. Two years later, he joined the war effort, first serving as an instructor for young officers before joining the War Records Office in London, and then traveling to the Western Front as a Special Press Correspondent with the Canadian Corps. But his main literary contribution to Canada's war effort was a piece of non-fiction: *Canada in Flanders* (1918). During his years in London, Roberts also published two novels, one before the war and one after: the first book was a romance about political intrigue in the Balkans, entitled *A Balkan Prince* (1913); the second book was an experimental novel set in pre-history, *In the Morning of Time* (1919). His greatest number of publications during this time, however, was in the genre of the animal-story: between 1907 and 1924, he published more than a dozen collections of animal stories. In terms of verse, Roberts wrote little poetry during these years, but managed to collect enough new poems to publish a slim volume in 1919, aptly titled *New Poems*.

After the war, Roberts divided his time between writing, socializing, and traveling. Difficult times were to follow, though: in June 1922, his old mentor, George Parkin, passed away, followed by the sudden death of his sister Jane in November, and then his mother the following February. His pain was eased somewhat by visits from old friends such as Frank Verbeck and a former student from King's College, Robert Norwood. He also enjoyed short stays from Bliss Carman, as well as his son, Douglas, in the spring of 1924. The following winter, Lloyd cabled his father with the offer to arrange a cross-Canada tour for him; Roberts agreed. He arrived in New York on February 4, 1925; the next day he was in Toronto.

At the age of sixty-five, Roberts returned to Canada to rekindle his poetic career. He gave recitals across Ontario and Western Canada, and in Vancouver became close friends with several members of the Vancouver Poetry Society. He then returned to Toronto, and took up permanent residence in a suite at the Ernescliffe Apartments on Wellesley Street. That fall, he went on a recital tour of Quebec and Atlantic Canada. Over the next few years, he would perform countless lecture tours and recitals, participate several times at the Muskoka Assembly, and make frequent trips to Vancouver. In 1926, he was awarded the first Lorne Pierce Medal for "achievements in creative or imaginative literature." He then published a new poetry collection, *The Vagrant of Time*, in April 1927, and later that summer was elected national president of the Canadian Authors' Association, a position he held for the next two years. But with old age came sad realities: on June 8, 1929 Carman died of a sudden heart seizure; the next year his estranged wife Mary passed away; Robert Norwood collapsed from a cerebral hemorrhage in September, 1932.

In 1934, Roberts published another new collection of verse, *The Iceberg and Other Poems*. Also appearing that year was Volume One of the *Canadian Who Was Who*, an encyclopedia of Canadian biographies for which Roberts served as general editor. His *Selected Poems*, chosen by him, was published by Ryerson Press in 1936. Two other collections of his verse would be published before his death in 1943: *Canada Speaks of Britain and Other Poems of War* (1941), a slim volume of Roberts's own war poetry, and *Flying Colours* (1942), an anthology of war poems edited with an introduction by Roberts. The pinnacle of his literary achievements came on May 18, 1935, when he received word that he would be knighted.

During the late 1930s Roberts had developed a relationship with Joan Montgomery, a woman nearly fifty years his junior who had worked with him on Volume Two of *Canadian*

Who Was Who. The couple was married on October 28, 1943. A short time later, Roberts became ill and was admitted to hospital: he died on November 26, only four weeks after the wedding.

Chapter 1: A Summary of Critical Approaches to Roberts

Praised in his own lifetime as "The Father of Canadian Poetry," in recent years Charles G.D. Roberts has received limited attention from scholars. In the last fifteen years fewer than a dozen articles on Roberts have appeared, and most of these are biographical in approach and offer limited critical insight. The last full critical treatment of Roberts appeared in 1969, and of the few full-length studies published recently on late nineteenth-century Canadian writers, Roberts is not approached singularly but as part of the Confederation group of poets, a scholarly decision that forces readers to consider his work in relation to the group's motives as a whole instead of treating it as a function of his personal creative vision.[1]

Given his prodigious literary output during a career that spanned six decades, it is difficult to explain why so few full-length studies have been published. In the last one hundred years of Roberts scholarship, only five monographs have appeared, and none can boast substantial depth or length of argument.[2] The first appeared in 1905 and remains the most succinct analysis of his early verse: James Cappon's *Charles G.D. Roberts and the Influence of His Times* analyzes Roberts's first six poetry collections, beginning with *Orion, and Other Poems* and ending with *The Book of the Rose*, which he erroneously calls *The Rose of Life*. He establishes a critical overview of Roberts's work by demonstrating trends of influence on each collection, ranging from Roberts's classical imitations in *Orion, and Other Poems* to his debt to Keats and Shelley in *Songs of the Common Day and Ave!* and his Swinburne-inspired poems in *The Book of the Rose*. The second monograph on Roberts, also by Cappon and appearing in 1925, is essentially a repackaging of his earlier study: added to the "Appreciation" chapter, which is a minor revision of his 1905 study, are selections of

Roberts's verse as well as a biographical chapter purported to be written by Lorne Pierce and not Cappon himself.[3] The third study is W.J. Keith's *Charles G.D. Roberts* (1969), which offers readers little more than a broad critical assessment of Roberts's work, dividing his exploration into chapters on poetry, the animal stories, and other works of fiction in a sweeping attempt to "sift and discriminate, to try to distinguish between the permanent and the expendable" (24). The most recent monograph on Roberts is Terry Whalen's *Charles G.D. Roberts and His Works* (1989), a succinct but slim study of Roberts's fiction that complements Fred Cogswell's earlier monograph on Roberts's poetry of the same title (1983). Significantly, Keith's study remains the only published attempt to explore Roberts's oeuvre as a whole.[4]

One major difficulty for scholars who approach the work of Roberts is the breadth of his publications. In addition to his nine major collections of verse, Roberts published ten novels, more than 230 animal stories, several short-story collections, and a host of non-fiction titles on topics ranging from Acadia and the nineteenth century to travel-guides and Canada's role in the First World War. Moreover, as Keith (1969) notes, "he was continually moving from one genre to another, often following the fashion of the moment, and never concentrating his abilities on the mastery of a particular literary form" (21). The result, Keith argues, has been "the splitting of his readership into at least two groups. Many who have encountered his animal-stories or his prose romances...have made no attempt to familiarize themselves with his verse, while those who know him as a poet are often uninterested in, or even unaware of, his work in prose" (21).

Reviewing Roberts scholarship during the last hundred years would appear to support Keith's claim. Criticism of Roberts is typically divided along genre lines: poetry, animal stories, and other fiction. The majority of critical interest lies with Roberts's poetry, even

though most of his poems were published between 1880 and 1907. Of the nine major collections he published during his lifetime, six were published during this period and only three appeared between 1919 and 1943.[5] The later collections were also considerably shorter in length than the previous books.[6] Among his early poetic works, "The Tantramar Revisited" stands out as his most original poem, whereas his most "nationalist" poem is by far the early piece entitled "Canada," included as part of *In Divers Tones*.[7] Scholars have also discussed at length his collection *Songs of the Common Day and Ave!*, particularly the motifs operating in his ode to Shelley as well as the structure and themes in his sequence of "seasonal" sonnets. *The Book of the Native* is viewed as a transitional collection of verse and the start of a decline in Roberts's art, even though its poems are often cited rather than analyzed. The collections from his "New York" years, *New York Nocturnes* and *The Book of the Rose*, have received the least attention and praise from critics, generally dismissed as urban-inspired lyrics in the case of *New York Nocturnes* or weak erotic verses in *The Book of the Rose*. Of his later poetry, little has been said with the exception of John Coldwell Adams's "Sir Charles G.D. Roberts's Later Poetry, 1926-1942" (1978), Les McLeod's article on "The Iceberg" (1984) and Donald Conway's "Roberts and Modernism: the Achievement of 'The Squatter'" (1984). Critics also cite his late poem "Two Rivers" as a strongly autobiographical piece to explain Roberts's apparently contradictory temperament.[8] But these are only limited commentaries: his meagre poetic output after 1907 has resulted in a general lack of critical understanding of his later work.

By far the best known of Roberts's publications are his animal stories. Hailed as a distinctly Canadian genre, the modern animal story enjoyed immense popularity at the beginning of the twentieth century through figures such as Roberts and Ernest Thompson Seton, who challenged the anthropomorphizing fictions of their literary predecessors by

attempting to portray accurately the psychology of an animal's motives. Their popularity also sparked an international debate among scholars, who argued over whether Roberts or Seton should be acknowledged as the sole creator of the modern animal story. Many argue that Seton, certainly the more popular of the two in terms of sales for his *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1898), deserves most, if not all the credit.[9] As for Roberts's work, critics have limited their discussions to a handful of oppositional stances; that is, they argue whether his animal stories reflect accurate natural observation or inventive, fictitious prose; whether the animals presented are realistic, anthropomorphic, or display instinct or reason; and more generally, whether Roberts was scientifically influenced (by Darwin) or Romantically-inspired when he wrote the stories. Despite the vast number of stories he produced, the international controversy they helped fuel, and the lasting popularity of the genre, Roberts's animal stories remain of less importance to scholars than his poetry.[10]

The third category in Roberts's oeuvre, other fiction, is generally dismissed by critics as having been written for financial gain and possesses little, if any, aesthetic value. What criticism does exist on his other fiction explores his treatment of the romance or the influence of Acadian folklore on his work.[11] The exception to this rule is *The Heart of the Ancient Wood*, which has received the most critical attention of all his other romances combined: its blurring of romance and realism, use of myth, and portrayal of the kinship between human and animal have made it an important text in understanding the evolution of Roberts's animal stories.

In addition to addressing a critical mass that divides Roberts's work along genre lines, scholars approaching his writings must contend with a second difficulty: dealing with the two major critical trends in Roberts scholarship, British Romanticism or American Transcendentalism, as the critical framework on which to build their discussions. Most

critics choose the former school. McLeod (1984a) notes that the term "Romantic...has been so consistently applied to the poetry of the last part of Canada's nineteenth century that a critical consensus may be said to exist on the matter" (2). And D.G. Jones (1970) declares that the Confederation poets "were clearly influenced by the nineteenth-century Romantics" (90). Similarly, in title and editorial approach Tracy Ware's *A Northern Romanticism: Poets of the Confederation* (2000) perpetuates the notion of a period of Canadian literature that shaped Romantic ideology to suit its own, unique vision of landscape.[12] Roberts's own debt to the Romantics is well-represented by scholars, most of them focusing on *Ave*, the influence of Keats on his early work, and on Wordsworth's presence in "The Tantramar Revisited."[13]

Roberts's reflections reveal that the Romantic writers played a significant role in his development. In his letters, for instance, he makes several references to Shelley and Keats, praising them for their craft. In an early letter to Charles Leonard Moore, he describes Keats as "that most glorious young Titan of poets" (July 14, 1884; *Collected Letters* 40), reiterating to Moore a few months later that he "worships" Keats and that "the very name of Keats is to me like a breath from the gardens of spice" (September 20, 1884: *Letters* 42). Several years later he would lament to Robert Underwood: "No, I haven't written anything in verse about Keats, though I have often wanted to. He is one of my gods" (August 20, 1905; *Letters* 275). His interest in Shelley was equally strong, although it is evident in his publications instead of personal declarations. His praise for Shelley is reflected in his 1892 ode to Shelley, *Ave*; an edition of *Alistair and Adonais* (1902); and a review of Shelley scholarship.[14] The influence of Wordsworth is less pronounced, amounting to passing mention in book reviews,[15] a visit to Wordsworth's cottage,[16] and one essay on Wordsworth's poetry, included in James Wetherell's *Selections from Wordsworth* (1892), although much of the essay is spent

justifying his selection of poems in response to what he called Matthew Arnold's tendency to "overestimate" the genius of Wordsworth's oeuvre (272).

Running concurrent to this scholarship are critics who look to the New World and American Transcendentalism to explain Roberts's intellectual and literary influences, a line of criticism confined mostly to Roberts's poetry.[17] Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, for instance, is discussed in relation to "The Tantramar Revisited" or, in the case of Janice Kulyk Keefer (1994), to Roberts's use of the Evangeline myth in his romance *A Sister to Evangeline*. Comparatively, most scholars tend to read Emerson's influence into his work, chief among them Cappon (1905), who suggests that Roberts's "Quest of the Arbutus" from *The Book of the Native* is "pure Emersonian optimism with touches of Emersonian phrase" (36). Desmond Pacey (1958) and D.M.R. Bentley (1989) see Emerson's influence mainly in *Songs of the Common Day and Ave!*: Pacey argues, for example, that "Autochthon" is "a not particularly memorable excursion into Emerson monism" (51), and Bentley suggests readers are "being asked to contemplate Emersonian Ideals" in the book's series of sonnets (399). The two least considered Transcendentalists in Roberts's work are Walt Whitman and Henry David Thoreau. Although Roberts wrote an introduction to *Walden* (1899), he makes almost no other mention of Thoreau in his writings; likewise, proof of his admiration for Whitman and Longfellow are sparse.[18] Only Cappon (1925) and Jean Mallinson (1976) have noted echoes of Whitman in Roberts's work[19]; as for Thoreau, William Archer notes in *Poets of the Younger Generation* (1902) that "there is something of Thoreau in Mr. Roberts's endowment...but withal his note is original" (363), yet no scholar since has attempted to explore this link, a surprising omission given Roberts's interest in Thoreau's work.[20]

Roberts's own admission of interest in the American Transcendentalists centres on Emerson. He declares in a letter to Bliss Carman that "the greatest of American Poets are

Emerson and Lanier" (March 22, 1886; *Letters* 59), and he refers frequently to Emerson in his book reviews, especially in his earlier pieces. [21] He admitted to Lorne Pierce that "Emerson interested me greatly, in both his poems and his verse" (74), but shied away from admitting to ideological similarities:

> Pierce: Were you sympathetic to his transcendentalism?
>
> Roberts: Very much so, but it was a general impression and not the acceptance of a system of thought." (Whalen 1987, 74)

Yet in his 1933 address to the Elson Club in Toronto, Roberts seems to contradict himself by suggesting that the Canadian poets of his generation "drew one strong stream of influence from Emerson and the New England school of transcendentalists, to whom it is heavily in debt for its philosophy and for its employment of the plain, blunt words of common speech" (82). Moreover, his belief that his generation drew on writers who employed "plain, blunt words" immediately implicates the verse of Walt Whitman, and possibly even the writings of Thoreau. Nevertheless, the most pervasive American influence on him was Emerson, though his championing of Emerson may also reflect the fact that they were distant relatives.[22]

Both approaches to Roberts, Romanticism and Transcendentalism, have yielded their detractors. Critics such as Gerald Noonan (1982) and McLeod (1984a) reject the notion that Roberts was an unrepentant disciple of the British Romantics, arguing instead that his work reflects more accurately a kind of "post-Romanticism." McLeod in particular believes that all the major nineteenth-century Canadian poets "chose, more or less consciously, a Romantic approach and vocabulary" (5) to express the philosophy of their generation but that their approach was influenced by Objective or Evolutionary Idealism. The result, in McLeod's opinion, is that their "Romantic approach" through Evolutionary Idealism caused the Canadian vision to shift to a uniquely "ironic" view of Nature (1). Mallinson (1976) evokes a

similar sentiment to that of McLeod and Noonan, although she believes that Roberts's best work depended on his rejection of the Romantic ideology rather than adapting it to his personal poetic vision: "when [Roberts] was able to forget the ambiguous burden of late Romantic preconceptions and lose himself in that landscape which he called 'stern, overwhelming, vast, weird' his work did not prove tame" (38). Likewise, Patricia Morley (1977) claims that transcendentalism "[is] too American a term" to apply to the animal stories of people like Roberts (354), a charge echoed later by McLeod: "the Post-Romantic poets necessarily rejected the vision of a new Eden so central to the American Transcendentalists" and that Transcendentalism was "part of the ironic disguise of Canadian nature poetry rather than part of its essence" (15-16). But these few dissenters offer little counter-voice to the host of scholars who embrace the critical status quo of working within the Romantic or Transcendentalist framework when treating Roberts's poetry.

These two critical frameworks have produced interesting scholarly results and offered readers entry points into understanding Roberts's work. By and large, however, such readings are limited to Roberts's poetry, and no study to date has attempted to read either Romanticism or Transcendentalism across Roberts's oeuvre. One reason for this narrow focus may lie in the basic argument that both approaches are traditionally associated with schools of poetic thought, and therefore critics have chosen not to apply such tenets to different genres; another possibility is that Roberts's writings do not possess an underlying philosophy that transcends the genre boundaries of his work. Keith (1969) believes this to be the case: "[w]hile there are interesting and important connections to be drawn between his work in different genres, there is nothing that inevitably and impressively holds the whole corpus together–no unified view" (21-22). Indeed, when faced with the problem of how to approach the breadth of Roberts's work, Keith feels that it is best "not to raise an elaborate

artificial structure into which the whole of Roberts can be fitted or forced, but rather to sift and discriminate, to try to distinguish between the permanent and the expendable" (24). Thus, his monograph is meant to serve chiefly as a critical assessment of Roberts's oeuvre rather than a way to understand or approach it. But his rationale in choosing not to argue for a unified view inherent in Roberts's writings suggests avoidance on the part of Keith rather than a confrontation with the central critical question: what holds Roberts's entire corpus together?

A clue may lie in two of Roberts's essays on the Romantics. In the concluding paragraph to "Wordsworth's Poetry" (1892), he offers the following statement about the poet's vision: "Wordsworth's peculiar province is that border-land wherein Nature and the heart of Man act and react upon each other. His vision is occupied not so much with Nature as with the relations between Nature and his inmost self. No other poet, of our race at least, has made so definite and intelligible the terms of our communion with external Nature" (274-5). For Roberts, the poetry of Wordsworth is more than the aesthetic appreciation of nature: it is a form of spiritual praise that acknowledges the mystical interrelation between nature and man that bears witness to the "communion" between humans and the natural world.

This notion of nature as a catalyst for spiritual experience is reiterated in "The Poetry of Nature" (1897), which offers an even more intense portrayal of Roberts's belief in the mysteries of Nature. He suggests there are two classes of nature-poetry: the first is poetry of "description" (276), while the other "treats of nature in some one of its many relations with humanity" (276). The remainder of the essay is an elaboration on these two concepts, although the majority of Roberts's comments are directed towards the second class. With regard to the second class, he attempts to trace the tradition of a higher, more symbolic form

of nature-poetry that began with the Greeks and Romans, transitioned through the Celtic bards and the Renaissance, and can be seen in the most recent of English verse traditions, the Romantic poets. Significantly, when summarizing the nature-poetry of the Romantics Roberts pays particular attention to the relationship their verse bears to the supernatural. He contends, for instance, that Wordsworth's best poetry "is to be found in the utterances of the high-priest in nature's temple, interpreting the mysteries" (280), likening the poet's role to that of a prophet or poetic oracle that deciphers the rich enigmas of the earth. Likewise, he declares that Keats's soul is "aflame with the worship of beauty" and that he used "the manifestations of beauty in the world...as symbols to express other aspects of the same compelling spirit" (280). Although it is not clear what Roberts meant by "same compelling spirit," the language he uses in this passage suggests that in Roberts's opinion Keats, like Wordsworth, used symbols of nature to articulate deeper, more spiritual mysteries of life.

The most mystical of the Romantics in Roberts's estimation is Shelley, who added to poetry "the note of nature-worship [and] saw continually in nature the godhead which he sought and adored" (280). More importantly, Roberts suggests that

> [m]ost of Shelley's nature-poetry carries a rich vein of pantheism, allied to that which colours the oldest verse of time and particularly characterizes ancient Celtic song. With this significant and stimulating revival of that strong sense of kinship, of the oneness of earth and man, which the Greeks and Latins felt so keenly at times, which Omar knew and uttered, and which underlies so much of the verse of these later days. (280)

His mention of "pantheism," which he aligns with ancient Celtic song, suggests that Roberts places Shelley within a long-standing tradition of supernatural verse that explores the relationship between humankind and the cosmos, a tradition he links to the medieval Persian

astronomer-poet, Omar Khayyam, and his mystical collection of quatrains, the *Rubaiyat*, as well as the "verse of these later days."[23]

Most telling is Roberts's conclusion to "The Poetry of Nature," in which he likens the role of the poet to that of a visionary who explores the mysteries of nature to its rightful mystical end: "And whosoever follows the inexplicable lure of beauty, in colour, form, sound, perfume, or any other manifestation, – reaching out to it as perhaps a message from some unfathomable past, or a premonition of the future, – knows that the mystic signal beckons nowhere more imperiously than from the heights of nature-poetry" (281). Roberts's insistence on the metaphor of the poet as seer, evidenced in the phrase "a message from some unfathomable past, or a premonition of the future," is in keeping with his core reading of the Romantics, namely, that Nature is a catalyst through which knowledge of the universe may be revealed to those who are open to receiving its "mystic signal."

M.H. Abrams (1971) argues that the general tendency of Romanticism "was, in diverse degrees and ways, to naturalize the supernatural and to humanize the divine" (68). Given Roberts's early interest in the Romantic poets and the supernatural rhetoric he employs in his essays to describe Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley, perhaps there is a third critical approach available to Roberts scholars, one that reconciles his affinity for Romanticism and Transcendentalism under a broader banner that relates to the supernatural.

Chapter 2: Contextualizing Roberts's Interest in the Supernatural

A long history of critical reference exists in relation to Roberts's interest in the supernatural. Beginning with the earliest Roberts scholars, critics have continually remarked over the years the ways in which he employed elements of the otherworldly in his writing. Unfortunately, two critical problems have emerged that have historically hampered any attempt at a reading of the supernatural reading in Roberts: first, comments on his relationship to the supernatural are typically isolated moments of analysis that pertain to a particular genre of his work, such as his poetry or his fiction, and thus have gone largely unnoticed by critics not working on that genre. Second, the majority of critical references have been obscured by the countless ways in which scholars have described Roberts's supernaturalism over the decades.[1] By connecting the disparate comments made during the last one hundred years, though, we soon discover that there is a pervasive line of discourse that has only scratched the surface of his interest in the supernatural and in occluded forms of knowledge.

Cappon (1905) contends that Roberts's abilities as a poet were at their apex when he turned away from his idyll imitations of Keats and Shelley to focus on lyrical poems and natural description verse, such as that found in "The Tantramar Revisited" or in his sonnet series from *Songs of the Common Day and Ave!*. More specifically, he argues: "a contemplative delicacy of feeling for nature is the chief characteristic of this class and they are best when they remain simply descriptive" (17). He also suggests Roberts's turning to this type of verse was markedly different "from the poets of to-day with their heavily essenced verse and deliberate mysticism" (17). Significantly, he would conclude his study by maintaining that Roberts's next collection will most likely be influenced by the same

"deliberate mysticism" he criticizes earlier in the book: "Bye and bye, I suppose we shall have airs from the *New Mysticism* of Miss Fionna [sic] Macleod and the Celtic School" (51).[2] More compelling are the poets Cappon believes reflect this interest in "deliberate mysticism." In his 1905 study, he suggests that Roberts's verse echoes that of Emerson, yet in his 1925 study he revises the list to include four additional poets, mostly contemporaries of Roberts, who are writing a similar kind of verse:

> In his greatest moods Mr. Roberts has realized 'The august infinitude of man.' Possibly only four or five American poets have done this in the elemental manner. For want of a better word we call it the cosmic touch. Bliss Carman has it in a marked degree, Walt Whitman also, and James Russell Lowell once in his 'Ode to Columbus.' Albert Durrant Watson possesses the same faculty, as may be seen in 'The Hills of Life' and "Under the Open Sky.' This is one of the greatest and least understood aspects of Roberts's work. (24)

Mysticism and theosophy in particular are common areas of discussion for each writer. Carman possessed an avid interest in the occult and mysticism, and by 1925 was already on the path to "rediscovering" an interest in theosophy.[3] Occultists have also championed Walt Whitman's verse in their writings, [4] and James Russell Lowell wrote an extensive essay on witchcraft in his 1870 collection *Among My Books*. Likewise, Albert Durrant Watson, a Toronto mystic, published the theosophically inspired text, *The Twentieth Plane: A Psychic Revelation* (1918), and later collaborated with Margaret Lawrence on *Mediums and Mystics: a Study of Spiritual and Psychic Forces* (1923).

Few of Cappon's colleagues would pursue Roberts's "least understood" area of influence. Critics like Archibald MacMechan (1924) and J.D. Logan and Donald F. French (1924) scarcely mention Roberts's interest in the supernatural, choosing instead to discuss

his debt to Keats and Shelley, although Logan discusses the "mysticism" of Carman as well as the "cosmic" verse of another Canadian poet-theosophist, Albert Ernest Stafford Smythe (224). Later studies, like those of Lionel Stevenson (1926), Lorne Pierce (1927), and Elsie Pomeroy (1932), display a more acute sensitivity to the mystical elements found in Roberts's work.[5] Although Pomeroy's article is the only focused analysis of Roberts's "philosophical mysticism," both Pierce and Stevenson align Roberts in their respective analyses with current paganistic religious movements by employing occult terminology to describe his work. In fact, all three critics describe his mystical poetry as displaying a sense of "cosmic consciousness," a blatant reference to Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke's 1901 spiritual treatise, *Cosmic Consciousness*, a text often noted for its treatment of theosophical tenets and which Roberts was likely familiar with.[6] Nor is it a coincidence that each critic employs the term "cosmic consciousness," since they are all linked to the occult movement in Canada: Pomeroy, for instance, later published criticism in the *Canadian Theosophist*. Similarly, Pierce was a friend and champion of Albert Durrant Watson, and published a pamphlet on him in which he describes Watson as a man "who unites in himself the poet's wonder and ecstasy, the mystic's insight and spiritual sensitiveness, as well as the scientist's exact knowledge" (17). Finally, Stevenson's *Appraisals of Canadian Literature* includes an overview chapter on "Canadian Poets and the New Universe" that mentions Roberts, Carman, and Lampman alongside several Canadian occult figures such as Watson, Smythe, and Wilson MacDonald; he too argues for the importance of Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness* during this timeframe. But such references are not surprising since Stevenson had ties to the Theosophical movement in Canada.[7] Roberts would give praise to Stevenson's book the following year in a letter to Craven Langstroth Betts: "You should by all means consult a

very comprehensive & judicious book by Dr Lionel Stevenson, which gives an invaluable & up-to-date survey of contemporary Canadian literature" (September 17, 1927; *Letters* 359).

Following Pomeroy's article in 1932, little was published about Roberts or his interest in the supernatural until the year of his death – a watershed of sorts for Roberts scholarship, since the two major publications for that year offered opposite stances about his place within Canadian literature. Elsie Pomeroy's biography has often been criticized for being nothing more than a thinly veiled autobiography and a work of hero-worship. Roberts himself played a major role in its genesis, and in a letter to Lorne Pierce he referred to it as "*our* book, –Elsie's & mine" (October 1, 1940; *Letters* 597). But what Pomeroy's biography did offer were additional insights into Roberts's affinity for things occult. For instance, she relates that during Roberts's tenure at King's College he communicated by Ouija Board with his dead friend Joseph Edmund Collins and "obtained certain results which almost seemed to imply something more than telepathy" (86). She also describes a parlour game played by Roberts and his friends called "Concentration," in which a subject is directed, while blindfolded, to a hidden object using the thought-waves of the other participants. Nor would this be her last mention of Roberts's link to the occult: she would publish two additional articles of note, one on Roberts, the other on his disciple, Robert Norwood, both articles appearing in *The Canadian Theosophist*.[8]

E.K. Brown's *On Canadian Poetry* (1943) makes no reference whatsoever to Roberts's interest in the supernatural or to the mystical elements contained in his work. In fact, he says little about Roberts or Carman at all, arguing instead that the three "pre-eminent masters" of Canadian poetry are Lampman, Duncan Campbell Scott, and E.J. Pratt and dedicates a chapter to each poet. More telling is his insistence that Roberts was a poet of natural description rather than substance. He claims Roberts to be "at his best when he deals

with the surface" (47) and that "[i]t would not be rewarding to linger over Roberts's interpretations of the inner meaning of nature. Never a poet of philosophical ideas, he was not intimately affected by the intellectual anxieties that *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man* had brought to the nature poets of Europe" (48).

In *Ten Canadian Poets* (1958), Desmond Pacey classifies Roberts's best verse into three categories: "objective descriptive poems...lyrics...and more pretentious but less satisfying poems in which he seeks by means of symbols to convey his sense of the immensity, grandeur, and power of the cosmos" (44). Of the three, Pacey believes that "[d]escription of places was his strong point, description in which the scenes described are related to basic but simple human emotions and actions" (49), a notion he would later expand to include his animal stories as well as his poetry.[9] Roberts's mystical poems were Pacey's least favourite of the three categories; he argued that their presence in Roberts's oeuvre owes not so much to his interest in mysticism as to the demands of his critics: "they encouraged him to attempt a type of subject-matter for which he was not suited" (39). His 1961 lecture is even more blunt in its assessment of Roberts's work: he suggests that his prose will not be remembered, nor the animal stories that involve humans as principal characters, nor his patriotic verse; as for his mystical poems, Pacey is "less fond" of them because they are "vague and rhetorical" (195).

In Carl F. Klinck's *Literary History of Canada* (1965), scholars attempted to capture the breadth and depth of Canadian literature. Roberts is well represented in this volume, chiefly in Roy Daniells's chapter on "Lampman and Roberts." Like many critics before him, Daniells argues that Roberts's poetry exists "within a framework of late Romantic convention, heavily influenced by the tradition that runs through English poetry from Wordsworth to Tennyson" (399). In fact, his chapter reads much like an echo of Brown's

earlier work, describing him as a poet of "less significance" than Lampman, whose main role was to influence Canadian letters rather than help create it and whose best work "is to be found in his descriptions of Canadian landscape" (400). In this superficial analysis, though, is to be found Daniells's recognition of a "cosmic spirit" operating in Roberts's verse: "Not even in his appreciation of a cosmic spirit in nature does his poetry show any advance; he records the revealing power of nature as clearly in the poems written before 1880 as in anything later" (399). Although Daniells is arguing that Roberts's lack of "advance" in this area is yet another weakness in his writing, he is implying that the "cosmic spirit" is a pervasive theme in Roberts's work.

The most striking statements in the *Literary History of Canada* about Roberts appear in Northrop Frye's "Conclusion." He suggests that the main intellectual movements which influenced *fin-de-siècle* Canadian poets like Roberts and Carman were largely occult in nature: "World-views that avoided dialectic, of a theosophical or transcendentalist cast, became popular among the Canadian poets of that time, Roberts and Carman particularly, and later among painters, as the reminiscences of the Group of Seven make clear. Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness*, though not mentioned by any of our authors so far as I remember, is an influential Canadian book in this area" (832). It is curious to note Frye's ordering of the two terms "theosophical" and "transcendentalist" to describe the work of Carman and Roberts. On the one hand, it could suggest that "theosophical" is meant to refer to Roberts and "transcendentalist" to Carman. If so, it is a bit surprising for Frye to make this comment since Carman was publicly known for his affinity with the theosophical movement. On the other hand, Frye may have intentionally grouped the terms together because he believed Theosophy and Transcendentalism were not mutually exclusive concepts. Regardless, Frye's evocation of Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness*, coupled with his suggestion that Roberts's

work reflected theosophical concepts, suggests a critical stance that deserves more than passing mention.

Since 1965 few critics have pursued this supernatural line of discourse. Keith (1969) discusses the poems that appeared under the title "Poems Philosophical and Mystical" in Roberts's *Selected Poems*, but ignores their mystical significance; instead, he categorizes them as "a rhetoric that provides a technical smokescreen to conceal the essential vacuity of what is being said" (35). James Polk (1972) declares that "throughout his life, Roberts was fascinated by the occult.... His interest in mysteries and coincidences shows up in several of his stories, the finest being 'The Perdu'" [a story from *Earth's Enigmas*] (85). But he offers little analysis or evidence for his claims. Carol Martell (1978) notes that the first section of *The Book of the Native* "bears the same title as the volume itself [and] is a pot-pourri of mystical and pseudo-religious poems" (58), yet she too fails to follow this line of discourse.

The most compelling arguments in relation to Roberts's use of the supernatural have appeared in the last twenty-five years. Donald Conway (1982) argues in his dissertation on Roberts that he was "a poet of vision, not a mystic" (24), and that his central poetic vision is related to the Idealist philosophy. Yet included in Conway's discussion at various points is his acknowledgement of Roberts's interest in the supernatural: for example, at one point he links Roberts's interest in Dante's *Divine Comedy* to his interest in the occult and astrology (45-48). He also suggests that Roberts's poetic vision was influenced by Richard Watson Gilder and Whitman in the mid-1880s, although he argues that it ultimately differed from their theosophical ideas because he adopted "a more abstract view" (162). In "Charles G.D. Roberts: Mystical Poet" (1984), Laurel Boone's abridged version of his 1937 essay, August Leisner explores Roberts's vision as a "nature mystic," suggesting that poetry collections like *The Book of the Native* possess "supra-cosmic depth" (275). Roberts praised Leisner for his

work, indicating to him in a letter: "No other critic, great or trivial, has ever seemed to have the slightest inkling of the philosophy which has, however feebly or obscurely, inspired my work from the very beginning. You have unerringly discerned it" (April 6, 1937; *Letters* 522). Bentley (1999) argues that Roberts incorporated Symbolist elements into his early fiction, and in *The Confederation Group of Poets, 1880-1897* (2004) he includes a chapter on "Supernaturalism" with respect to the group's main practitioners, although he focuses more on Carman, Lampman, and Campbell than on Roberts.

These comments on Roberts's interest in the supernatural suggest the possibility of a broader critical framework involving the spiritual world by which to explore and interpret his work. Before we embark on an in-depth exploration of Roberts's writing, it is imperative first to contextualize his interest in the supernatural to gain a better understanding of the extent to which he was influenced by occult currents of thought during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Only after a thorough examination of his acquaintances and friendships, letters, and the cultural milieu in which he wrote can we begin to investigate how he employed the supernatural in his oeuvre.

In March 1895, Roberts wrote to Susan Hayes Ward, his friend and poetry editor of the New York periodical *The Independent*, letting her know of his plans to visit New York in April.[10] Given his passion for the city's vibrant literary scene as well as Ward's contacts in the publishing world, it is not surprising that he would write to her and explain his intentions. But what makes this letter unique is that he does not come to his business matters directly, as was the case with the majority of his letters to Ward during the 1890s. Instead, he begins by thanking her for providing him with the details of the death of her mother, who had passed away sometime in February; he reflects on the significance of her letter and the implications of her mother's death before continuing, then confesses his sympathies for Spiritualism:

> I wonder if you will think my common-sense discredited if I say that I hold certain notions not utterly remote from Spiritualism! Don't think I am at all in sympathy with that fantastic stuff which charlatans have found so conducive to their trickery. But I do believe that the physical change called death interposes between ourselves and those who have passed ahead a less absolute barrier than is generally supposed. It has seemed to me at times, & in private, that the barrier was quite thin! (March 7, 1895; *Letters* 195)

This short passage suggests that Roberts had more than a cursory knowledge of occult movements. His use of such terminology as the thin "barrier" between life and death and the mere "physical change" brought by death demonstrates that he was familiar with the teachings of Spiritualism and the vocabulary of its practitioners. Furthermore, his reference to the "charlatans" and their "trickery" reveals that he was aware of the public outcry over fraudulent Spiritualist mediums that had plagued the movement since its beginnings in the 1840s. To appreciate how he would arrive at such familiarity with Spiritualism and related psychic phenomena, however, one needs to understand the context in which such movements arose in Canada in the mid-nineteenth century as well as what they offered to people whose orthodox Christian beliefs were being challenged by advances in science and industry.

The rise in popularity of Spiritualism was largely in response to a growing chasm between science and religion. Advances in astronomy, medicine and other material sciences, coupled with the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1861), as well as historical criticism of the Bible, led to serious challenges, both privately and publicly, to the infallibility of Christian orthodoxy. As a non-denominational movement that appealed to Christians as well as other religions, Spiritualism offered an alternative and somewhat reconciliatory perspective by basing its teachings on two

fundamental notions: first, the human spirit is immortal; second, after physical death the spirit persists within the cosmos and that through mediumistic activity, it is possible to communicate with these spirits.[11] The movement thus serves as a bridge between science and religion through its practitioners' argument that the psychic investigations are empirical in nature; that is, the resulting concrete manifestations of spirits in séances and other forms of spirit communication offer the living sufficient data to convince them of the afterlife.

Modern Spiritualism is usually traced to the small village of Hydesville in New York State. In March 1848 the young Fox sisters, Margaretta and Catherine, reported hearing mysterious "rappings" in their cottage bedroom and the family could not locate its source. Incredibly, when asked questions by the girls, such as "can you count to ten?", the mysterious force began to respond accordingly with the appropriate number of raps. Using this Question and Answer approach, they soon learned that the source of the rappings was a spirit named "C.B.," a man allegedly murdered by the previous owner of the cottage. The Foxes then called in various neighbours, who testified to hearing the rappings and who were also surprised at how much the spirit knew about their affairs. News of the rappings spread quickly, and by the next day large crowds gathered at the cottage to witness and possibly communicate with the "murdered" spirit.[12]

By 1850 the popularity of the Fox sisters and the "rappings" had grown far beyond the local community, attracting the attention of people such as P.T. Barnum, who had them give exhibitions in New York City at his hotel and at Barnum's Museum. The sisters also performed private séances at the home of Rev. Dr. Griswold, in the company of writers such as J. Fenimore Cooper and George Bancroft.[13] More compelling are the reported numbers of Spiritualists engaging in psychic experiments during these years: sources estimate that by 1855 there were 2,500,000 Spiritualists in the United States; by 1859, that number reached

11,000,000.[14] This increase in enthusiasm for Spiritualism also led to an increase in the number of practicing mediums, who soon expanded the repertoire of manifestations beyond rappings to include table-tilting, levitation of objects, and physical manifestations of the spirit such as ectoplasm or spirit fingerprints. Additional conduits for spirit communication, the *planchette* and the ouija board, would also become commonplace.

Spiritualism spread north to Canada. Ramsay Cook (1985) notes that by the 1850s, "spiritual activities had begun to arouse public interest [in Canada]" (66). He also mentions that it was often a pan-American activity: "spiritualists most frequently cross[ed] the border to western New York to participate in the Cassadaga Free Lake Association founded in 1879 (later rechristened Lily Dale)" (68). Walter J. Meyer Zu Erpen and Joy Lowe (1990) suggest that "Spiritualist activities date from the 1850s in Eastern Canada and apparently from at least 1870 in British Columbia" (72). Similarly, Stan McMullin (2004) notes that spirit communication "manifested in Ontario in the early 1850s" and that the Fox sisters, who had lived in the Belleville area prior to moving to New York State, played an important role in cultivating Spiritualist beliefs in John Dunbar Moodie and his wife, Susanna Moodie.[15]

The Maritimes experienced its own share of Spiritualist enthusiasts. As Erpen and Lowe indicate, Emma Hardinge's travel narrative *Modern American Spiritualism* (1870) includes Prince Edward Island as one of her discussion points for Spiritualist activities in Canada (80). A British citizen by birth, Hardinge came to America in 1856 at the age of 23, where through the mediumship of Ada Hoyt she converted to Spiritualism, eventually becoming a medium herself and publishing several tracts on Spiritualist-related subjects. Likewise, McMullin (2004) refers to the Maritime medium Alfred Cridge, who published a book about Spiritualism in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in 1854, singling out Yarmouth and Halifax as two locations for mediumistic activity (33-34). Of closer proximity to Roberts

is the late nineteenth-century clergyman-turned-writer Basil King. Born in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, he graduated from King's College just prior to Roberts's arrival in 1885. He was later ordained by the Church of England and served in Halifax and Cambridge, Massachusetts before losing his eyesight. He also went on to publish several works on religion and spiritualism, notably *The Abolishing of Death* (1919) and *The Spreading Dawn: Stories of the Great Transition* (1927).

As Spiritualism's popularity grew in the 1850s and 1860s, so too did the number of charges of fraud as well as anti-Spiritualist publications. As early as 1853, the American Methodist minister Hiram Mattison published *Spirit Rapping Unveiled*, in which he challenged the credibility of Spiritualist phenomena and practitioners like the Fox Sisters. Similar accusations were directed at other popular mediums, including Daniel Douglas Home and Florence Cook. Canadian newspapers took up similar positions in the debate: Ramsay Cook relates how the American spiritualist writer J.M. Peebles came to speak in Toronto in 1873 and drew "predictable condemnation from the Toronto *Globe*" (66). Similarly, by the 1870s nearly all the major British mediums were "at one time or another accused of fraud" (Gauld 81). Thus, many practitioners drew increasingly on empirical controls in séance rooms "to avoid fraud as much as to establish the veracity of the séance messages" (McMullin 180). The question of whether Spiritualist phenomena were credible or not led to the establishment of Great Britain's Society for Psychical Research in 1882, an organization whose mandate was to investigate and, if possible, to substantiate through empirical methods the existence of psychic phenomena.[16]

In the midst of these charges emerged the figure of Madame Blavatsky (1831-91) and the founding of the Theosophical Society in the late 1870s. Although there is no definite account of Blavatsky's early adult years, her active interest in the occult appears to have

begun sometime in the late 1840s, when she traveled the world to seek out spiritual masters and experience different phenomena. Bruce Campbell (1980) notes that during this period "she knew the Coptic magician Paulos Metamon, who introduced her to occult lore in Cairo, and she was acquainted with the famous European medium, D.D. Home" (4). He also mentions that "[d]uring her occasional visits home to Russia...she conducted spiritualistic séances with members of her family and their friends" (4). In 1871 she opened the *Societe Spirite* for psychical phenomena in Cairo, but it eventually closed under claims of fraud. She then immigrated to New York City in 1873, and soon after met Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, a lawyer and journalist who covered Spiritualist phenomena. Together they formed the Theosophical Society in 1875, an eclectic esoteric movement that incorporated aspects of several occult traditions including Spiritualism. A decade later, the Society had gained considerable ground: by 1888, there were approximately two dozen theosophical lodges in the United States alone, with a membership of roughly 460; by 1896, there were 103 branches, with membership totaling almost six thousand (Campbell 104).

Like Spiritualism before it, theosophy attempts to reconcile science with religion. But rather than relying on "empirical proof" of the afterlife through physical manifestations like rappings or ectoplasm, Blavataksy and her followers chose a more cerebral, individualist approach to spiritual enlightenment. Drawing on elements of Eastern religion such as karma and reincarnation as well as Darwin's concept of evolution, they created a heterodox system of belief that enabled initiates "to transcend the cleavage between science and religion by a return to the concern of an ancient wisdom-tradition, long forgotten" (Campbell 29). The core of theosophical teachings involved four main concepts: first, the notion of cosmic evolution, in which human evolution is intertwined with the belief that as "the 'Great Breath proceeds outward, worlds, objects, and men appear. As it recedes, all disappear into the

original source" (Campbell 62); second, an interpretation of the human constitution whereby "the upper or spiritual being is composed of three principles, and the lower nature of four" (Campbell 66); third, the power of karma as a vital force in the universe; fourth, the belief in human (not animal) reincarnation, and that "reimbodiment on earth occurs until the individual is able to overcome all the forces that tie it to this planet" (Campbell 69).

Not much is known about the impact of theosophy in Canada, and few studies exist that address this area of research. But based on available criticism and comments by those who claimed to be theosophists, it appears that those drawn to its teachings were mainly upper class intellectuals from a variety of political, scientific, or literary backgrounds. Cook, for instance, includes in *The Regenerators* a comprehensive account of the socialist and labour activist, Phillips Thompson, who discussed "the teachings of Edward Bellamy and Madame Blavatsky" during the late 1880s and early 1890s at meetings of the Toronto Nationalist Association (167) and took out a membership in the Theosophical Society in the early 1890s. Similarly, Michèle Lacombe's "Theosophy and the Canadian Idealist Tradition: A Preliminary Exploration" (1982) lists an impressive group of intellectuals and cultural elites who were influenced by theosophy during the early 1900s, including painters Lawren Harris and Emily Carr; Albert Durrant Watson; and the literary critic William Arthur Deacon.

The main centre for early theosophical activities in Canada was Toronto. In the late 1890s several prominent Theosophists went there to lecture, including Blavatsky's successor, Annie Besant, who gave two lectures in September 1893, then returned in 1897 to deliver additional addresses in both Toronto and Hamilton (see McCann, 84, 108). Another prominent theosophist to speak in Toronto during this time was Countess Wachtmeister, who attracted four hundred and fifty people to her 1897 lecture on the subject of "Death and

after" (McCann 108). Also of note is Charles Webster Leadbeater, who gave three lectures at St. George's Hall in 1900 (McCann 139), although his authority as a respected Theosophist would soon be discredited on charges of sexual deviance and encouraging boys to masturbate. The majority of the aforementioned lectures were likely the result of the efforts of the Toronto Theosophical Society and its founder, Albert Smythe.[17] The society was chartered in 1891, and its founding members consisted of Dr. Emily Stowe, Canada's first woman doctor; her daughter Dr. Augusta Stowe Gullen, also a physician; the suffragist Mrs. Ethel Day MacPherson; the novelist Algernon Blackwood; and Smythe, who was a journalist by profession, first with the Toronto *Globe* and later with the *World*. Smythe also established and edited the Theosophical periodical, *The Lamp*, which ran from 1896-1900, and was advertised in *The Independent* during Carman's tenure as editor. Although Smythe left the Society for a short time in the early years of the twentieth century, he rejoined in 1907 with renewed fervor and by 1910 was elected Vice-President of the Toronto Theosophical Society. In 1920, he started a new journal called *The Canadian Theosophist*, which he edited until his death in 1944; the journal continues to be published today.

Although these details of spiritualist and theosophical activities in Canada are scant, they help to contextualize the questioning milieu into which Roberts was born and demonstrate that movements such as Spiritualism were not relegated to larger centers but indeed permeated all regions of the country, including the Maritimes. If, as Bentley (2004) contends, late Victorians experienced a sense of spiritual crisis because "their Christian beliefs had been compromised or destroyed" by challenges to orthodoxy (206), it is not surprising to find evidence of this crisis in Roberts. The product of a strict Anglican upbringing and first-born son to an Anglican priest, he bore the brunt of his family's intellectual and religious expectations. Although he admired and respected his father,[18] as

Cogswell (1983a) notes, he "lacked his father's religious conviction, and there are many indications that he was finding the practice of Christianity increasingly at odds with his feelings" (208).[19] Similarly, Bentley (2004) argues: "there is a good deal of evidence that [Roberts and Carman] were in spiritual transition in the late 1880s and early 1890s" (213). Both Cogswell and Bentley focus on changes in subject matter in Roberts's fiction and poetry as proof of the crisis during these years. Yet there are several biographical elements that may help strengthen this argument, both in this early period and beyond, for during the last years of the nineteenth century and even into the twentieth, Roberts associated with a number of individuals who, although committed to their literary craft, were followers of occult traditions such as Spiritualism and Theosophy.

One of the more influential writers to visit Roberts at Kingscroft was William Sharp. His posthumous memoir, published in 1910 by his wife Elizabeth, reveals a professional network of writers and editors that spans the Atlantic Ocean. His commitment to following literary movements in both Europe and North America is revealed through his publications. Not only did he publish his own fiction and poetry: he also wrote important early biographies of Browning and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, served as general editor of the Canterbury Poets series, and edited the anthology *American Sonnets*, a collection that included early Canadian poets such as Charles Heavysege and Archibald Lampman.

Apart from his literary career, Sharp was an avid traveler and during his short life of fifty years he visited many countries, including Italy, Algeria, Greece, and the United States, an interest reflected in Elizabeth's romanticized chapter titles such as "Early Days in London," "First Visit to Italy," and "Winter in Athens." One visit of interest to early Canadian literature scholars occurs in chapter nine, "First Visit to America." Here Elizabeth recounts her husband's September trip to New York in 1889 as well as a stopover in Canada

in mid-August—a tour of the Maritime provinces under the guidance of Roberts as well as a trek through "Evangeline's country" with both Roberts and Carman (*William Sharp: A Memoir* 150-2).

Although several scholars mention the summer event at Kingscroft as a minor incident, few have given second thought to the significance of a well-established British writer and editor spending several weeks in Canada with a relatively unknown Canadian poet and his lesser-known cousin. What information does exist about Sharp's stay at Kingscroft can be found in various biographies. Elsie Pomeroy, for instance, mentions Sharp's stay at Roberts's home in Nova Scotia: "Other visitors to Kingscroft were William Sharp and Joseph Edmund Collins. Mrs. Roberts was very much in awe of the former, when he arrived, a magnificent Viking with a blond beard.... He took upon himself two tasks, that of always helping her wash the dishes and of carrying upstairs his own bath water" (84). She also mentions Sharp's alter-ego, Fiona MacLeod, under whose name Sharp published several Celtic stories and poetry collections including *The Dominion of Dreams* (1899), *The Divine Adventure* (1900), and *The Winged Destiny: Studies in the Spiritual History of the Gael* (1904). She concludes her comments by suggesting that MacLeod's work "differs profoundly in literary and mystical quality from all the rest of Sharp's acknowledged production" (85). After describing Fiona MacLeod's "literary and mystical" work, she devotes a few pages to Roberts's psychical research between 1885 and 1895, including his use of the Ouija Board. The subject of the occult at Kingscroft would not resurface until years later in a biography of his cousin Bliss Carman.

At first glance, Muriel Miller's *Bliss Carman: Quest and Revolt* (1985) appears to follow Pomeroy's lead by recounting similar psychical activities at Kingscroft. On closer inspection, however, her narrative differs significantly. Like Pomeroy, she describes the

parlour game "Concentration" played by Roberts and his friends, but offers no commentary; by contrast, Pomeroy purposefully downplays any psychic connection between the cousins and dismisses their game as "a kind of glorified 'Hide the Thimble' which was popular at Sunday School parties" (83). Similarly, both biographers mention that Roberts and Carman became involved in the Ouija Board and horoscope casting. Pomeroy claims that Carman's friend Hovey introduced Roberts to astrology (88). Miller, on the other hand, argues that it was Sharp who offered up occult secrets to the cousins:

> If Carman's and Roberts's ability to read each other's minds was uncanny, Sharp's inner sight went a long way beyond such a rudimentary psychical exercise. The clairvoyant Britisher (who did his mystical writing as Fiona MacLeod) seemed to be in direct communication with the forces of the occult. During his visit, he introduced his hosts to the secrets of the ouija board and horoscope casting in which both Carman and Roberts were to dabble for many years after that. (61)

Finally, Pomeroy takes Roberts's own words at face value, that he soon gave up on his interest in the Ouija Board. Yet Miller asserts that Roberts and Carman used the Ouija Board and participated in horoscope casting "for many years" afterwards. Such discrepancies in their early occult interests creates a bio-critical void between Pomeroy and Miller that is not easily explained: the fact that Roberts had considerable control over Pomeroy's biography is one possibility,[20] but, given his High Anglican upbringing, such an explanation would only fuel speculations about why he would want to minimize the events.

Compounding the debate is John Coldwell Adams's biography, *Sir Charles God Damn: The Life of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts* (1986), which mentions neither Roberts's and Carman's psychical activities at Kingscroft nor Sharp's affiliation with the occult. Instead, Adams confines his one-page summary of Sharp to literary accomplishments and to his

gentlemanly behaviour at Kingscroft, in which he helped with the dishes and carried his own bath water (51). In fact, he focuses much of his chapter "The Kingscroft Years" on Roberts's financial troubles and the women in his life during that time, especially Jean Carré and Maude Clarke. Why he felt such supernatural matters were insignificant is surprising, given the attention that both Pomeroy and Miller place on them. Two facts do remain: first, in the fall of 1889 Sharp, a writer and student of the occult, visited Kingscroft; second, during the Kingscroft years Roberts and Carman engaged in psychical activities.

Sharp's interest in the occult began when he was a university student in Scotland. He pored over mystical and occult writings between the years 1871-73 at Glasgow University and "read omnivorously; night after night he read far into the morning hours literature, philosophy, poetry, mysticism, occultism, magic, mythology, folk-lore" (*Memoir* 15). Even more significant is a letter Sharp wrote to Elizabeth from Paris on April 10, 1884: "On Sunday, if I can manage it, I will go to Mdme. Blavatsky" (*Memoir* 96), who had a profound impact on several of Sharp's contemporaries, including W.B. Yeats, "AE" (George Russell), Ernest Rhys, and Arthur Symons.

Of particular note are Yeats and "AE," who were connected with Sharp through the Celtic Twilight, an artistic movement in which writers from Ireland and Scotland attempted to resurrect the mythical and mystical elements of their Celtic ancestors. They were avid practitioners of the occult: "AE," for instance, was a member of the Theosophical Society from 1890 to 1898, after which time he founded the new Hermetic Society, "a loosely organized discussion group, which met weekly to discuss the writings of Madame Blavatsky and other theosophical scriptures" (Davis 1937, 25). By the time Sharp met "AE" in 1897, he was already known to the Irish Theosophist, who had "begun to admire the books this man had published under the name Fiona MacLeod, books about Gaelic mythology, psychic

phenomena, and communion with nature" (Summerfield 77-78). "AE" would later remark in a letter to Fiona MacLeod that "your inner nature preserves the memory of old initiations, so I talk to you as a comrade on the same quest" (*Memoir* 278). Sharp also engaged in occult activities with the young Yeats: "From time to time he interested himself in definite psychic experimentation, occasionally in collaboration with Mr. W.B. Yeats" (*Memoir* 424).[21] And Yeats remarked in a lecture to the Aberdeen Centre of the Franco-Scottish Society in 1907 that Sharp was "the most extraordinary psychic he had ever encountered" (*Memoir* 424).

Roberts's relationship with Sharp began in 1887. Though biographers make little mention of their relationship prior to August 1889, there are several publishing events that suggest more than mere acquaintance between the two men. First, in 1887 three anthologies were published that included the work of Roberts: the first, *Ballades and Rondeaus, Chants Royal, Sestinas, Villanelles*, was brought out by Gleeson White; the other two are connected to Sharp: he edited *Sonnets of This Century* and Elizabeth edited *Sea Music*. Roberts was encouraged by the attention he received in *Sonnets of This Century*. In a letter to William Douw Lighthall, he cannot hide his pleasure over the kind words Sharp said about him: "In [*Sonnets of This Century*] the editor—Wm. Sharp, who, as you know, was an intimate of Rossetti's & became his best biographer—puts a note to the following effect: 'I am unaware if he be of Canadian birth, but he is indisputably foremost among the poets of Canada.' And he says warm things of the sonnets which he quotes" (June 2, 1888; *Letters* 81).

The second literary event to link the two writers was the publication of *Poems of Wild Life* in 1888. Sharp, the general editor of the Canterbury Poets series, wished to publish a collection of "nature" verse. Roberts was chosen to select and edit the collection, which contained poems by him as well as by Sharp. The latter's poems constitute the collection's second largest contribution, spanning twenty-seven pages of the volume, and Roberts praises

his abilities in the Notes section at the end of the book: "Mr. William Sharp's 'Wild Life' verse, the fruit of a sojourn in the wilds of Gippsland and New South Wales, and of a voyage in the Pacific, is characterized by that direct and interpretative truthfulness which constitutes the enduring charm of his Transcripts from Nature. In its feeling for the romantic and the supernatural, Mr. Sharp's song has a special significance" (236). He describes Sharp's poetry as "romantic and supernatural," for he saw in Sharp's writing an influence that was extraordinary.

The third literary event to link Sharp with Roberts was the publication of *American Sonnets* in 1889, the year of Sharp's visit to Kingscroft. Sharp edited the collection and wrote the introduction; he also included Roberts, Lampman, and Heavysege. In his introduction he singles out Roberts and Lampman as significant Canadian writers: "Foremost among these northern [Canadian] singers are Charles G.D. Roberts and Archibald Lampman. The former is admittedly at the head of younger Canadian poets, and his *In Divers Tones* and other volumes have gained attention here as well as overseas" (xlvi). Though Roberts is not the most abundant Canadian contributor (Heavysege has the most verse represented by the Canadians), there is an anomaly in the Notes that suggests that Sharp favoured Roberts. The Notes are arranged alphabetically by the author's last name and the editor writes the contributors' biographies. In *American Sonnets*, however, Sharp's note on Roberts does not appear until after the final entry, positioning Roberts in a place of prominence at the end of the collection. He also offers considerable praise for the young Canadian: "Roberts, Charles G.D. Professor of English Literature at King's College, Windsor, Nova Scotia. Author of *Orion, and other Poems. In Divers Tones*, etc. Editor of *Poems of Wild Life*. The foremost living poet in Canada. The sonnets given are from *In Divers Tones*" (293). His admiration for Roberts's work would continue in later years.[22]

In January of that same year Roberts published his first review of Sharp in his "World of Books" column for the Saint John periodical, *Progress*. In his discussion of Sharp's *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy*, he describes Sharp's "genius" as "vital," "stimulating," and "exhuberant" (6). He claims that his verse reflects a feeling for "the romantic, the supernatural, the heroic, and the weirdly suggestive" (6), then proceeds to review the book's two sections separately. Yet in both cases he pays particular attention to supernatural elements found in the poems. For example, in his discussion of the "Romantic Ballads" section, he notes that there are "four poems...permeated in every line with that unquestioning realization of the supernatural which gives such thrilling effect to 'The Ancient Mariner' and 'Christabel'" (6). He then mentions how the long poem, "The Weird of Michael Scott," draws on Gothic conventions to produce "nerve-thrilling effects" (6). In his discussion of the second section, "Poems of Phantasy," he demonstrates an acute awareness of the difference between Gothic-inspired verse and that which draws on a more esoteric tradition: in this section, he writes, "the note is sweeter, softer, less strenuous; but that strange and wide-eyed sense of the super-natural is not for a moment absent" (6). Although he does not offer substantive analysis of the section, it is important to note the two poems he quotes from are quoted in their entirety. The first poem, though unnamed in the review, is entitled "A Dream." Here the speaker describes how in a dream he discovered a message inscribed on a rock in a "haunted land" (1), and that upon reading the message, he realized he was dead. More telling is that the final image of the poem is that of a disembodied spirit, in which "the shadow overhead / Was not the darkness of the skies / But that from which my soul had fled" (14-16). The second poem, "The Wandering Voice," immediately follows "A Dream," and it too evokes images of the spirit world through its suggestion of both a disembodied voice and a "shadowy shape" (29) that "waves a wildly threatening hand, / It

hath a dreadful face" (31-32). This haunting figure serves as a voice of prophecy, warning that "*The House of Malcolm falls*" (16), and is possibly the Witch of Dunmore, who appears in an earlier poem in the collection.[23] Thus, it is significant to note that of the poems in the collection Roberts chooses to end his review, one explores the boundaries between life and death and the other suggests the haunting power of the clairvoyant.

Sharp's generosity to and literary support for Roberts would be repaid in August, 1889 when he visited Kingscroft. Besides opening up his home to the British man of letters, Roberts also took Sharp on a tour of the Maritime provinces—a stopover that would last almost three weeks before Sharp continued on to New York to visit a mutual acquaintance, Edmund Stedman. The trip made a lasting impression on Roberts, who indicated as much in a letter to Lampman: "Wish you could have met Sharp! He was with me three delightful weeks. Have you his little vol. *Romantic Ballads & Poems of Phantasy*? If not, do get it" (November 10, 1889; *Letters* 111). Later that week he wrote to Lighthall, expressing similar sentiments: "Have been deeply disappointed in [Douglas] Sladen's curious lack of sincerity & his selfishness. Sharp seems to me in every way more genuine, & more trustworthy. I got very fond of him" (November 15, 1889; *Letters* 112).

In the years following Sharp's visit, Roberts made further attempts to review his work.[24] Of special note is the review he published in Saint John's *Progress* in 1890 as well as a quotation attributed to Roberts that appears on the back page of Fiona MacLeod's *The Winged Destiny: Studies in the Spiritual History of the Gael* (1904). In "The World of Books: The Poems of Graham R Thomson," Roberts reviews Rosamund Marriott Watson's *The Bird Bride* (1889), but in so doing aligns Watson's work with that of Sharp, arguing that both writers represent part of a "Romantic Revival" (6). More importantly, he believes there

are three integral elements to this school, "prominent among these is a sensitiveness to spiritual influences, a consciousness of what we rather loosely call the supernatural" (6).

The second important comment Roberts made in relation to Sharp is concerning his literary alter-ego. On the back page of Fiona MacLeod's esoteric work *The Winged Destiny: Studies in the Spiritual History of the Gael* (1904) appears the following critical quotation from Roberts:

> Throughout her pages one is ever keenly aware of the elements. Sun, wind, and flame, the dew and the flood, the dust and the mountain-top assume personality. The otherlife everywhere is immanent; and the horizons of life are continually lifting that the bodily eye may catch glimpses of spiritual things....Of such substance is the texture of the fabric which Fiona Macleod[sic] weaves; and she weaves as one who has looked into the deeps of her heart and seen therein patterns both of time and eternity.

In a 1904 review of *The Winged Destiny*,[25] J.M. Synge notes that the first part of the book deals with "the more mystical side of Highland life, and [is] of considerable interest. All through [the first part] however, there is rather too much reflection, that is made up of a sort of esoteric platitude" (389). His recognition of MacLeod's esoteric themes is not surprising, given Sharp's interest in things occult; in fact, Sharp's other publications in 1904 are consistent in theme with *The Winged Destiny*, for earlier that year he had published the spiritual piece "A Dream" in the *Theosophical Review* under his pseudonym and dedicated it to G.R.S. Mead.[26] Even more compelling are the ways in which this piece resonates with the poem "A Dream" that Roberts quoted in his review of Sharp's work fifteen years earlier.[27] Though Roberts's quotation is not as explicit as Synge's, he too recognizes the "otherlife" described in *The Winged Destiny* and the possibility of catching "glimpses of spiritual

things" in the book, leaving scholars to question whether his interest in MacLeod's/Sharp's work was solely aesthetic.

Sharp played a significant role in cultivating Roberts' interest in the supernatural. But there were other people who came to King's College during the late 1880s who may have played a similar role. A second poet to visit Roberts at Kingscroft during the same period was Douglas B. Sladen, a British poet and travel-writer who traveled extensively in China, Japan, Australia, Canada, the United States, and Europe, published several collections of verse as well as travel narratives, and edited *Australian Ballads and Rhymes* (1888), subsequently enlarged for Sharp's Canterbury Poets series. Apart from his literary endeavours, he also displayed an interest in the supernatural: in 1883 he published a poem titled "Spiritualism" in the *Melbourne Review*, in which he professes his belief in the teachings of the movement, but not in its mediums:

I am no disbeliever in the mystic
    And hidden presences that awe us so,
Although I trust not in the cabalistic
    Control that their professors fain would show:
I think that airy powers hover round us
    With some capacity for intercourse,
Although would-be interpreters confound us
    With hollow icons for the real force. (81-88)

Equally significant is an experience he had with telepathy that was documented for the Society for Psychical Research's *Phantasms of the Living* (1886). He describes how he recorded in his diary a dream in December 1881 about his father's house being on fire. He recounts how "the dream impressed me so vividly that I felt convinced that a fire had

actually happened there, and, striking a light, I walked across the room...and made a brief entry of it" (324). Several weeks later he received a letter from his father explaining there indeed had been a fire while they were at church. But as Sladen notes, his "telepathic experience" did not relate to the time and day of the fire – it occurred at the time when his father had been writing him the letter: "When I was having the communication...it was about 3.30 p.m. in Kensington. Now with the mail going out at 5 p.m., 3:30 would have been a very natural – I think I may say a most natural time for my father to be finishing a letter to me...I, therefore, had my magnetic communication when he was at once focussing his mind on me, and focussing his mind on the fire, in order to tell me about it" (325). In his later years, Sladen published two additional works of note: *The Shadow of a Great Light* (1917), which deals specifically with Spiritualism; and a second autobiography, *My Long Life: Ancedotes and Adventures* (1939), which includes a chapter entitled "My Psychic Experiences."

One early mention of Sladen in Roberts's work can be found in his Introduction to *Poems of Wild Life* (1888), in part thanking Sladen for his publication, *Australian Ballads and Rhymes* which he drew from for his own anthology. That same year Sladen had approached Roberts to help him suggest Canadian poets for the upcoming anthology, *Younger American Poets* (1891): Roberts recounts in a letter to Lighthall, "[Sladen] wishes to represent in the collection the strongest of our younger singers, & asks me for a list of such, & to put him in connection with them" (October 20, 1888; *Letters* 90). Despite his initial interest, Roberts arranged for his brother Goodridge to help Sladen in his stead (Pomeroy 1943, 80). But their relationship continued to grow: Roberts stayed with Sladen in May of 1889 when he visited New York (*Letters* 108); Sladen quickly reciprocated by visiting Windsor and meeting with Roberts that same spring (Adams 1986, 49-50). Years

later they would meet up again, this time in England, where Roberts received a warm welcome from Sladen, "who was living in London at this time and who at once introduced the Canadian to his literary circle" (Pomeroy 1943, 155). Through Sladen, he met several successful writers, including George Washington Stevens, a famous correspondent for *The Daily Mail* and Anthony Hope, writer of the popular adventure novel, *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1894) (Adams 1986, 87). Given Roberts's generosity to Sladen during his stay at Kingscroft, as well as Sladen's reciprocal hospitality over a decade later, they were more than mere literary acquaintances.

Sladen also describes in some detail his excursions with Roberts and Bliss Carman in his travel narrative of Canada, *On the Cars and Off* (1895). Included in the publication are his stops in Windsor and Fredericton, a description of King's College, a picture of Professor Roberts, and a recounting of his canoe trip with Carman on the Saint John River. Perhaps the most curious comment included in his book is a statement made in the first chapter, "Nova Scotia: The Land of Evangeline." After offering a summary description of Roberts's "nature-poems," he concludes: "[Roberts] is not mystical like Mr. Carman, the other nature-poet of the Maritime Provinces" (6). Why Sladen would feel compelled to include this statement about Roberts is puzzling, especially since Roberts had been involved in psychical experimentation for some time and, as critics have suggested, published his own mystical poems during this period. Rather than stating that Roberts had no mysticism, perhaps Sladen was merely suggesting that his interest in the supernatural was not as strong as Carman's at that time.

A third person associated with Roberts who had an affinity for the supernatural was Bliss Carman. Critics have noted the presence of the occult in Carman's work as well as Sharp's influence on his writing. Cappon (1930), for instance, suggests similarities between

his early work and the writings of Fiona MacLeod. In discussing Carman's 1891 poem "The Bugle," he finds "a mystical symbolism which blends a cosmic sense of nature with the spiritual history of man" (22). He explains that "phrases in Carman's poems [like] 'the lonely trail,' 'the shadowy quest,' 'the gates of doom,' 'the battle of Sombre Field,' represent the same gnostic exaltation and love of mystical horizon as Fiona [MacLeod]'s 'Hills of Dream' and 'high sweet call of release' " (22). More revealing are his later remarks, in which he speculates on the possibility of an occult influence on Carman's writing: when speaking of *Behind the Arras* (1895), he notes that Carman's phrase " 'the lone bright lands of taciturnity'...represents a tendency to bring it nearer the speculative occultism of Oriental mystics" (99). But he chooses not to make the critical leap, concluding that "this occult strain never becomes more than a casual element in Carman's poetry, hardly representing the place it secretly occupied in his thoughts" (99). Another critic who mentions Carman's ties to the occult is Bentley, who notes in *The Gay]Grey Moose* (1992) that "for Roberts, as for Carman, Pan is not only linked with occult ('secret', 'magical') knowledge, but also associated with the therapeutic powers of the natural world" (244).

Sharp and Carman made an immediate impression on each other. Evidence suggests that Sharp knew of the young poet prior to their meeting at Kingscroft. He first mentions Carman in his Notes to *American Sonnets*. In his note on Edith Thomas, he writes: "Miss Thomas is one of the most charming of the younger nature-poets; and with her should be mentioned Maurice Thompson, A. Lampman, Bliss Carman, and W.Wilfrid[sic] Campbell" (292). Carman knew about Sharp through Roberts as well as through Sharp's biography of Rossetti, though his first mention of Sharp does not appear until after their meeting in the fall of 1889. In a letter to his sister, he writes of his pleasure in having met the English man of letters: "you will rejoice that I have made such a good friend. He is one of the very foremost

literary men of London of this generation, a friend of Browning, and Swinburne, and Morris, and formerly of poor Rossetti. Then he knows all the ways of books and writing over there, so that you can see that it is tremendously useful to me to know him" (September 8, 1889; Carman, *Letters* 30). Carman saw in Sharp an important literary contact to bolster his career. And there appears to be some truth to this hope, for in February 1890, he received an unsolicited offer to publish a book of his poems, an offer that originated with Sharp.[28] Though Carman did not accept the offer, he thanked Sharp for his generous offer by including his work in *The Independent*, where Carman worked as literary editor from 1890 to 1892.[29]

Further evidence of Carman's interest in Sharp can be found in the American journal *The Chap-Book*, which ran from 1894-1898.[30] Carman, its first editor, played a key role in Sharp's work appearing in its pages. Sharp's first contribution to *The Chap-Book* was "A Northern Night," a short story published in the journal's third issue. His work would appear several more times during Carman's editorship, especially in the September 15, 1894 issue, which Sharp's friend Edmund Stedman affectionately called the "Sharp Number" (*Memoir* 239). It included a poem, "To Edmund Clarence Stedman," a short story, "The Birth of a Soul," and a lengthy review of Sharp's work by Carman. And although Carman claimed he was not editing the journal at that time,[31] his relationship with Sharp probably influenced the issue's focus on the English man of letters. As for the contents of the "Sharp number," Carman's review of Sharp's 1892 collection *Flower o' the Vine* is conservative in tone, focusing on his use of metrics as well as the elements of romance that pervade his work, especially in his earlier volume *Romantic Ballads*. Included at the end of his review, however, are some brief remarks on a private reading Sharp gave at Mr. Stedman's home in New York in 1892—an event that reads more like a psychical experiment than a poetic

performance: "It was not a public reading, by any means, but entirely *sub rosa.* Closeted with this conjurer of weird suggestion out of unwilling words, I was the delighted victim, the spell-bound *corpus vile* of an editor, on whom things might be tried with impunity" (222). Equally compelling is Sharp's short story, "The Birth of a Soul," a piece of dramatic prose exploring the spiritual angst suffered by a mother, father, priest and nun during the birth. Also in the room is an unseen character, "The Other," whose speech suggests its connection with spiritual darkness: "And the sin of the woman, the which I am, shall lie like a cankerworm within thy heart; and the evil of the man, the which I am, shall eat into thy inmost being" (224-5). The story deals with issues of spirituality and otherworldliness, and forms part of a volume of dramatic pieces that was influenced by the Belgian symboliste Maurice Maeterlinck.[32]

Another contributor to *The Chap-Book* was Sharp's fellow occultist, W.B. Yeats. His short story "St. Patrick and the Pedants," published in the June 1, 1896 issue, explores the spiritual tensions between Christianity and Celtic spirituality in a narrative about a dying druid who wished to touch Michael Bruin's rosary.[33] Also included at the end of the issue is an anonymous article entitled "A New Chapter in Literary History Especially Dedicated to the Curious." Although Carman stopped editing the journal in March 1896, this article reinforces *The Chap-Book*'s continued editorial affinity for occult-related material since the subject of the article is Sar Josephin Peladan, who in 1890 founded the Order of the Catholic Rose+Croix; the article discusses, among other things, Peladan's mystical writings and his association with Rosicrucianism.

One of the more curious pieces to appear in *The Chap-Book* during Carman's editorship was not a short story or poem, but an advertisement. Included in the August 1, 1895 issue was an announcement for *The Lamp*, Smythe's new occult journal published out

of Toronto: "The Lamp is the only publication in Canada devoted to Theosophy—religion, philosophy, and science harmonised. In it the ancient Copt and the modern Kanuck meet on common ground" (233). In the magazine's few years of publication, from 1894 to 1900, several significant names would appear on its pages; the online index for *The Lamp* includes names such as "AE", Yeats, Roberts, Sharp, and Carman. Though not all these men were contributors to the journal, the fact that they are mentioned lends credence to the belief that these writers' works were interpreted for their occult significance.

Carman's friend, Richard Hovey, frequently visited Roberts's home in Windsor, Nova Scotia, both alone and at times with his lover Henrietta Russell, America's foremost expert on François Delsarte, whose "Law of Correspondence" linked physical gestures with spiritual acts (Boone 1990, 166-7).[34] In 1894, Hovey published a translation of the plays of Maurice Maeterlinck; Maeterlinck is associated with the Symbolists, an aesthetic movement stemming from such French writers as Baudelaire and often aligned with the occult tradition. For his part, Maeterlinck was a friend of Villiers de l'Isle Adam, who introduced him to the "occult sciences of sorcery, spiritualism, and magnetism, and [to] the study of obscure philosophical concepts" (Halls 43); he would publish in 1921 L*e Grand Secret*, a "historical study of occultism and esoteric doctrines from the dawn of history" (Halls 134). Sharp was fascinated by Maeterlinck's writings: after discovering his plays *La Princesse Maleine* and *Les Aveugles*, he noted in his diary that "[Maeterlinck] is a writer of singular genius; and I shall send for everything he has written" (October 1, 1891; *Memoir* 190). Given Sharp's devotion to Maeterlinck, it is unlikely that he missed Hovey's edition of the translations; nor does it come as any surprise that Sharp published criticism on Maeterlinck, including the article "A Note on the Belgian Renascence," which appeared in the December 15, 1895 issue of *The Chap-Book*. Hovey believed that Sharp's work was influenced by Maeterlinck, and

indicated as much in a letter to Carman earlier that year. Carman's response is one of ignorance and apology: "Yes, old man, I know; my words on Sharp have all the grace and freedom which ignorance alone can give.... But the scope of learning and philosophic grasp, so equally essential—these things I have not; and so I blunder. Yes, I see Sharp's indebtedness to Maeterlinck....But Maeterlinck himself does not get me yet" (January 7, 1895; Carman, *Letters* 83). Hovey's posthumous publication, *To the End of the Trail* (1908), reinforces Sharp's place in Carman and Roberts's inner circle, for included in an advertisement for Hovey's poetic tragedy, *The Marriage of Guenevere*, are critical quotations by Sharp and Roberts.

In Carman's later years he became increasingly interested in the occult. In 1920, he began a friendship with the theosophist Dr. Ernest Fewster, and frequently stayed with Fewster and his wife at their home in Vancouver. He also drew on Theosophy as a research subject for his writing. While working on the poem "Shamballah," for instance, he noted in a letter to Fewster's wife Grace how he "spent some time in the very pleasant reading room of the United Theosophists near here in connection with these shambling Shamballistics" while on a trip to Los Angeles, California (circa Christmas, 1922; Carman, *Letters* 299). He would later meet Annie Besant, who was President of the Theosophical Society in 1907. Critical reception of Carman's work also aligned him with other occult writers: his verse, for example, appears in the 1917 anthology *The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse*, along with such well-known occultists as "AE", Yeats, A.E. Waite, and Sharp/MacLeod. He also attended in 1928 the Annual Dinner of the Poetry Society in New Canaan, Connecticut, at which "AE" was the chief guest (letter to Grace Fewster, January 30, 1928; Carman, *Letters* 356). Most significant are Carman's letters to Margaret Lawrence between 1927 and 1929, which include several references to Theosophy and related occult topics.[35] H. Pearson Gundy

suggests that Carman's interest in the occult in his later years is in many ways a return rather than a beginning: in the introduction of Chapter 14 of *Letters of Bliss Carman*, Gundy notes that "Carman attributed his ability to stand up to the gruelling pace he had set himself, to new friendships and to his new (or renewed) interest in the 'mystic truth' of theosophy" (316). By the end of his life Carman had finally embraced the influence that haunted his spirit for more than thirty years.

During his Kingscroft years, Roberts interacted with many internationally recognized literary figures, including William Sharp, Douglas Sladen, Richard Hovey, and his younger cousin, Bliss Carman. Each of these men was dedicated to their literary craft, but they also held considerable interest in esoteric traditions, and many of them drew on such traditions for inspiration. After Roberts moved to New York in 1897, he continued to display an interest in the supernatural and to affiliate with like-minded individuals. Pomeroy (1943), for instance, mentions a visit Roberts paid to a "gipsy fortune-teller" in 1900 (163). She also notes that one of Roberts's intimates during this period was Elsa Barker, who "many years later became well known to all students of psychic research" (170). Born in Vermont, Barker spent most of her life in New York City, working as a teacher, newspaper writer, and editor before turning to writing full-time. Although she published both poetry and novels, her most famous work is a trilogy of "automatic writings" in which she claimed to channel the spirit of a dead Los Angeles Lawyer named David P. Hutch: *Letters from a Living Dead Man* (1914), *War Letters from the Living Dead Man* (1915), and *Last Letters from the Living Dead Man* (1919). She also published several esoteric poems, including "The Mystic Rose," which appeared with three other poems in *The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse*.

Another friend of Roberts who visited his New York flat frequently was the writer Richard Le Gallienne, who had been part of the Rhymers Club (which included such

occultists as Arthur Symons and W.B. Yeats) and was a good friend of William Sharp; his writings demonstrate considerable awareness and interest in occult subjects. He includes, for instance, a reference to A.P. Sinnett's occult text, *Esoteric Buddhism*, as well as a section on Madame Blavatsky and theosophy in his *Book-Bills of Narcissus* (1891). Similarly, in *Prose-Fancies: Second Series* (1896), he refers to the "occult" ways of the rose in his essay "The Greatness of Man," and a year later published a poetic translation of the *Rubaiyat* of Khayyam, a text often used and quoted by occultists. Le Gallienne also displayed an interest in horoscope-casting: Whittington-Egan and Smerdon (1960), for example, quote letters in their biography of Le Gallienne in which he rejoices over good news from recent trips to a fortune-teller (288), as well as a letter he received from a young astrologer who told him "great things are to happen to [you] about 40" (375). Significantly, Le Gallienne would publish the poem "Women and War" in the Summer 1916 issue of *Sunset of Bon Echo*, the Canadian magazine of the Walt Whitman cult headed by Flora MacDonald Denison, herself a former member of the Toronto Theosophical Society.[36]

Roberts left for Europe in 1907. While he was in France, one of the books he recommended to his son was the *New Thought* best seller, *In Tune with the Infinite* by Ralph Waldo Trine (Pomeroy 1943, 224), which Adams (1986) claims "had a marked effect on his recovery [from an attack of nerves]" (109). In 1910, he moved to Munich and established himself in a flat that was haunted by a little girl who purported to be "his sole companion" (Pomeroy 1943, 228). But it was not until his return to Canada in 1925 that Roberts began to reinvigorate his interest in the esoteric tradition. Shortly after his arrival, he began touring, and while out West developed friendships with several artists associated with the Vancouver Poetry Society. Formed in 1916, the society attracted a range of literary figures from across the country over its more than thirty-year tenure, including Roberts and Carman, both of

whom served as Honorary Presidents. The Vancouver Poetry Society also produced a number of chapbooks and, beginning in 1936, published a tri-yearly magazine, *Full Tide* that continued for several years; a biography of the Society was published in 1946 through The Ryerson Press.

Dr. Ernest Fewster, a local general practitioner and poet, first organized the society and served as President through most of its existence. Born in England in 1868, Fewster came to Manitoba in 1887, then to Vancouver in 1888. He enrolled in Chicago's Dunham-Hering Medical College in 1898, earning his M.D. and practicing in Kansas for eight years before returning to British Columbia. His first poetry publications were in *Poems of Armageddon* (1914), a pamphlet of patriotic poems written by him and Alice M. Winlow. Several years later he published a volume of nature essays, *My Garden Dreams* (1926), before publishing four additional books of poetry. What is perhaps more intriguing about Fewster is that he and his wife Grace were students of the occult: Boone (1989) points out that they were "ardent theosophists" (351). During the late 1910s, Fewster became close friends with Carman, and has been credited with "reintroducing" him to theosophy. In the 1920s, he also befriended Roberts, and in a letter to Kathleen Strathearn on May 10, 1928, Roberts describes him as having "perhaps a *clairvoyant* insight" (Adams 1991, 58).

The often overlooked significance of Fewster's interest in theosophy is not surprising given that little is known about the influence of Theosophy on twentieth-century Canada. Although few studies exist, two deserve attention. The first is by Lacombe (1982), who locates theosophical activities within a Canadian context by noting that "the fine print of Theosophy allowed its Canadian adherents to resolve the conflicting claims made upon them by nationalism and continentalism" (104). She argues that theosophy had its "heyday" in Canada between 1920 and 1930 and offers an impressive list of social and cultural elites who

embraced its teachings. The second publication is Ann Davis's *The Logic of Ecstasy: Canadian Mystical Painting* (1992), in which she explores the ways in which the teachings of theosophy manifested themselves in the work of prominent members of the Group of Seven, such as Lawren Harris, as well as in the mystical paintings of Bertram Brooker and, to some extent Emily Carr.

What these studies suggest is that theosophy had a wide circle of influence that permeated all areas of Canadian society. Furthermore, given the kind of impact theosophy had on Canadian arts and letters in the early decades of the twentieth century, it is not surprising that an organization such as the Vancouver Poetry Society would find itself part of this wave of interest. Perhaps the society had more to offer Roberts than simply another venue for his work and feedback on his craft. Indeed, if the President of the Vancouver Poetry Society was a theosophist, then it would stand to reason that its members and activities would reflect this interest. And this was indeed the case: early meetings were held in the Julian Lodge of the Theosophical Society (*Biography of the Vancouver Poetry Society* 17); also of note is the prominent theosophist Charles Lazenby, who gave lectures at Society meetings in April, 1918. In fact, many of the writers who participated in the Vancouver Poetry Society were either directly involved in Theosophy or linked to Canadian theosophists: A.M. Stephen, who joined the Society in its early days, was in the words of his brother, "an ardent student of Theosophy" (*Biography of Vancouver Poetry Society* 71). He became friends with Roberts through both the Vancouver Poetry Society and the Canadian Authors Association, a man who Roberts would come to regard as "one of our *first rank* poets" (September 17, 1927; *Letters* 359). Two other members of the Vancouver Poetry Society worth noting are Annie Charlotte Dalton and Tom MacInnes, both of whom Lacombe (1982) cites as students of theosophy (103). Dalton, British by birth, had moved to

Vancouver with her husband, Willie, in the mid-1890s. She published several collections of verse, most notably *Flame and Adventure* (1924). She was also an active member of the Canadian Authors Association as well as the Vancouver Poetry Society, and served as its Honorary Vice-President from 1917 to 1929 and Honorary President from 1929 to 1938. Although no correspondence between her and Roberts exists, she is mentioned frequently in his letters to others; Roberts also wrote to her husband from time to time and would have known her from both the Vancouver Poetry Society as well as the Canadian Authors Association. As for MacInnes, Pomeroy (1943) recounts that Roberts held a great admiration for his writing, and that the summer after Roberts's first recital tour in Vancouver, MacInnes stayed with him in his flat at Ernescliffe (281). According to the Vancouver Poetry Society biography, MacInnes's early writings were "narrative and philosophical"; he later "came under the influence of Poe and wrote haunting, melodious poems on Oriental and supernatural themes" (67-68).

Another frequent visitor to Vancouver Poetry Society readings was Wilson MacDonald, who produced over a dozen volumes between 1918 and 1958, and who Lacombe describes as "the poet laureate of Theosophy in Canada" (108). He made his first appearance at the Vancouver Poetry Society sometime between 1924 and 1926. Significantly, his first collection of poetry, *Song of the Prairie Land* (1916), included an introduction by Albert Smythe, in which he asks in genuine occult fashion, "Who is Wilson MacDonald? Only the records of palingenesis can reveal that secret, but I fancy that he has wandered from the lost Etruscan paradise and brought with him many of the arts and mysteries that glorified the ancient people" (8-9). Although Roberts and MacDonald were not correspondents, Roberts mentions him frequently in his letters to Lorne Pierce and William Arthur Deacon, demonstrating a familiarity with his work as well as a relationship

beyond mere acquaintance.[37] He and MacDonald also gave readings at the Muskoka Assembly on similar occasions: one photograph from 1925 shows Roberts, MacDonald, and Carman posing together; a second photo from the 1929 Assembly includes Roberts, MacDonald, John Elson, and Margaret Marshall Saunders. More significant is the fact that the Muskoka Assembly had ties to theosophy. In her little-known *The Muskoka Assembly of the Canadian Chautauqua Institution* (1985), Sylvia DuVernet notes that "a unique aspect of the Muskoka Assembly was the presence of a very strong theosophical influence" (13), and that a number of theosophically-minded Canadian artists played a role at the Assembly, including the dramatist Roy Mitchell, Albert Durrant Watson, Bliss Carman, Charles G.D. Roberts and Wilson MacDonald. Interestingly, of Roberts she says: "a cursory survey of the titles of Roberts' works, *The Forge in the Forest, The Heart of the Ancient Wood, The Haunters of the Silences*, for example reveals an interest in the ancient arts of magic and cosmic occultism...Roberts intends that we, with him, should become aware of the theosophic Wisdom of the Wilderness expressive of the mystical relationship between all beings in the cosmos. We are all kindred of the cosmic wild" (146).

Two final writers of note who were not associated with the Vancouver Poetry Society but linked to Roberts through an interest in theosophy in the 1920s are William Arthur Deacon and Albert Durrant Watson. Deacon was a frequent correspondent with Roberts, and they enjoyed a close friendship. He became interested in Theosophy sometime in 1916 and from that time "to the end of his life, Deacon lived by certain theosophical doctrines" (Thomas and Lennox 11). In fact, by 1917 Deacon and his wife had become friends with members of the Winnipeg lodge and "before he left the city [he] had founded and become the first president of its second lodge, the Blavatsky" (Thomas and Lennox 12). As for Watson, although Roberts never corresponded with him, nor do any of his writings

demonstrate a relationship with the occult poet, several pieces of evidence suggest that Roberts was familiar with Watson and his writings. First, the collaborator on Watson's *Mediums and Mystics* was Margaret Lawrence, who was a friend of Carman's, served on the executive of the Canadian Authors Association, and was a correspondent with Roberts.[38] Second, one of Roberts's close friends at this time was Lorne Pierce, who collaborated with Watson on *Our Canadian Literature* (1922), an anthology which Robert Lecker (1996) argues was heavily influenced in terms of poetic representation by Watson's occult interest: "Watson's selections were warm, fuzzy, sentimental outpourings about love and loss and potential, most of which were inspired by romantic and theosophical leanings that prompted him to choose the elevated expression over the mundane, eternity over the here and now" (65); Watson included three poems by Roberts: "The Potato Harvest," "A Song of Growth," and "The Summons." The following year, Pierce published his critical pamphlet on Watson, in part criticizing "Toronto the Good" for its religious conservatism and its inability to appreciate Watson's "spiritual superstructure" (5). Pierce had also commissioned Watson to write *Robert Norwood*, the first volume in Ryerson's "Makers of Canadian Literature" series; Norwood was one of Roberts's favourite students while he was at King's College. Moreover, in the early nineteen thirties Roberts began work as editor for the *Canadian Who Was Who*, and one of the contributors was Pierce. In his correspondence with Pierce about possible entries, he repeatedly mentions Watson: "Besides Carman, would you do also Kirby, Sherman, & Watson" (May 28, 1933; *Letters* 449). And in a letter to Pierce one week later, he declares: "You know, anyhow, all there is to know about Carman, Kirby, Sherman & Watson" (June 3, 1933: *Letters* 450). Given Pierce's friendship with Watson, Roberts's phrase "all there is to know" must implicitly refer, in part, to the Canadian occult poet.

In addition to these biographical linkages between Roberts and the esoteric tradition are three pieces of writing in his later years that together may solidify a "re-discovery" of the occult at the end of his life. The first piece is his article "My Religion," published in the June 5, 1926 issue of the *Manitoba Free Press*.[39] He begins the essay by noting his firm conviction that science and religion can co-exist, and that "it seems to me a pretty poor and craven religion that cannot face, accept and assimilate all material facts which science has revealed" (27). He also acknowledges his belief in man's immortality, that "the spirit of man is a spark, an emanation, of the Deity" (27). His third point is captivating in its implications for understanding Roberts's work, since he professes to be influenced by occult ideas. He speaks of an "ancient hypothesis" that "colors my religion," a hypothesis he describes as "spiritual evolution" (27) that appeals greatly to him: "I prefer to think that I might have a few more lives, a few more ages, in which to develop, in which to fit myself for the society of the just made perfect. And even then I should hope that there were planes of perfection further on towards which I might continue to aspire" (27). His mention of wanting to live "a few more lives, a few more ages" immediately echoes the notion of reincarnation, a notion contrary to the orthodox teaching of Christian religions like his father's Anglicanism but popular in Eastern religions such as Hinduism and other areas of Eastern mysticism. The phrase "planes of perfection" is an acutely occult notion, related directly to the teachings of Theosophy and echoing Watson's *The Twentieth Plane*.[40] Roberts shies away from such esoteric interests in the end, concluding his essay with the notion that there is comfort in the "communion of saints and sinners which is afforded by some one or other of the organized churches" (27).

In a letter to Frederick George Scott a few years later, Roberts included a copy of his poem "Re-Birth." What is significant about this letter is not only the poem, which itself

exemplifies tenets of theosophy, but also Roberts's description of it: "It may strike you as a bit heterodox! But I do not think one life is quite enough for us, in which to fit ourselves for eternity" (May 1, 1933; *Letters* 446). His use of the phrase "I do not think one life is quite enough for us" is a direct echo of the sentiments he expressed in "My Religion" seven years earlier and is in direct keeping with the reincarnation / cosmic evolution concepts taught by theosophists.

The third piece of evidence relates to an address Roberts gave in Toronto in the early 1930s. On March 18, 1933, he delivered an address to the Elson Club, "Canadian Poetry in its Relation to The Poetry of England and America." Beginning with Isabella Crawford, he proceeded to mention several important figures including Charles Mair, Bliss Carman, Archibald Lampman, and W.W. Campbell. He suggests that there were key influences on these writers that made Canadian poetry distinct:

> There is another consideration which gives unity to our Canadian poetry of this period. In doctrine, in dogma, in creed, our poets may differ very widely, from strict orthodoxy, through a sort of mystical theosophy, to a Neo-Platonic pantheism or Nature worship. But they all worship. They are all religious, in the broad sense, in their attitude towards this life and the future. (82)

Given his early relationship with William Sharp, his own psychical experiments during the late 1890s, his affiliation with occultists and theosophists in New York at the turn of the century and then later in Canada during the 1920s, phrases such as "mystical theosophy" take on new meaning. Such terms no longer suggest an outsider's impressions, nor do they necessarily refer only to people like his cousin Bliss Carman. Instead, Roberts demonstrates in this passage an acute awareness of the influence esoteric traditions had on his literary generation.

One last detail surrounding Roberts's interest in the supernatural that relates to Albert Smythe. It is intriguing to note that although Roberts did not appear to be friends with Smythe or correspond with him, they were certainly familiar with each other. Smythe, for example, wrote an article entitled "Charles G.D. Roberts" for the February, 1925 issue of *The Canadian Bookman*, in which he not only summarizes Roberts's career but also demonstrates that he was present at Roberts's first Canadian engagement since returning from England: "The audience represented all the literary interests of the city, and Mr. Roberts' readings were heartily received, though his selections were scarcely representative of his best work" (25). Later that summer, Smythe was elected to the Executive Committee of the Toronto branch of the Canadian Authors Association, the same branch in which Roberts was elected President the following year.[41] For his part, Roberts considered Smythe in his later years to be part of the same literary generation as himself. In a letter to Howard Angus Kennedy, he notes: "The men & women of the 1860 group...are Carman, Lampman, D.C. Scott, F.G. Scott, W.W. Campbell, Gilbert Parker, Pauline Johnson, – also Helena Coleman & Albert E. Smythe" (May 27, 1933; *Letters* 449). Why Roberts would include Smythe among the other members is somewhat surprising, since he was first and foremost a journalist, and what little poetry he did publish appeared in two volumes almost thirty years apart: *Poems Grave and Gray* (1891) and *The Garden of the Sun* (1923). Given Roberts's affiliation with occultists and theosophists during the 1920s and 1930s, his renewed interest in esoteric traditions led him to consider Smythe part of the 1860s group not so much for his literary contribution to the generation but for his infusion of esoteric ideas into Canadian culture, many of which Roberts and his contemporaries used for inspiration in their own writings.

Chapter 3: The Early Supernatural Stories – *Earth's Enigmas*

There is evidence that Roberts underwent some form of "spiritual transition" during the last decades of the nineteenth century (Bentley 2004, 213). One strong indication of this struggle is an incident that occurred in early 1882: when asked if he would teach at the Sunday school recently established by his father, Roberts declined the position, stating that it would be inappropriate to accept it because of his "slightly heterodox religious convictions" (Pomeroy 42). Another indication is his participation in psychical experiments during the Windsor years, including use of a Ouija board as well as horoscope-casting. The most telling indicator, though, is his own writings during this period, since several of his fiction and non-fiction pieces can be linked to the supernatural tradition.

The supernatural was a natural subject of investigation for Roberts because it served as a meeting point for the three main influences in his life: religion, philosophy, and the Classics. In the first instance, the supernatural represents a powerful force in the universe, whose presence suggests that there are mysteries within the cosmos that cannot be reconciled by the teachings of organized religions such as Christianity; thus, the supernatural served as a counterpoint to the dogmatic principles of Anglicanism. Second, the supernatural represents a key challenge to society's reliance on reason and notions of material knowledge, which would have intrigued the questioning scholar fresh from studies in mental and moral philosophy. Third, Roberts would have been drawn to the occult forces of the supernatural tradition because they possessed thematic and spiritual links to elements found in the Classics: notions such as Fate, prophecy, and the communication between gods and men through oracles were stock characteristics of early Western texts. His academic training in

the Classics would have enabled him to recognize affinities between these texts and the writings and teachings of the esoteric tradition.

In the late 1880s, Roberts began publishing a regular book review column in the Saint John *Progress* titled "World of Books." It covered a range of literary genres as well as a variety of Canadian, American, and British writers, including William Sharp, the American poet Joaquin Miller, and his recently deceased Canadian contemporary George Frederick Cameron. Also appearing in the column were discussions of books that reflected his own scholarly interests, reviewing, for example, a biography of Shelley as well as such scholarly texts as William Alexander's *Introduction to the Poetry of Robert Browning* or Ephraim Emerton's *Introduction to the Study of the Middle Ages*. The column succeeded in exposing Saint John readers not only to a host of international artisans but also to the eclectic literary tastes of its writer.

One category of books reviewed in Roberts's column but seldom discussed are texts that possess a supernatural dimension. A sampling of the reviews from "A World of Books" reveals his growing interest in works of a supernatural nature. For instance, it was in the January 1889 column that he first reviewed the work of Sharp, particularly his supernatural volume *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy*. He also reviewed Edward Bellamy's immensely popular utopian novel, *Looking Backward*, whose protagonist falls into a hypnotic sleep and awakens in the year 2000. The book's championing of social and economic equality would also prove influential among occult movements like Spiritualism and especially Theosophy, which preached, among other things, the principle of "Universal Brotherhood." In a third review he writes about Hereward K. Cockin's *Gentleman Dick of the Grays and Other Poems*, in which he contrasts Cockin's light-hearted verse with the esoteric work of other poets: "Fancy rather than imagination is the inspirer of these lays; the

subtler beauties of cadence and color must not be looked for, any more than faultless *technique*, or profound psychical insight." Also of note is his review of two recent works by the American novelist and playwright, Amelie Rives: *A Brother to Dragons, and Other Tall Tales* and "The Quick or the Dead." In the first collection's title story, "A Brother to Dragons," the Butters must contend with a family ghost. Similarly, "The Quick or the Dead" is a supernatural tale about a woman who is caught between the love for her dead husband and the love of a cousin who resembles him. This cursory selection of reviews demonstrates that Roberts's choice of books not only reflects some of the popular literary tastes of the time, but also his affinity for books that contained supernatural themes.

Roberts's most telling review appeared one year after his column on Rives, in which he describes the emergence of a new literary movement based on the supernatural tradition. In "The World of Books: The Poems of Graham R Tomson," he reviewed a collection of poems by the British poet, Rosamund Marriott Watson, who wrote under the pseudonym of Graham Tomson. In his discussion of *The Bird Bride* (1889), he aligns Watson's work with that of William Sharp, arguing that both writers represent part of a "Romantic Revival" (6). He believes that there are three integral elements to this school, but that "prominent among these is a sensitiveness to spiritual influences, a consciousness of what we rather loosely call the supernatural. This is evinced in a fondness for handling weird themes built, in a fashion of subtle suggestiveness, from old superstitions and folk-myths" (6). His emphasis on "spiritual influence" as being the catalyst for these supernatural works suggests there is a mysterious force that draws writers like Sharp and Watson to such material, and that only those who are "sensitive" to this force will recognize the important spiritual themes that may be gleaned from local folklore for literary inspiration. Equally intriguing is the second characteristic, which he calls "the human note" (6). Rather than defining the concept, as he

did for the first characteristic, he offers the poem "A Wayside Calvary" as explanation. Its tone is distinctly un-Christian, and is about a "carven Christ" that hangs above the mound of two hundred dead Prussians. No one acknowledges these dead save Nature itself: "The Prussians' sun-scorched mound lies bare; / But thin grass creeps above the dead, / And pallid poppies flutter fair, / And fling their drowsy treasures there" (18-21). Coincidentally, Carman reviewed Tomson's work a few years after Roberts's review appeared: in his review of her second collection, *Summer Night and Other Poems*, he quotes almost the entire text of "A Wayside Calvary," noting that in this poem "the ancient faith is infected with the hopeless, pathetic spirit of these later times." His use of the term "ancient faith" to describe the poem implies that like Roberts, he too interpreted the poem as being distinctly un-Christian.

The third characteristic described by Roberts is "pessimism," although he distances his usage from its generally accepted definition of negativity: instead, he suggests there is a positive, almost spiritual meaning to this philosophy: "it is not the cynical, self-satisfied, deadly pessimism of satiety or exhaustion, but the fruitful pessimism which so often marks a long advance in the striving after an adequately based Ideal. It is a pessimism groping on the verge of the highest insight, even when its gloom may seem most void of light" (6). Again, Roberts's use of phrases such as "highest insight" and "striving after an...Ideal" suggest that there is a deeper purpose in the writing of these supernatural poems; it is not so much the achievement of divine wisdom that Watson and Sharp are attempting to articulate, but the quest for esoteric knowledge that informs these works.

Roberts likely drew on Sharp's Introduction to *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy* to help contextualize his review of Watson, a book which he had reviewed the year before in the Saint John *Progress*. The "Romantic Revival" that Roberts refers to, for instance, is explicitly declared by Sharp at the beginning of his introduction (v). Sharp also

defines this school along occult lines by suggesting that the new group of writers possess a "passion for the weird and the supernatural" (v) and that "[t]he thrill of the supernatural is so keen because it touches the most natural part of us" (x). Both comments correspond neatly to Roberts's first and second characteristics. Roberts's third characteristic, though, appears to be his own observation, since Sharp does not employ the word "pessimism" anywhere in his Introduction. The close affinity between Sharp's introduction and Roberts's review does not diminish Roberts's interest in the group or his belief in the merits of a supernatural tradition; on the contrary, his appropriation of Sharp's comments serves to reinforce his growing appreciation for such writing, a notion that would find fruition in Roberts's own supernatural prose during this period.

A few years later, Roberts published his first collection of "nature stories," *Earth's Enigmas*, and not surprisingly in the collection are several stories of a supernatural nature. Little has been said of these stories, perhaps because their presence was overshadowed by the important first animal stories appearing in the book, "Do Seek Their Meat from God" and "The Young Ravens That Call Upon Him." Another possible reason for ignoring them is because Roberts did not publish any conventional supernatural tales after 1903. A third possibility is that critics were unaware of the extent of Roberts's interest in the supernatural and so dismissed the publication of these stories as an exception to his other, more popular writings. Whatever the reason, few scholars have attempted to analyze this fictional group, let alone the place it occupies within his oeuvre. It is imperative, then, to correct this critical oversight before proceeding with an analysis of Roberts's other esoteric writings, especially since this collection represents a key milestone in his interest in the supernatural.

The first critical commentary on Roberts's supernatural stories in *Earth's Enigmas*, albeit somewhat superficial, was Elsie Pomeroy's biography. She dedicated a few pages to a

group of stories that includes "The Stone Dog," "In the Accident Ward," and "The Hill of Chastisement," which, "although written at wide intervals...are alike in their grim symbolism, alike are they also in their origins, for they were all written in dreams and, with the exception of the explanatory conclusion most obviously added to the second story, they appear exactly as they were *dreamed*" (140). A.C. Morrell (1980) has proposed a slightly different group by adding "The Barn on the Marsh" to Pomeroy's list and suggesting that these autobiographical "dream-stories" reflect Roberts's fear of death (139). Conway (1982) also refers to Roberts's group of "dream-stories," but he too offers little analysis of their supernatural elements. He favours instead evolutionary readings of "The Stone Dog" as well as "In the Accident Ward," which he believes echoes sentiments found in T.H. Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* (1896) and "marks Roberts's full recognition of the vital importance of evolution in his own life" (235). Slightly more illuminating is Conway's brief analysis of "The Hill of Chastisement," whose ending reflects Roberts's heterodox view of religion: "If exterior correspondence presents the feeble spirit with insurmountable obstacles, to embrace a dogmatic religious structure is even worse" (291). But he says little else of the other supernatural stories in the collection. More recently, Bentley (1999) has hinted at a possible esoteric reading of the stories by suggesting that "situations and occurrences abound [in *Earth's Enigmas*] that clearly intimate the existence of occult forces in the human and natural worlds" (30). But like his scholastic predecessors, Bentley falls short in offering any meaningful analysis of the stories, focusing much of his discussion on a narrative comparison between "The Hill of Chastisement" and two plays by the Belgian symbolist Maurice Maeterlinck to reinforce his position.

Despite the general lack of critical attention to these stories, Pomeroy and Morrell present a compelling grouping of Roberts's stories that warrants further attention. Although

both scholars recognize the significance of four of the supernatural stories included in *Earth's Enigmas*, neither critic mentions "The Eye of Gluskâp" or "The Perdu" in their respective studies. Ignoring "The Perdu" is particularly surprising: several early reviewers allude to its mysterious nature, including Roberts's friend Francis Sherman, who suggests that the story possesses "a higher, newer meaning" (180); more recently, Polk (1972) declares that "[Roberts's] interest in mysteries and coincidences shows up in several of his stories, the finest being 'The Perdu'" (85). As for "The Eye of Gluskâp," it was originally published as "The Star of the Marsh," but after it appeared in *Earth's Enigmas* Roberts decided to move it to the short story collection *By the Marshes of Minas* because of its "Acadian" subject matter; it too contains supernatural elements that are similar to those found in "The Perdu." Any analysis of the supernatural stories is incomplete without considering these stories in addition to the four previously mentioned, and what we discover is that Roberts believed that these two stories were integral to *Earth's Enigmas*, and significant achievements in his oeuvre.

With the publication of Laurel Boone's *The Collected Letters of Charles G.D. Roberts*, scholars discovered additional clues about the significance of *Earth's Enigmas* and its supernatural stories. Among his correspondence to Carman was a letter in which he outlined a possible list of stories for the collection as well as the overarching theme that connects them. In a postscript to his letter to Carman in the spring of 1894, he writes: "It occurs to me that a good name for my vol. of stories would be 'Earth's Enigmas,' or 'Riddles of Earth.' The mystery of life & fate plays [a] leading part in nearly all of them" (May 6, 1894; *Letters* 182-3). Following this note is a list of the stories intended for the collection, divided into three categories: those that reflect best the "mystery of life and fate," those that do to a lesser degree, and those in which the theme "hardly exists" (*Letters* 183). The stories

that appear in the first category include "The Stone Dog," "In the Accident Ward" and "The Perdu." Appearing in the second category is "The Star of the Marsh"; surprisingly, "The Barn on the Marsh" is not mentioned. Regardless, of the five supernatural stories to appear in the first edition of *Earth's Enigmas*, four are viewed as important examples of his overall theme. And with the inclusion of "The Hill of Chastisement" in the second edition, the total number of supernatural tales in *Earth's Enigmas* becomes six.

This new group of six stories is not meant to be read only as stemming from the same esoteric source: the six stories naturally fall into three sub-categories, which roughly correspond to their chronology of creation and/or publication. The first pairing consists of stories that explore the speaker's confrontation with the supernatural, and includes "The Stone Dog" and "The Barn on the Marsh"; the second pairing, which I define as "visionary" narratives, refers to "The Star of the Marsh" and "The Perdu"; the third pairing consists of his two primary dream-narratives, "In the Accident Ward" and "The Hill of Chastisement," which are characterized for their heightened use of esoteric symbols. These natural pairings not only highlight key areas of psychical discourse, they also reveal a pattern of progression or evolution in his interest in the esoteric tradition: in the earliest stories he grapples with the idea of the supernatural, in the second pairing he deals with people and objects that become conduits of the supernatural, and in the third pairing he shifts his attention to the esoteric concepts and symbols that underpin this tradition. The result is a group of six stories that traces over a twenty-year period Roberts's growing spiritual questioning of Christian orthodoxy as well as his deepening interest for things occult.

Roberts's first supernatural story, "The Stone Dog," was originally published in 1885 in *Longman's Magazine*. It was an early favourite of Roberts, who considered it "my first important story" (Pomeroy 1943, 140), and recounts, in part, the adventures of an unnamed,

first-person protagonist, who discovers some ruins on the outskirts of a city. But the true focus of the story is the protagonist's struggle to explain an encounter he had with the supernatural, an encounter that ultimately reveals Roberts's interest in exploring the irresolvable tension that exists between humanity's reliance upon the senses and reason, and the reality of phenomena that cannot be materially or scientifically explained.

The early part of the story demonstrates the speaker's reliance upon the senses to interpret the surrounding environment. His discovery and processing of the ruins at the outskirts of the city require not only his sense of sight, but also the need for his sense of smell, touch, and hearing:

> [my] eyes were so watchful that not even the uprising of some weeds, trodden down, perhaps, hours before by a passing foot, escaped their notice. My nostrils were keenly conscious of the sick metallic odor from the marshes, of the pleasanter perfume of dry reed panicles, of the chill, damp smell of mouldering stone-work, and of a strangely disagreeable haunting essence from a certain dull-colored weed...My ears, for all their painful expectancy, heard at first no sound save the rustle of a frightened mouse in the dead grass near; but at length they detected the gurgle of running water, made audible by a faint stray wind which breathed in my direction.
>
> Instinctively I turned and followed the sound. (193-4)

Although he uses his "eyes," "nostrils," and "ears" to interpret the desolate scene, he feels that hearing is the most reliable of the senses, and so chooses to "follow the sound" of the running water. He soon discovers that the source of this water is a fountain, upon which sits a stone dog. Facing the fountain are seven steps that lead down to a mysterious doorway. This *descendus ad infernos* immediately intrigues the explorer, who proceeds to examine the door, "half forgetting my apprehensions" (199).

Contrasting this use of primary senses is the inexplicable fear he experiences when he enters the ruins. The stillness of the outskirts, for instance, "filled me, in spite of myself, with a vague apprehensiveness" (193). Similarly, when he sees the fountain and the stone dog for the first time, he deems it to be "the only cheerful object in the landscape; yet I felt an unaccountable reluctance to approach it" (195). This rhetorical strategy of the speaker describing his instinctual fears heightens the tension of the impending narrative. It also places such feelings in opposition to what we soon learn is the young man's belief in a flawless world of reason and logic: "I profess to hold my imagination pretty well under control, and to have but small concern for ghostly horrors" (195). But after witnessing what he believes to be a "dull white glow" vanishing from the eyes of the dog, the speaker can no longer deal with his growing fear and rushes up the stairs to dispel the illusion: "I grasped the great stone head and gave it a wrench, but found it just as immovable as it looked"(200). Unfortunately, this triumph of reason is short-lived, for rather than experiencing vindication, he is "vexed at [his] idiotic fears" (200). Moreover, nightfall is fast approaching and he is forced to return to the city.

The next morning he explores cafés, squares, and churches, but the fountain and ruins are ever-present in his mind, an unnatural force compelling him to return to the isolated place: "The spell of the dead outskirts, of the shadowless dead marshes, of that mysterious and inscrutable dog, clung to me with unrelenting persistence" (201). The repetition of the word "dead," coupled with the notion that the ruins had cast a "spell" on the speaker, serve to reinforce the foreboding and supernatural essence of the area. He decides to return to the area, and on approaching the ruins, he notices strange atmospheric conditions. To suppress his rising nervousness he uses material knowledge once again to explain the eerie effect: "I looked out upon the wan pools and marshes, whence a greenish mist steamed up, and seemed

to poison the sunlight streaming through it. It is possible that this semblance of an unwholesome mist was not so much the fault of the marshes as a condition of the atmosphere, premonitory of the fierce electric storms and the earthquake which visited the city that same night" (202). Although he presents a scientific justification for the eerie effect, the words he uses belie his belief in the explanation, that is, instead of offering an objective, pragmatic cause for the weather anomaly he moralizes on the scene by suggesting that the mist was "unwholesome" and "seemed to poison the sunlight." This uncanny phenomenon signals to the speaker and the reader that further supernatural events are imminent and sets the stage for what will be the protagonist's ultimate confrontation with the supernatural.

Closely following the man's encounter with the mist is his second attempt to open the door, an act that triggers the stone dog to come alive, only this time more fearsome than in the first experience: "its eyes, now wide open, flamed upon me with strange and awful whiteness" (204). The speaker is terrified by the vision, but overcomes his fear by running up the stairs to confront the apparition as he did with the previous encounter. Once again he is rewarded for his efforts, but in so doing is forced to acknowledge he experienced a "moment of weakness" by allowing his imagination to overcome his reason: "the ignorant could hardly be blamed for even the wildest superstitions, when a cool-headed and enlightened modern like myself was so wrought upon by the fictions of his brain. I philosophized for some time, however, before I got the better of my repugnance to that door-way" (204). Although he downplays the impact the event has on his psyche by dismissing it as a "wild superstition," the fact that he needs to "philosophize for some time" before approaching the door again reinforces the point that his powers of reason are beginning to wane under the stress of inexplicable phenomena.

Determined to open the door, he descends the steps a third time. But just as he manages to loosen the bolt, he can no longer contain the rising fear in his heart and "faced around like lightning, in an indescribable horror. There, at the very top of the steps, crouched the dog, its head thrust down close to my face" (206). This third confrontation with the supernatural is more terrifying than the previous two and proves to be the speaker's undoing, for in challenging the ghostly dog this time, he loses not only his senses but also his ability to reason: "as the head closed down...I made a wild spring to get past the crouching form. Then reason and consciousness forsook me" (206).

The speaker awakens the next day in a hut, saved by a Good Samaritan who discovered him "lying in a stupor, face down, across the basin of the fount, and directly beneath the jaws of the dog" (208). He learns from the host that he is not the first to have a supernatural encounter with the stone dog, and that years before two men went seeking for treasure in those ruins but "had gone mad, with the great white eyes of the dog turned terribly upon them" (208-9). The host also mentions that there are "other strange things said about the spot...which, however, he would not talk of even in daylight" (209). As a representative of the superstitious townsfolk, the host cannot provide the speaker with a rational explanation for his ghostly encounter; instead, what he offers are local stories about the "Fonte del Cano," a rhetorical strategy on the part of Roberts that substantiates the speaker's experience rather than discredits it. These tales, coupled with the inexplicable bite marks he finds on his shoulder, force the speaker to concede that "the experiences that befell me by this fountain have shaken painfully the confidence I once enjoyed as to the fullness of my knowledge of the powers of things material. I cannot say that I have become credulous; but I have ceased to regard as necessarily absurd whatever I find it difficult to explain" (198).

Morrell contends that the dog is a projection of Roberts's mind, a "figure [who] will literally tear him to pieces if he follows his urge to return to the womb or to the female principle" (143). But reading "The Stone Dog" from a Jungian perspective minimizes Roberts's attempt to articulate his understanding of supernatural encounters. The young man's loss of "reason and consciousness" in springing past the stone dog was more than a physical reaction: the horrific vision was so vivid that the barrier between material knowledge and the supernatural realm had been momentarily broken; for all intents and purposes, he had experienced a spiritual as well as a physical fall. The ending of the story thus challenges the reader's sense of material knowledge since the final image of "The Stone Dog" is supplied by Roberts without any reasonable explanation. In fact, since the inexplicable set of teeth marks is a physical manifestation of the supernatural encounter, the authenticity of the encounter seems even more probable. What Roberts suggests at the end of "The Stone Dog" is that in the presence of a supernatural force, neither the senses nor reason will adequately explain its existence.

Two years after he published "The Stone Dog," Roberts wrote to his friend Richard Watson Gilder, the American poet and editor of *The Century*, thanking him for a package of writings by his brother-in-law, Charles De Kay. De Kay, a literature and art critic for the *New York Times*, also wrote about the supernatural. His short story, "ManMat'ha," is described by Roberts in his letter as "a strange & fascinating thing – the sort of thing I revel in" (*Letters* 62). A mixture of supernaturalism and folklore, it concerns a young first-person narrator and his live-in female housekeeper, a shaman-like figure who "brandish[es] with exultation a carved rod hung with bright claws, and shells, with lappets of fur and hair" (147). The central plot of the story involves the man's discovery and eventual falling in love with an invisible female creature from the woods. Also of note is De Kay's narrative poem

The Vision of Esther (1882), which Roberts praises for having "such vigor, such boldness, such breath, such rushing of the fresh winds" (*Letters* 62). This long poem is a continuation of De Kay's earlier work, *The Vision of Nimrod* (1881), and is about the specter Esther, a priestess of the sunfane, who appears to Persian reformers and tells them of her life as Nimrod's Queen. What makes Roberts's comments on De Kay's works significant is that this letter also makes reference to "The Stone Dog." After offering comments on De Kay, he closes the letter by mentioning to Gilder that he is "very anxious to know how you liked 'The Stone Dog'" (*Letters* 63). Although the story was published two years earlier, his exchanging of it for De Kay's work reflects more than a passing interest in supernatural writing on the part of Roberts; on the contrary, "The Stone Dog" represents only the beginning of his supernatural prose period. More importantly, it is the first of two stories that would explore a protagonist's confrontation with the supernatural realm: the second story, "The Barn on the Marsh," would appear just one year after Roberts's letter to Gilder.

Originally published in 1888, "The Barn on the Marsh" is Roberts's only recorded instance of a potential supernatural encounter. It consists of two memories, one from when the speaker was a young boy of seven, the second when he is eighteen. In the first memory, he recalls an event in which his father accidentally broke the handle off a hoe while they were working in the Rectory garden. At first the Rector is upset, but he then decides to get it repaired at their neighbour's workshop, which is located at the back of the neighbour's barn. When they reach the barn, they discover their neighbour's dead body swinging in the doorway. The young boy "sobs in horror" while the Rector calmly cuts the body down with "the draw knife he had come to borrow" (213). Nothing more is said of the event, and for reasons unexplained, "soon after this tragedy, the barn was moved down to the marsh" (213). Not long after, the Rector moves his family to the city.

Although this first memory consists of little else than one youth's first encounter with an image of death, the narrative's contrasting symbols prepare readers for what will become the supernatural climax of the story. For instance, from the outset of the story Roberts wants readers to recognize there is a purposeful distinction to be made between the barn and the Rectory: the barn was "[a] perpetual eyesore to the rector; but I cannot help thinking, as I view it now in the concentrated light of memory, that it did artistic service in the way of a foil to the loveliness of the rectory garden" (210). This description implies that the barn is plain or perhaps even grotesque in appearance, a lifeless shell in comparison to the colours and vibrancy of a garden. Furthering this comparison between the buildings is the barn's association with death: the image of the dead neighbour hanging in the doorway serves to confirm that the building is meant to be viewed as a moral and spiritual contrast to the life that pervades the Rectory, the spiritual home of the parish priest and his family. A second image of contrast is the young boy's emotional shock and the Rector's discreet pragmatism about the dead body. Whereas the young boy witnesses a natural horror he cannot deal with and stands as if paralyzed, the Rector ignores his own spiritual misgivings about the man's suicide and cuts him down. This difference between what the boy experienced on a sensual level and what the rector needed to do also anticipates the speaker's moment of initiation as an adult, when he must contend with a second horrific vision that challenges not only his fear to act, but also his reliance on the purported certainty of a material world.

In the second memory, the speaker decides to return to his "old haunts" after graduating from college. At night he visits his friends, some of whom are living at the Rectory while others live just a few miles away. He can take the main road to travel between the houses, but chooses instead a shortcut through a less-traveled road that goes past the old barn. Although he had passed by it many times without giving thought to his childhood

horror, one particular night on his walk he notices that "the marsh seemed all alive with flying gleams" (215) and that there was a "strange play of the moon-shadows" over them (216). This uncharacteristic change in the landscape echoes the strange atmospheric conditions in "The Stone Dog" that preceded the speaker's supernatural encounter with the dog. As he passes by the barn this time, "a creeping sensation about my skin, and a thrill of nervous apprehension made me stop suddenly and take a look behind. The impulse seized me unawares" (216). Again, as we have seen in "The Stone Dog," the "creeping sensation" experienced by the protagonist is both a textual and a physical signal that warns him and readers a visitation is imminent.

When the speaker looks back, he sees the image of his long dead neighbour, but rather than stand and "sob with horror" as he did at the age of seven, he now experiences a deeper sense of terror: "as the roots of my hair began to stir, my feet set themselves instinctively for flight. This instinct, however, I promptly and sternly repressed. I knew all about these optical illusions" (216-7). Here Roberts is portraying again the struggle between imagination and reason: the sensation of fear compels him to run, but he controls this instinct by telling himself his dead neighbour no longer exists as part of the material world. He further reasons that the "ghostly vision was due solely to the association of ideas, – I was fresh from my classes in philosophy, – aided and abetted by my own pretty vivid imagination" (217). Yet he cannot ignore the non-rational side of his humanity, noting that his struggle to dispel the vision is not an easy one since "the natural man, this physical being of mine, revolted in every fibre of the flesh from any closer acquaintance with the thing" (217-8).

Wishing to conquer the illusion and prove to himself the sanctity of the material world, the young man moves closer to the apparition, knowing that "I had to bring all my

philosophy to bear, else my feet would have carried me off in a frenzy of flight" (218). Since his eyes continue to deceive him, he reasons that by touching the object he will dispel the apparition: "At last I reached the conclusion that since my sight was so helplessly deceived, I should have to depend upon the touch. In no other way could I detect the true basis of the illusion" (218-9). He thrusts out his walking-stick and is rewarded for his efforts: the body disappears, revealing instead "a piece of wood and iron" (220). Yet this triumph of reason over imagination is short-lived, for when he leaves the barn, he feels the need to take one last reassuring glance. Unfortunately, the barn offers little reassurance: "There, as plain as before I had pierced the bubble, swung the body of my neighbour. And all the way home, though I would not turn my head, I felt it at my heels" (221). Despite the speaker's trust in philosophy and the material realm, it is the horrific image that wins in the end. His faith in the power of material knowledge has been defeated, and he is left at the inexplicable threshold of supernatural experience.

Pomeroy (1943) points out that the factual events of "The Barn on the Marsh" occurred just as Roberts described in the story, including his use of a walking-stick to touch the apparition. She emphasizes that this story is important for students who are "interested in the fundamental characteristics of the *man* as well as in the literature he created" (25). She believes that his challenging of the apparition's existence and his touching of it with the walking-stick demonstrate an integral part of his character: "This subordination of imagination to reason, this mastery of any personal feeling or re-action, and the determination to investigate fully which the poet exhibited when only seventeen, remained a prevailing characteristic throughout his life" (26). Pomeroy's reading of Roberts's character in relation to the event is problematic for two reasons: first, she focuses solely on his dispelling of the vision, even though the story concludes with the vision reappearing as the

speaker begins to walk away from the barn. Second, in arguing that his imagination was "subordinate" to his reason, Pomeroy is ignoring the extent to which he engaged in psychical experiments during his Windsor years, affiliated with occultists throughout his lifetime, and wrote about supernatural subjects. Any reading of the story as a means to understand "the man," then, must surely take into account its ending. In so doing, the ending of "The Barn on the Marsh" reasserts rather than dispels Roberts's ongoing interest in the supernatural.

Although "The Barn on the Marsh" is not mentioned in Roberts's letters or in his original scope of stories for *Earth's Enigmas* described in the 1894 postscript to Carman, it bears a striking resemblance in theme to "The Stone Dog." The speaker's shift in experience from material certainty to inexplicable encounter reinforces a pattern of tension already exhibited in "The Stone Dog": whereas the first memory applies to the speaker's beholding of a natural horror (and thus appeals to the world of the senses), the second encounter with the hanging body defies all logic, thereby challenging the foundations upon which his sense of reality depends. Thus, in both stories a protagonist is confronted by a horrific vision from the supernatural realm, and though he tries desperately to impose logic upon the apparition, he ultimately fails in his attempts and is forever changed by the encounter. Reinforcing this thematic link between the two stories is their structural proximity in *Earth's Enigmas*: "The Barn on the Marsh" appears immediately after "The Stone Dog" in the first edition, then directly before it in the second edition. Whether through authorial influence or editorial decision, these stories were paired in *Earth's Enigmas* to emphasize a single theme: there are forces in the universe that cannot be explained using the tools of materialism or philosophy.

The second pair of Roberts's supernatural stories was published in the early 1890s and represents a shift in his interest in the esoteric tradition. In the early stories he attempted to portray the power of the supernatural in terms of its effect on the individual psyche, and

the rupture in knowledge that occurs when one is confronted by a vision of the otherworld. But in this second group of stories, he demonstrates how the popularity of movements such as Spiritualism, coupled with his own psychical experiments during the Windsor years, begins to influence his story writing. No longer is his concern with merely understanding the supernatural: now he wishes to explore the supernatural as conduit by portraying in his fiction the ways in which knowledge of the universe is revealed to human beings through objects from nature.

The first of the two stories was published in 1891 as "The Star of the Marsh" and later renamed "The Eye of Gluskâp" for *Earth's Enigmas*. Like the stories from the first pairing, "The Star of the Marsh" is included in Roberts's vision for the structure of *Earth's Enigmas*, although he grouped it in the second category of stories that explore the mystery of life and fate; that is, he felt it displayed this theme "to a lesser extent" than stories such as those discussed earlier. But he still viewed it as an important work: he expresses in a letter to Carman that despite the story's initial rejections from "Century, Harper's, Atlantic, & Scribner's...I cannot help thinking it the best prose I have done" (March 17, 1891; *Letters* 130). Significantly, it appears as the final story of the first edition of *Earth's Enigmas*. It also contains supernatural elements that closely resemble those found in his more famous occult narrative, "The Perdu." Yet no critic to date has bothered to discuss this story, perhaps because it was removed prior to publication of the second edition of *Earth's Enigmas* or because of its Acadian subject matter. Regardless, the supernatural characteristics of the amethyst and its visionary qualities, combined with the story's underlying emphasis on notions such as "Fate," places "The Star of the Marsh" squarely within a literary context that is esoteric by design.

On the surface, "The Star of the Marsh" is a historical romance centred on two events: the deportation of the Acadians from Grand Pré, Nova Scotia in the mid-eighteenth century and the love relationship that develops generations later between a young British man named Desbra and Jessie McIntyre, the descendent of an early possessor of the amethyst. But the historical and romantic context of the story serves mainly as backdrop to the supernatural goings-on of a strange amethyst that "discerned a supernatural terror in many a heart that claimed renown for courage" (274). It represents part of the region's local folklore and is known by various names, including the "Witch Stone" (257), "The Star" (257), and "The Eye of Gluskâp" (260). Long before the Acadians sought or possessed it, the amethyst formed part of local Indian lore: for generations it had "sparkled in front of Blomidon, visible at intervals in certain lights and from certain standpoints, and again unseen for months or years together...The Indians...believed that to meddle with it at all would bring down swiftly the vengeance of the demigod" (260). Moreover, any man who sought "the elfin light" (261) would come to a bad end: for instance, a French sailor, who had wrestled the amethyst from its cliff-perch was found dead a few days after attempting the feat (261); it was then found by a young Acadian named Pierrot Desbarats, who "laugh[ed] to scorn the superstitious fears of his fellow-villagers" (261). He suffered a similar fate, mysteriously losing two oxen, his best cow, and his apple orchard after he brought the amethyst to his farm. But an old Micmac woman warned him that "the spell of the stone had no power upon a woman" (262), and heeding her advice, he placed the amethyst in the care of his lover, Marie Beaugrand; from that day "the shadow of ill-fate had seemed to pass from him" (262). She loses it on the way to the deportation ship, and it disappears from human hands until after the Acadian expulsion is complete. This pattern of ill-fortune repeats itself a few years later when a Scottish settler named Dugald McIntyre claims part of the Acadian

lands and with it the Star of the Marsh. As in previous situations, though he believes the amethyst will fetch him great wealth, "the finger of ill-fortune soon designated Dugald McIntyre as the man whose claim to the 'Eye' was acknowledge by the Fates" (269). He experiences bad crops, problems with cattle, and even loses his barns and outbuildings to fire (271), leaving him no choice but to give up the lands to a "skeptical philosopher," who himself lasts only twelve months before selling the acreage "for a mere song" (271).

Tied to the amethyst's mysterious light and association with bad luck are the supernatural sounds of Acadian exile that emanate from the shore. Sailors who approached land on stormy nights would first see the stone's "unearthly eye-beam" (273), then hear "the rattle of oars at the mouth of the creek, and the creaking of ships' cordage, and anon the sound of children crying with the cold. If voices came from the spot where the 'New Marsh' lay unseen and the 'Star' shone coldly watchful, they were for the most part in a tongue which the wayfarers could not understand" (273). Despite such frequent sightings and experiences, the stone would not subject its power to the ways of science and philosophy: of the many scientists who "undertook to unravel the mystery....not one of them ever attained to a vision of the violet gleam" (274). This reference to science and to those who wish to impose material knowledge upon inexplicable phenomena serves to reinforce the idea that it is the supernatural force, not science, that decides when and how its knowledge will be revealed, and to whom.

Generations later, a young man named Desbra purchases the land near the stone and begins to court a young woman, Jessie, who is the great-granddaughter of Dugald McIntyre. He reveals to her his purchase, and she rebukes him with a stern warning: "You have become a man of Destiny" (277). Although he dismisses her fears, he decides that to trick the stone he will hand over his deed to Jessie, thus saving him from ill-fortune. But he does not escape

the amethyst's power so easily, for one day while looking at the "mystic beam" (280), he becomes mesmerized by its awesome light: "There was a long silence, while Desbra kept gazing on the mystic gleam as if fascinated. At last Jessie made a move as if she thought it time to return to the house, whereupon the young man [woke] out of his fit of abstraction" (281). He explains to Jessie that he had fallen under a kind of trance while gazing into the stone's light, and that events of the Acadian expulsion were revealed to him by the amethyst, events he is convinced he experienced in a past life: "Why should I think that I was there when it all happened, – that it all happened to me, in fact?" (282-3). Intrigued by this notion, Jessie begins to question him about his name, eventually determining that he is the great-grandson of the Acadian man Pierrot Desbarats, whose lover, Marie, lost the stone when they were boarding the ship over a century ago. The amethyst thus operates as a conduit to the past, allowing Desbra to become clairvoyant and witness the Acadian expulsion through the eyes of his ancestors.

Following this clairvoyant experience with the stone is Desbra's second supernatural encounter with "The Star of the Marsh." One stormy night closely following his marriage to Jessie, they decide to go and see if the gem "would shine a welcome to their home-coming" (285). After only a few moments of gazing at the light being emitted from the stone, Desbra once more falls under its spell: "In a few moments Desbra became absorbed, as it were, in a sort of waking dream. His frank, merry, almost boyish countenance took on a new expression, and his eyes assumed the strange, far-focused steadfastness of the seer's" (286). Roberts's choice of the word "seer" to describe Desbra at this point is particularly telling: rather than merely witnessing the vision as in the previous encounter, he now bridges the gap between death and life in the manner of a spiritual medium. He also appears to take on the life of the stone, for his own voice and demeanor change under the influence of this spirit:

> At last the girl could bear no longer the ghostly silence, and that strange look in her husband's face.
>
> "What do you see, Jack?" she cried. "What do you see? Oh, how terribly it shines!"
>
> When Desbra replied, she hardly recognized his voice.
>
> "I see many ships," said he, slowly, and as if he heard not the sound of his own words. (287)

He relives the tragedy of the shipwreck through a vision that ends with the collapse of the dike and the disappearance of the amethyst. But Desbra's vision is no longer restricted to historical events. At this moment past and present conflate, for the lovers discover the next day that Desbra's prophecy has become reality: the dike washed away in the night and the glow of the amethyst had gone out (290-1). Equally important is Roberts's description of Desbra when he comes out of his trance: "The young man started back and put his hand to his eyes, as if awakening from a dream" (289). This notion of him being in a mediumistic trance is reinforced by Jessie, who remarks that "you have been dreaming or in a trance, and seeing dreadful things that I could not see at all!" (290). Thus, Desbra's experience as being likened to that of a seer, coupled with his change in speech and that he eventually "awaken[ed] from a dream," reasserts the notion that "The Star of the Marsh" is not so much a historical romance as it is Roberts's creative attempt to explore the power of the supernatural and the mediumistic abilities of those who can channel such inexplicable forces.

"The Star of the Marsh" was removed from *Earth's Enigmas* prior to the publication of the second edition, appearing instead in *By the Marshes of Minas*. He notes in the Preface that this story, along with "Tragedy of the Tides," another story from the first edition of *Earth's Enigmas*, were better suited for this collection because "their subjects bring them obviously within the scope of this collection rather than the other" (iii). Yet his decision to

remove it from *Earth's Enigmas* does not negate the relationship it bears to other supernatural stories that appear in the volume. On the contrary, less than a year after "The Star of the Marsh" was published he wrote a second story that dealt with similar ideas: "The Perdu" would not only employ clairvoyance as a controlling theme of the story, it would also become his most recognized occult narrative.

Critics of *Earth's Enigmas* have identified "The Perdu" as a significant achievement within the collection, and that it possesses uncanny characteristics. In *The Canadian Magazine*, for instance, Francis Sherman states that "undoubtedly the finest story [in *Earth's Enigmas*] is the one called 'The Perdu'....It is a strange, beautiful story which, with its perfect close of love unfilfilled[sic] and unsatisfied, is surely more symbolic than the tales of realism are wont to be" (180). He concludes: "'The Perdu'...has in it more of beauty and color, and grace of language, and a *higher, new meaning* than anything that the greater of the realists have ever attempted" (180; emphasis added). Also of note is a review that appeared in *The Bookman*, in which *Earth's Enigmas* and Duncan Campbell Scott's *In the Village of Viger* are characterized as "experiments in prose" and that stories such as "The Perdu" are "close to the mystery of life in the forest and lonely places" (366). More recent scholars have also stressed the story's "mysterious" nature: Cogswell (1983a), for instance, describes it as a "dark epiphany...among the finest fantasies of its kind ever written" (218), while Polk (1972) declares that "throughout his life, Roberts was fascinated by the occult....His interest in mysteries and coincidences shows up in several of his stories, one of the finest being 'The Perdu'"(85).

Roberts's letters reveal that he was particularly fond of "The Perdu" and believed it was an important story in his oeuvre. Not only is it included in the first category of narratives that explore the "mystery of life & fate" in his 1894 postscript to Carman: he also mentions

in a letter to Walter McRaye thirty-five years after the initial publication of *Earth's Enigmas* that "I shall *love* to have that extra copy...Bless you. It contains some of my most significant yarns. Instance 'The Perdu.' The critics all miss the 'enigmatic' note,--because I dont[sic] stress it, as I dont[sic] like to be *obvious*" (November 24, 1929; *Letters* 389). The most revealing correspondence about "The Perdu" is a letter he wrote to Carman in which the story is first mentioned. Included almost as an afterthought in the first paragraph is the following statement: "[H]ave just finished, & mailed to Gilder, a mystic psychological thing, a sort of story, called "'The Perdu'" (March 19, 1892; *Letters* 144). In describing the story as a "mystic psychological thing," he is implying that "The Perdu" is not to be defined along traditional literary lines, but finds closer ties to a supernatural or esoteric tradition of writing.

"The Perdu" is about the effects of a mysterious pool on a rural neighbourhood and two of its young folk, Reuben Waugh and Celia Hansen. Although it possesses a certain beauty, the neighbourhood folk believed the Perdu to be "an object of dim significance and dread" and that "if [the passing stranger] were to translate the term for them for their better information, they would show themselves impressed by a sense of its occult appropriateness" (18-19). The Perdu is no ordinary body of water; instead, it acts like a thin boundary between the past and the present, blurring the reality of all that surrounds it: "At times the landscape, that was so changeless, would seem to waver a little, to shift confusedly like things seen through running water" (21-22). Everything is altered by its presence, and even the slightest of modern phenomena cannot penetrate its depths: "If a common sound, like the shriek of a steamboat's whistle, now and again soared over across the hills and fields, it was changed in that refracting atmosphere, and became a defiance at the gates of waking dream" (22-23). Significantly, "waking dream" is the same phrase used to describe Desbra's clairvoyant experiences in "The Star of the Marsh"; it alludes to the precarious boundary between sleep

and wakefulness explored in early occult forms of hypnosis, such as mesmerism, as well as the thin barrier between life and death traversed by Spiritualist mediums.

The quiet mystery of the Perdu is soon broken by the presence of Reuben and Celia, who begin to frequent its banks. Their visits to the Perdu rekindle an interest in the pool and its mysteries. Indeed, "[u]nder the influence of the children's sympathetic expectancy, the Perdu began to find fuller expression. Every mysterious element in the neighborhood – whether emanating from the Perdu itself or from the spirits of the people about it – appeared to find a focus in the personalities of the two children" (29). The result of this symbiotic relationship between the Perdu and the youngsters was that "[e]very experience, every manifestation, when investigated, seemed to resolve itself into something of an epidemic sense of unseen but thrilling influences" (29-30). Like the Indian and Acadian tales about "The Star of the Marsh," the mysterious occurrences near the Perdu do nothing to help explain its significance; on the contrary, such unresolved phenomena only increase the pool's supernatural awe.

The townsfolk also begin to associate Reuben with the Perdu. His constant visits to the pool, for example, spawn a host of new stories about the Perdu, which "were certain to be connected, soon after their origin, with the name of Reuben Waugh" (29). In another instance, Reuben explains to Celia that the strange light emanating from the middle of the Perdu is nothing more than gases escaping from a tree underneath the surface of the water. Yet the townsfolk embrace this mystery as another example of the Perdu's supernatural powers, and because of Reuben's affiliation with the pool, nickname the phenomenon "Reube Waugh's Lantern" (36). Despite such constant aligning with the Perdu, Reuben is ironically the one character who offers plausible, material explanations for the unexplainable occurrences at the Perdu throughout much of the story. For example, he explains to Celia's

father that the reason there are footprints on the snowy Perdu, but none leading to or away from it, is because of the way the Perdu's banks are sloped. Earlier in the story he also deduces that a pale green hand seen waving over the water was more likely the result of a lily-leaf being pulled by an unseen catfish than a supernatural occurrence – although in this instance, rather than embrace such a rational explanation the two young playmates "were content to leave the vision but half explained" whenever they saw the green hand afterwards (35).

Reuben's explanations about what he believes are natural occurring phenomena on the Perdu do little to prepare him for the supernatural vision he witnesses on his return from the city. After seeking his fortune abroad in order to gain approval of Celia's parents, he returns a successful young man. But any changes he underwent while living in the city are quickly erased by the power of the Perdu, for as he "reached a slope overlooking the amber-bright country of the Perdu, he was once more the silent eager boy, the quaintly reasoning visionary, his spirit waiting alert at his eyes and at his ears" (44). His heightened senses and "visionary" nature are soon rewarded, for once he spies the Perdu he notices a pale hand waving in the middle of the water. But this time it is no longer the pale green hand from his youth that appears: the hand now waving to him from the water is pale and white, an image he instinctively associates with Celia. He immediately dives into the water, but is unable to find a body. At first he laughs at his initial panic, attributing the vision to his own unconscious association of Celia with the Perdu. But as he turns to look back at the water, "his heart leaped into his throat suffocatingly, for again rose the hand and arm, and waved, and dropped back among the lilies! He grasped the nearest tree, that he might not, in spite of himself, plunge back into the pale mystery of the Perdu" (48). The pool becomes a "floor of opal" (48), whose gem-like appearance now resembles the amethyst from "The Star of the

Marsh," and like the "star," it is operating as a conduit for supernatural forces, revealing to Reuben an event of which he had no prior knowledge. The resulting clairvoyant experience confirms what he had felt since his early youth, that although the Perdu did not flow like the river downstream, its occult powers reached far beyond the shallow banks and offered up secrets to those who were open to sharing its knowledge. Convinced now that something horrible has happened to Celia, he rushes to the Hansen farmhouse, only to discover that she is dead. His quiet pronouncement "I know" in response to Celia's father asking if he had heard about Celia's death (50) is a final reminder to readers that neither material science nor Christian faith can explain all of life's mysteries.

In "The Stone Dog," the protagonist's faith in "the powers of material knowledge" is gradually chipped away by an animated piece of sculpture. Similarly, in "The Barn on the Marsh" the image of the dead neighbour affects the young boy's psyche, whereas the second image of the neighbour challenges his definition of reality. In contrast to these two stories is the more explicit occult narrative "The Star of the Marsh," in which a young man becomes a spiritual medium for his ancestors via an amethyst that possesses supernatural powers. Similarly, in "The Perdu" Reuben Waugh's kinship with a mysterious pool that is surrounded by strange and inexplicable phenomena is rewarded, although tragically, with a horrific vision of his playmate and lover, Celia.

The third pair of supernatural stories consists of "In the Accident Ward" and "The Hill of Chastisement," although the latter did not appear until 1903 as part of the second edition. Both Pomeroy and Morrell link the two stories in their respective groupings, arguing that they represent "dream" narratives. Pomeroy (1943) in particular believes that they are a form of automatic writing, suggesting that with the exception of "In the Accident Ward" Roberts performed little editing on them: "although written at wide intervals...they are alike

in their grim symbolism, alike are they also in their origins, for they were all written in dreams and, with the exception of the self-explanatory conclusion most obviously added to ["In the Accident Ward"], they appear exactly as they were *dreamed*" (140). Certainly "The Hill of Chastisement" and "In the Accident Ward" are examples of dream sequences and both are of similar length, the first comprising eight pages, the second only six pages. Yet Pomeroy's grouping of "The Stone Dog" under this same "dream" heading is problematic, since it is not as explicit in terms of recreating a dream narrative; that is, rather than offering a phantasmagoric story without explanation, it is filtered through the eyes and experience of a first-person protagonist, who tells the tale from memory and at times breaks the flow of the narrative by interjecting commentary about the events. Thus, even though Roberts may have "dreamed" parts of "The Stone Dog," its themes and narrative strategy are better aligned to "The Barn on the Marsh" than to the other two stories.

"In the Accident Ward," which was included in Roberts's category of stories that best explores "the mystery of life and fate," begins *in medias res* with an unnamed first-person narrator standing at the base of a low hill. As he gazes at his surroundings, he notices that the grass and sky are "of a strange and dreadful pallor" and that he is standing in the middle of a "red road of baked clay, blood red" (111). When he looks behind him, he notices he has come through an open gate, and that standing in the mouth of this gate are "two gray leopards and a small ape" (112) that, upon hearing "a word whispered which I could not understand," draw away and disappear (112). Morrell believes that this opening landscape is "symbolic rather than scene-setting" (143), a notion reinforced by Conway (1982), who believes that the opening possesses a "Dantean quality" (233). The "blood-red path" certainly suggests the road of life and the *in medias res* opening echoes the beginning of the *Inferno*, but what of the two leopards and small ape, and the gate at which they stand?

Morley (1977) contends that "the ape and tiger were the animals most frequently chosen to illustrate discussions of evolution and ethics" (349), and links the depiction of the leopards and the ape to Tennyson's poem *In Memoriam*, which refers to "the ape and the tiger," an argument supported by Conway, who suggests "Roberts's beasts are obviously chosen from Tennyson's 'In Memoriam,' which provided the age with its most popular image of the imperative of human evolution" (233).

Although intriguing, the Darwinian arguments put forward by Morley and Conway make little sense for two key reasons. First, Roberts was an experienced outdoorsman and would have known the difference between a tiger and a leopard, a notion confirmed by the illustration of spotted leopards in the frontispiece of the second edition. Second, if readers look closely at the "small ape" depicted in the frontispiece, they will discover that it looks remarkably similar to a baboon. If so, the relationship between leopards and a baboon in the story assumes a deliberate mythological significance, specifically Egyptian. Leopards are often associated with Osiris, the God of Death; furthermore, the baboon is often depicted as the figure who guarded the first gate of the Underworld. The resulting mythological symbolism makes more sense than a Darwinian reading of the animals, especially when we consider that shortly after the leopards and ape disappear a ghostly figure "all in gray" approaches him from the summit of the hill, closely pursued by "the Second Death" (113). The term "Second Death" is a possible reference to Revelations: any soul whose name was not found in the Book of Life would be "thrown into the lake of fire" (REV 20:15). Yet this term is also used by occultists to describe palingenesis, or rebirth; it is therefore ambiguous as to which meaning Roberts intended. Regardless, in both instances, the narrator has passed through the "first gate" of death and is approaching a second "transition" point.

At first the speaker is afraid of the approaching figure of Second Death, but when the ghost "fell at my feet, and clasped my knees in awful fear, I felt myself grow strong, and all dread left my soul. I reached forth my right hand and grasped the pursuing horror by the throat" (113). By shifting the focus from his own fate to that of protecting the ghost, he discovers new life and a renewed sense of purpose. But the elusive nature of Second Death proves his undoing, for "the iron grip of my own strong and implacable fingers seemed to close with a keen agony upon my own throat" (113). The figure of Second Death is no longer an external object of dread for the speaker but a force that emanates from within him. The resulting confrontation with his own Second Death is unresolved, though, since moments later the speaker awakens in the accident ward, swathed in bandages and surrounded by attending nurses and doctors. The story ends with him briefly recalling the horrific image of the crash and "sickening upheaval of the collision" (114) before slipping back into a second, more calm slumber.

Both Pomeroy and Morrell criticize the story's ending for its less than adequate resolution of the provocative dream-sequence that preceded it. Morrell, for instance, declares that the ending "is both aesthetically and psychologically inadequate" (144). For her part, Pomeroy defends Roberts's narrative by suggesting it was "the market," not Roberts, which created such a pragmatic and stylized conclusion: "one cannot refrain even at this late day from lamenting that the market required a practical explanation as suggested by the title" (140-1). Indeed, the power of the narrative resides within the dream proper, since Roberts's portrayal of one man's "near death" experience represents a new and deeper form of spiritual investigation in his writing. The boundary being addressed in this story is no longer that of the material world versus the supernatural: now it is the psychological realm of the afterlife that he wishes to explore.

Complementing "In the Accident Ward" is his more overtly religious narrative, "The Hill of Chastisement." A first-person protagonist, who resides at the mouth of a cave located half-way up a mountain, is suffering from an unnamed sin. Below him in the abyss, "through the upward roll of the smoke flamed grinning faces, as the white faces of the drowned gleam up through a black water" (197-8); they mock him in his misery, prompting him to lash "more fiercely with the knotted leather scourge that hung from my girdle" (198). He seeks atonement from an old man who lives in the inner sanctuary of the cave, "in a glory of clear and pure light, so penetrating that it revealed the secrets of my breast" (198). The old man sits with his head bowed "over a book that shone like crystal" (198), oblivious to the protagonist's repeated self-flagellation, prayers, and cries for mercy. One night, the sinner "grew aware" that if he chooses the rough path around the hill he will eventually arrive on the other side and thus be able to enter the inner cave of the saint. The path itself proves treacherous and he becomes a Christ-like figure, falling repeatedly along the path but forcing himself to "rise bleeding and stumble on" (201). His penance is in vain, though, for he suddenly realizes that his atonement is refused. Ignoring the defeat, he presses on, and discovers a heap of stones and a wooden pillar beside the path, which he interprets as a change in fate and a sign of his forgiveness: "I knew it was a wayside calvary. I knew it was set up on the hillside for the last refuge of such lost ones as I" (202). He flings himself upon the structure, weeping for joy; but moments later a sudden red light illuminates the path, revealing the tragic truth: his wayside calvary is instead "a reeking gibbet" (203).

Although "The Hill of Chastisement" is sleight of action, the story's religious symbolism is unquestionably poignant and complex. In fact, much of the symbolism is presented in relation to traditional Christian teachings: the abyss below the sinner is an image of hell, complete with flames and faces that laugh and mock him. Contrasting this vision of

hell is the inner sanctuary of the cave, in which dwells a saint, basking in the spiritual glow of a Bible. A third religious icon is the wayside calvary evoked at the end of the story, which gives the sinner hope for his redemption. Yet the sinner's failure at atonement does not result in a clear victory for the story's underlying religious framework. On the contrary, as Morrell points out, the story offers a "cruelly ironic conclusion" (149), which ultimately represents "a deep disbelief that the promises of Christianity have any power to ease the pain of rejection and regret or to prevent shameful death" (148-9). Similarly, Conway argues that "[i]f exterior correspondence presents the feeble spirit with insurmountable obstacles, to embrace a dogmatic religious structure is even worse" (291). By focusing on the psyche of the sinner and his attempt to ensure redemption and a place in the afterlife, Roberts is exploring through this dream sequence a theme already encountered in "In the Accident Ward," namely that the boundary between this world and the next is a complex matter, and that the path into the afterlife is fraught with perils. The ease with which the wayside calvary becomes a "reeking gibbet" reinforces Roberts's growing distrust of organized religion as a reliable source of knowledge for explaining the relationship between this life and the next.

Two other points challenge a traditional Christian reading of the story. First, the concept of an inner cave that glowed with "clear and pure light" is most certainly an echo of Plato's cave. Given Roberts's background in philosophy during his undergraduate career, he could not have missed the analogy; the resultant image places emphasis on the sinner's quest for knowledge, not atonement. Reinforcing this supernatural link to Plato and the esoteric tradition is a line from Roberts's "Ave," published ten years earlier, which refers to "Plato's theme occult" (186). Second, Bentley (1999) argues that the story may be indebted, in part, to two plays by the Belgian symbolist, Maurice Maeterlinck: "It is...impossible to state with absolute certainty that 'The Hill of Chastisement' is primarily indebted to [Maeterlinck's]

'The Blind' and 'The Intruder' rather than to Poe or, say, Rossetti, but the many qualities that the story shares with the plays...do conspire with the external evidence to make this a distinct possibility" (36). If so, the story takes on an additional esoteric significance, since Maeterlinck was well-read in occult lore and the Symbolists in general are regarded as a literary movement that was heavily influenced by occult ideas.

These six stories are Roberts's exploration of the seemingly thin barrier between life and death claimed to be traversed by practitioners of Spiritualism and depictions of the secrets of the cosmos that may be gleaned from coming into contact with such forces. Written over a twenty-year period, they are a small but significant group of stories whose publication marks a key transition period in Roberts's philosophy. Although they have received little attention from scholars, the majority of them figure prominently in his original thematic vision of *Earth's Enigmas*, a collection which, in Roberts's words, explores "the mystery of life and fate." The central tension in all six stories involves some aspect of the supernatural. In "The Stone Dog" and "The Barn on the Marsh," his two earliest supernatural stories, the protagonist confronts a horrific vision that he cannot reconcile with his material understanding of the universe. In the second pair of stories, "The Star of the Marsh" and "The Perdu," objects from nature, an amethyst and a pool, take on an occult significance through their ability to channel knowledge of the universe to two susceptible young men. The final two supernatural stories included in *Earth's Enigmas* are the dream-narratives "In the Accident Ward" and "The Hill of Chastisement," whose protagonists are projections of the individual psyche and collectively represent Roberts's grappling with fears of the afterlife. The writing/publishing chronology of these stories also reflects a deepening interest and understanding of the supernatural on the part of Roberts. The earliest stories involve a confrontation with external manifestations of the supernatural, whereas in the second and

third pairs the supernatural becomes increasingly internalized; that is, the clairvoyant abilities of Reuben and Desbra represent a transition point in the process since the visions enter via their psyche while the dream-narratives are a new level of complexity in the internalization process.

Roberts's supernatural stories reflect the characteristics of the "Romantic Revival" described in his 1890 review of Rosamund Marriott Watson, particularly the first two. The first characteristic, which involves a "fondness for handling weird themes built, in a fashion of subtle suggestiveness, from old superstitions and folk-myths," is certainly evident in the stories. In "The Stone Dog," for example, the Good Samaritan represents one of the superstitious townsfolk and relates to the protagonist after his encounter at the ruins tales of the "Fonte del Cano." Similarly, in "The Perdu," the narrator notes how the pool's inexplicable phenomena and mysterious nature are inextricably linked to the neighbourhood folk, whose unwavering belief in its powers spawn new tales about its "occult significance" in relation to Reuben Waugh. Also of note is "The Star of the Marsh," which is set in the historical context of the Acadian expulsion, thereby implying that the weird tale originated in Acadian folklore. His subsequent renaming of it as "The Eye of Gluskâp" enhances the tale's folklore origins by further aligning it with supernatural creatures from Native mythology.

The second characteristic of the "Romantic Revival," which Roberts describes as the "human note," is best represented by "The Hill of Chastisement," particularly the ending of the story when the protagonist thinks he sees a wayside calvary, which turns into the "reeking gibbet"; in this single moment he experiences the essence of human tragedy as his blind hope is irrevocably destroyed by unforeseen circumstances. The notion of tragedy is reflected in the dead and forgotten Prussians described in the Watson poem he quotes in his 1890 review to define this characteristic; the image of the wayside calvary also serves as the

title and central symbol for her poem. Another story possessing this characteristic is "The Perdu": the return of Reuben from abroad does not end in a proposal of marriage to Celia but in a witnessing of her arm and hand outstretched from the Perdu, a horrific vision that signals her death. The tragedy is further punctuated by the story's final image, in which Celia's grief-stricken father, standing at the door with Reuben, utters the fateful phrase: "Oh, Reuben, if you stayed it might have been different!" (51). The pathos of the image is both touching and intense in its narrative simplicity.

Roberts's deliberate choice of volumes that investigate supernatural themes to review in his "World of Books" column as well as the pains he took to explore similar topoi in a group of six stories published in *Earth's Enigmas* indicate his growing appreciation and affinity for things occult. The emphasis in the six stories on the "horror" of the supernatural symbolizes not only the sensual or psychological response of the speaker to such visions: these horrific images also represent a rupturing in the speaker's understanding of the universe, whose *weltanschauung*, which is invariably based on reason and material knowledge, is challenged by inexplicable phenomena whose meaning lie outside the boundaries of conventional wisdom. This obsession with understanding the afterlife, a notion he aligns with the receiving of divine knowledge, is a theme that would haunt Roberts for the rest of his life and a tension he would continue to explore in future writings.

Chapter 4: The Role of the Supernatural in Roberts's Acadian Fiction

Early in his career Roberts demonstrated a considerable interest in the Acadian tradition in Atlantic Canada. His non-fiction series, "Echoes from Old Acadia," consists of four essays originally published between December 1884 and January 1885, which range in topic from an "Acadian 'Bûche de Noël" to the wife of Charles La Tour, an early Governor of Acadia. His first major essay on the literary potential of the Acadian tradition, "The Outlook for Literature: Acadia's Field for Poetry, History and Romance," appeared in 1886, where he muses on "the future of literature in Nova Scotia" (7) and its role in the shaping of a national literature. He suggests that the province offers writers several sources of creative inspiration. The first source is Nova Scotia's landscapes, whose "stern coasts, now thundered against by Atlantic storms, now wrapped in noiseless fogs...overwhelming tides [and] weird reaches of flat and marsh and dyke, should create a habit of openness to nature, and by contrast put a reproach upon the commonplace and the gross" (7). The next two sources form part of the region's cultural traditions. The second source is Nova Scotia's wealth of Indian legends, although drawing directly from such legends will result in literary failure: "[o]nly indirectly, by association and suggestion, is Indian legend likely, I think to exert marked influence upon our creative literature" (7). Writers should instead look to the third source, Acadian culture, as an alternative source for inspiration; its dramatic history is a goldmine of literary potential, due in part to the Acadian "hardships and...triumphs" as well as to its "deep pathos of the end" (7). He cites Longfellow's *Evangeline* as proof of such an influence: the poem is not the apotheosis of Acadian inspiration, he argues, but merely an example of what can be

accomplished by writers who tap into this tradition. Acadian history and culture "should be breeding ground for poem, and history, and romance" (7).

Inspired by his own words, Roberts proceeded to publish several Acadian works of history and romance. His interest in the history of the Acadian people, which began with the "Echoes from Old Acadia" series, would resurface in his *History of Canada* (1897), the first section of which deals with New France and the expulsion of the Acadians. He also published other non-fiction prose about the Acadians, including "In the Land of Evangeline," which appeared in the June 1899 issue of *The Saturday Evening Post* as well as *The Land of Evangeline and Gateways Thither* (1895), a tourist guide about the Acadian settlements of Nova Scotia and other Maritime destinations including Halifax and Saint John, New Brunswick. In *The Land of Evangeline and Gateways Thither* Roberts equates the area and people of Acadia with mystery and the supernatural: in the Introduction, for instance, he describes Old Acadie as possessing a "romantic and mysterious past" (1), whose lands are "not less fair, and not less fitting scenes for all the romance which Time and Fate and the Poet have placed in their keeping" (1-2). He also suggests that the climate of Acadia is "so benign that Chaucer might have had it in *prophetic vision* when he wrote: 'The ayre of that place so attempre was / That never was grievaunce of hot ne cold'" (2; emphasis added).

Roberts's main contribution to the field of Acadian literature was the short stories and novels he published between the years 1894 and 1904. Beginning with *The Raid from Beauséjour* (1894), he would publish three additional romances about Acadia, including *The Forge in the Forest* (1896), *A Sister to Evangeline* (1898), and *The Prisoner of Mademoiselle* (1904) as well as a collection of short fiction, *By the Marshes of Minas* (1900). Collectively these books attempt to portray in one form or another "the eager searchings, the bold exploits [and] strange adventures" of the Acadian people ("The Outlook for Literature," 7).

Despite such an avid and sustained interest on the part of Roberts, almost no criticism exists on his Acadian works. Keith (1969) devotes a chapter to Roberts's "Fiction and Romance" but affords little space to the Acadian prose, which he criticizes for its use of "stock ingredients and clichés" (64) and believes it should be relegated to "the category of juvenilia" (66). John Moss (1984) agrees with Keith's summation: instead of attempting any meaningful discussion of Roberts's Acadian romances he offers only a single paragraph, concluding that the romances possess only "Acadian cliché and romantic contrivance" (87). Likewise, Terry Whalen (1987) dismisses the group by arguing that Roberts "implicitly shows that he knew the North American market" in these works and that his three romances possess "more propaganda than art" (6). A less harsh assessment is offered by Janice Kulyk Keefer, who includes in her *Under Eastern Eyes: A Critical Reading of Maritime Fiction* (1987) brief discussions of *The Forge in the Forest* and *A Sister to Evangeline*. Relying on historical context and possible source texts, she argues that *A Sister to Evangeline* is a nationalist rewriting of Longfellow's poem *Evangeline* while *The Forge in the Forest* is the "fictional complementary" (98) to *A Sister to Evangeline*, a lesser romance bent on putting "hostilities back in the hands of gentlemen and thus achieve parity between the [French and English]" (99). She would reiterate this critical position later in her "Fortunate Falls and Propitious Expulsions" (1994) by suggesting that the two romances "present pre-Expulsion Grand Pré as a miracle of social and aesthetic harmony" (34) and employ the mythic notion of "Acadie as Eden" in order to serve Roberts's "nationalist (and centrist) vision of history" (38). Similarly, Elizabeth Waterston (1984) contends that Roberts, along with Gilbert Parker, decided that "French/English connections could serve as the stuff of Canadian romance" (109) and manipulated Acadian history in his fiction in order to address the issue of "French-English accommodation in Canada" (111).

The only other essay published on Roberts's Acadian fiction is William Owen's "Vision and Revision in Roberts' Acadian Romances" (1984). On the surface, this article appears to complement the studies of Waterston (1984) and Keefer (1987), for he sets out to prove that Roberts had two purposes in mind when he wrote his romances: the first was to develop and promote "harmonious reconciliation between the English and Acadian peoples of the Maritimes" (117); the second purpose was to "revise and improve the image of the...British military...during the eighteenth century" (117). Owen, however, identifies an aspect of Roberts's Acadian romances that no other critic has identified: the role of the supernatural. Granted, Owen's space dedicated to this topic is limited, but this does not diminish the significance of his statements. Far from being a minor aspect in the novels, Owen argues that the supernatural is "an important element in the tales" (119); that is, a tension exists in *The Forge in the Forest* and *A Sister to Evangeline* between history and the supernatural, which at times affects the historical accuracy of Roberts's characters. In *The Forge in the Forest*, for instance, Roberts "occasionally introduces the supernatural to render a moral judgement on history" (121), citing Grûl's punishment of the Black Abbé as an example of this narrative strategy. Owen believes that this scene suggests "Roberts has used the supernatural as a stronger, more valid force to correct the record of history" (121). Similarly, in *A Sister to Evangeline* he points out that the lovers of the story, Yvonne de Lamourie and Paul Grande, are "protected by the white magic of Mother Pêche" (122), suggesting once again the power of the supernatural as a mitigating force within the narrative.

This chapter expands on Owen's comments by exploring the ways in which Roberts incorporates elements of the supernatural into several of his Acadian prose works, including *The Forge in the Forest*, *A Sister to Evangeline*, and stories from *By the Marshes of Minas*.

Collectively these works reveal that Roberts maintained an avid interest in the supernatural after leaving King's College in the spring of 1895. More importantly, his deliberate and careful incorporation of such elements into his Acadian works is in keeping with similar elements found in stories from *Earth's Enigmas*, suggesting further that his struggle with questions of the cosmos and the afterlife continued to haunt him.

Published in the same year as *Earth's Enigmas*, *The Forge in the Forest* recounts the adventures of an eighteenth-century Acadian lord named Jean de Mer, who has recently returned to Grand Pré after a three-year absence. Structurally speaking, the romance is divided into two interconnected narratives, both of which are narrated by Jean. In the first part, Jean helps his son Marc overcome a revenge plot concocted by the powerful, but heretical Acadian priest, the Black Abbé, who, in retaliation for Marc's public condemnation of his manipulative actions against Acadian villagers, attempts to have him branded a spy for the English. The second part concerns a young English woman named Mizpah Hanford, whose son Philip is kidnapped by supporters of the Black Abbé. Jean, who recently rescued Mizpah and her sister Prudence from followers of the Abbé, has fallen in love with her and so volunteers to go after the boy. Despite his initial protestations, Jean agrees to bring Mizpah with him in place of the wounded Marc, whose condition forces him to remain in Grand Pré with Prudence, who also happens to be his lover. Overshadowing this second plot and the eventual safe return of Philip is Roberts's inclusion of a bloody but decisive victory for Jean and the Acadian forces over a New England garrison, a fight that serves as the climax to Part II and involves the tragic death of Tamin Violet, one of Jean and Marc's companions from Part I. Looming behind all of these events is the historical background of the romance, which takes place just prior to the Acadian expulsion.

The Forge in the Forest is a mélange of romance conventions, with linked revenge plots, forbidden love, and heroic quests. Yet in the Foreword Roberts hints at another characteristic, an area of critical inquiry seldom mentioned by scholars that links the history of the Acadian people to mysterious forces. After describing present-day Nova Scotia, he notes that "behind this countenance of gladness and peace broods the memory of a vanished people" (11). The phrase "vanished people" implies that the Acadians were not merely exiled but disappeared completely from existence, thus lending a supernatural tone to their history. More importantly, the fact that their memory still "broods" in the area suggests that a part of these people persists in the landscape, a force that exists outside of historical consciousness. Reinforcing this idea of a lingering Acadian presence in the region is his first mention of the heretical priest, the Black Abbé: "[t]hough the race whose bane he was has gone, still stalks the sinister shadow of the Black Abbé" (12). The Abbé is a kind of demon or form of undead that haunts the Nova Scotia landscape. Hence, this image of a haunting spirit, coupled with the notion of a vanished people, signals to the reader that there are strange phenomena associated with this "vanished" people that should not be taken lightly.

The majority of the supernatural elements found in *The Forge of the Forest* originate with François de Grûl, a mysterious figure who spends his time protecting Acadian villagers from the Black Abbé. His wild demeanor sets him apart from the military discipline of the soldiers as well as the refined manners of Acadian gentlemen like Marc and Jean de Mer. Roberts also links him to literary wizards like Merlin, by bestowing on Grûl similar physical characteristics: he has long white hair, a long white beard, and wears "a rimless cap of plaited straw, with a high, pointed crown; and this was stuck full of gaudy flowers and feathers. From the point of the crown rose the stump of what had been, belike, a spray of goldenrod, broken by a hasty journeying through the obstructions of the forest" (77). He also

carries a "white stick, with a grotesque carven head, dyed scarlet" (78), which he waves in "strange, intricate curves" (79). Moreover, just prior to his first encounter with Grûl Jean "senses" the wizard before seeing him: "I felt, rather than heard, a presence come behind me" (76). This description of Jean's extra-sensory perception echoes the experiences felt by narrators in "The Stone Dog" and "The Barn on the Marsh" before their respective encounters with the supernatural. Faced with such an awesome and bewildering figure, Jean declares that Grûl is a "fantastic form" (79).

Complementing Grûl's appearance are his occult powers. Marc mentions to Jean that despite his "mad" moments, Grûl is "sane for the most part, and with some touches of a wisdom beyond the wisdom of men" (80). He also notes that "his strange ravings, his prodigious prophesyings, do something here and there to weaken the Abbé's influence with our people" (80). Similarly, the Indians refuse to lift a hand against him because they believe "a Manitou dwells in him" (81). As for Grûl's repeated phrase, "Woe, woe to Acadie the Fair, for the day of her desolation cometh" (77), his doomsday prophecy operates as a rhetorical strategy to help substantiate his soothsaying abilities, since readers would have likely been familiar with the historical fact that the Acadian expulsion began in 1755. Another feature of Grûl's supernatural powers is his use of strange symbols to communicate with Marc and Jean. At one point, they discover a peeled stick, a portion of which is "cut down to a flat surface, and on this was drawn with charcoal a straight line, having another straight line perpendicular to it, and bisecting it. At the top of the perpendicular was a figure of the sun" (116). Following this description in the text is an illustration of the rune, demonstrating the extent to which Roberts was conscious of the power of symbols and of the need to depict rather than simply describe them. Marc describes the symbol as part of Grûl's "sign manual" (117), and is able to interpret it: he will meet the men at high noon. Although

the message is fairly banal, Grûl's use of symbol establishes his interest in occluded forms of communication and his ability to use them should the need arise.

The only character who questions Grûl's powers is Jean de Mer. Although his son holds "a childlike faith in this fantastic being" (121), Jean maintains an air of caution and skepticism towards the white wizard, declaring that "all this mystery, and this blind obedience [to Grûl]...were little to my liking" (121). Yet he is continually baffled by Grûl's ability to offer assistance at critical times. Indeed, although Grûl is not prominent in the narrative, as Keith (1969) points out, his position is crucial to the success of the Acadians, for he "appears at important crises in the story to assist the hero" (65). Three times during the narrative he intercepts Jean during his adventures to offer counsel. In Part I, for example, Marc and Jean are being chased on a river by followers of the Black Abbé. Although they manage to escape by sinking one of their canoes, they hit a rock and must swim to shore. Luckily, they gain land and flee into the forest. But in the midst of their rest and newfound security, Grûl suddenly appears and warns them "to fly" (78), as the Indians are still on their trail; then he disappears to "throw them off the trail" (79). It is this moment of protection that enables Marc and Jean to reach de Ramezay and clear Marc's name without further incident. In the second instance, Grûl leads Marc and Jean to the captured sisters, Prudence and Mizpah, a move which precipitates both Jean's feelings for Mizpah as well as his quest for the kidnapped boy. Grûl's third counsel to Jean occurs in Part II: while stopping at the base of a cliff to rest, Jean and Mizpah spot Grûl dangling the Abbé over the cliff. They move into the bushes and watch the scene unfold, which ends with Grûl allowing the Abbé to escape. Despite their hidden vantage point, Grûl suddenly appears at their side and asks, "do you dream he did not see you?" (208), signaling that they must hurry along in their quest or face further obstacles. Later, they spot followers of the Abbé paddling towards them and are able

to prepare an ambush. Grûl's warning, then, enables Jean and Mizpah to gain advantage over the Indians and continue their quest. Grûl's actions once again echo those of Merlin, for it is not so much his supernatural powers but his ability to offer wise counsel that marks him as a wizard. Likewise, it was not Merlin's talent for casting spells or performing magic that made him critical to Arthur's success, but his uncanny ability to offer crucial counsel that made him a powerful figure in the Arthurian romances. More importantly, Grûl's continuous and successful counsel moves Jean to alter his opinion of the mysterious figure: "I praised the saints for sending to our aid this madman Grûl – whom…I now graciously absolved from the charge of madman" (125).

Although his opinion of the man has altered, Jean maintains a sense of mistrust towards Grûl's powers; a decision that is not without merit, for the one prediction Grûl offers to Jean in the story does not come true. Late in Part II he claims that Philip will be taken "to the sea that is within the heart of the land" (208), a reference to the Bras D'Or lakes. Jean, though, notes that despite this prophecy, "Grûl had told us falsely. The child was not destined for Ile Royale" (209). He then proceeds to conjecture on possible explanations for Grûl's mistake, citing two likely reasons for the supernatural miscue: "Whether the strange being really thought he was directing us aright, or, his vanity not permitting him to confess that he did not know, trusted to a guess with the hope that it might prove a prophecy, I have never been able to determine" (209). It is important to note that despite his misgivings and skepticism towards Grûl's prophetic abilities, Jean is "unable to determine" why Grûl was wrong. More importantly, immediately following the apparent vindication of his skepticism towards Grûl's supernatural powers, Jean evokes the spirit of Fate as a counterpoint to Grûl: "Fate did presently so take our affairs into her own hands, that Grûl's misinformation affected the end not at all" (209-10). Here we see Roberts revealing the hypocrisy of skeptics

like Jean de Mer who question the validity of supernatural forces, for rather than rejecting outright the "fallible" forces represented by Grûl, he trades one mysterious power for another by evoking the notion of "Fate" to explain the events that were to unfold. Furthermore, after citing Fate as a possible moving force in the universe, Jean reiterates this half-belief in the power of otherworldly forces. Although he begins by evoking God as the person who will help them find Philip, he quickly distances himself from declaring a clear, Judeo-Christian stance by reflecting on the significance of his evocation: "That some one greater than ourselves does sometimes help us in such perils, I know, whatever certain hasty men who speak out of a plentiful lack of experience may declare to the contrary. But whether this help be a direct intervention of God himself, or the succor of the blessed saints, or the watchful care of one's guardian spirit, I have never been able to conclude to my own satisfaction" (221). Roberts is once again speaking through Jean, reiterating his own belief in forces of the cosmos that control our lives, a power that cannot be confined to notions of Christian orthodoxy.

The one occasion when Jean concedes his belief in prophecy is in reference to a prediction made by the Black Abbé, not Grûl. Early in Part I, the Black Abbé utters the fateful phrase to one of Jean's friends, Tamin Violet: "Red runs your blood beneath the apple tree" (108). Tamin is initially terrified by the prediction. But both Jean and Marc rebuke him for his fears: Jean, for instance, claims that "he said it to spoil your sleep and poison your content" (108). Likewise, Marc declares, "who has ever heard that the Black Abbé was a prophet?" (108). Reassured by their words, Tamin concludes that "the Black Abbé is no prophet. Had it been Grûl, now, that said it, there were something to lie awake for, eh?" (109). Yet at the end of Part II it is the Black Abbé who has the last laugh. Just before the attack on the New Englanders, Jean admits that "I have never heard that one of [the New

Englanders] was kept awake with strange terrors, or had any prevision....But among us French, that night, there was one at least who was granted some prevision" (279-80). Tamin approaches Jean before the attack and shakes his hand, "a something of farewell" (280). Just as the Abbé foretold, after the battle Jean finds Tamin dead beneath an apple tree, with blood soaking into the snow around the base of the tree. The young man's tragic death forces Jean to concede that there are forces in the universe beyond our control: "here was one grim prophecy fulfilled" (292).

Roberts's use of the prophecy motif, coupled with Grûl's mysterious powers and the central place he commands in the shaping of the narrative, suggests that *The Forge in the Forest* is more than a second-rate novel filled with "romantic contrivance." On the contrary, it functions as a new, extended literary outlet for Roberts's interest in the supernatural, one that enables him to explore the ever-present tension between inexplicable occult forces in our lives and the world of skeptics like Jean de Mer who struggle to reconcile its place within their materialist view of the universe. This powerful tension, though, is explored chiefly through concrete manifestations of the supernatural, that is, through the actions and words of characters such as Grûl and Jean de Mer. A more introspective Roberts would be revealed two years later when he permits his own opinions on the supernatural to penetrate the narrative of *A Sister to Evangeline*.

Generally referred to by critics as the sequel to *The Forge in the Forest*, *A Sister to Evangeline* takes place during the year of the Acadian expulsion. It is the story of Paul Grande, nephew to Jean de Mer, who returns to his boyhood home of Grand Pré after a two-year absence in search of Yvonne de Lamourie, the daughter of a wealthy farmer in the village. A similar but simpler narrative than *The Forge in the Forest*, it maintains the first-person narrator approach but is structured along a single romance plot involving Paul and

Yvonne, told from the perspective of Paul. The romance is also thematically linked to Longfellow's *Evangeline* through its Acadian setting and title, as well as its echo of the star-crossed lovers, Evangeline and Gabriel Lajeunesse, whose tragic love-story is retold through the struggles of Paul and Yvonne. A third link to *The Forge in the Forest* is Roberts's exploration of the supernatural. Indeed, as we have seen in his earlier Acadian romance, the supernatural elements in *A Sister to Evangeline* form a powerful presence in the novel.

One of the recurring characters in this supernatural sequel is the white-wizard, François de Grûl. His presence is felt especially in the first half of the novel. Roberts wastes no time evoking the supernatural in *A Sister to Evangeline*, as Grûl's grim prophecy about Acadia's "day of desolation" is proclaimed at the end of Chapter 1, a narrative strategy that serves to undercut the conventional romantic notions Paul evokes while enroute to his boyhood home, namely, the beauty of the village and of his mistress, Yvonne. Closely following this event is Paul's first encounter with the wizard of Acadia. Although he is disturbed by the wild man's appearance and manners, he is immediately drawn to the wizard's supernatural accoutrements, particularly his wand: "That little stick, which Grûl wielded with authority as if it were a sceptre, still caused me some superstitious qualms. I remembered how at my first sight of it I had looked to see a living spark leap from that scarlet head" (12-13). Not only does the wand display mysterious powers through its ability to produce "living sparks"; it also reveals Paul's discomfort with such forces, since the sight of the wand causes him to experience "superstitious qualms." Grûl also evokes his soothsaying abilities by warning Paul that there is "an evil hand uplifted against [Yvonne] this night!" (14). Paul insists that the sorcerer explain his words, but Grûl dismisses his demand and departs into the night. It is not until later that Paul understands the warning, when Yvonne's house is burned down. More is also told about the sorcerer's history and the

nature of his hatred for the Black Abbé: Grûl reveals, for instance, that he was "reputed a wizard in the old days in France, for having brought men back from the very gape of the grave" (147). He also explains to Paul that while in France he was "part fop, part fantastical scholar, a dabbler in magic, and a lover of women" (158-9). Yet his role in this romance is less active than it was in *The Forge in the Forest*. Although he nurses Paul back to health in a key sequence of chapters that reveal some of Roberts's struggles with the supernatural, his counsel is kept to a minimum; in fact, his participation in the plot stops half-way through the narrative.

What makes *A Sister to Evangeline* compelling in terms of Roberts's interest in the supernatural is his introducing of a second sorcerer-figure to act as complement to and replacement for Grûl, an old woman named Mother Pêche who used to tell Paul "tales of wizardry" in his youth (17). During his first encounter with Mother Pêche, Paul initially ignores her outstretched hand of greeting but quickly remembers that "one had better defy any omen than leave a kindness undone" (17), and so places a silver coin in the old woman's hand. She refuses to keep the coin at first, flinging it over her shoulder and declaring that "there was sorrow on it" (18). Paul is initially amused by her actions, and felt that "throwing away the silver piece was taking superstition quite too seriously" (18). He places the coin in her hand a second time, reminding her that the value of the coin outweighs any bad luck it may contain. For her part, Mother Pêche chooses to keep the coin this time, though her recognition of the "sorrow" in the coin prompts her to reciprocate Paul's monetary gift with a supernatural one: a legendary talisman whose story he is familiar with. He notes that it goes by many names, including "'Le Veilleur,' or 'The Watcher,' among our Acadian peasants; but the Indians called it 'The Eye of Manitou,' and many mystic virtues were ascribed to it" (19). His listing of the stone's various names echoes the supernatural amethyst from

Roberts's early Acadian story, "The Eye of Gluskâp." Mother Pêche cautions Paul not to remove the talisman from his neck because "[w]hile this you wear...what most you fear will never come to pass" (20). At first, Paul belittles her warning by laughing at the prospect of needing such a talisman since he is "not greatly given to fear" (20). Her sharp rebuke, though, causes him to experience a renewed sense of "vague, formless, [and] terrible" fear (20), and he demands that she give him the stone.

Mother Pêche's powers involve more than clairvoyance and talismans. After giving Paul "The Eye of Manitou," for instance, she asks to see his hand. Before Paul can protest, she examines his hand and declares: "'Your heart's desire is nigh your death of hope'" (22). Paul notes that she is "speaking like an oracle" (22) and is eager to know the meaning of her words; he pressures her to explain, but she refuses. Significantly, he decides to let the matter die because he did not want to "appear too deeply concerned in such old woman's foolery" (22).

Apart from palm-reading, Mother Pêche can also cast spells. Late in the narrative she offers some tresses of Yvonne's hair to Paul, noting that she has "put a spell on it" (183) that will prevent Yvonne from straying far: "it will draw, it will draw her; she cannot let it go very far off, as long as she lives" (183). This notion pleases Paul, for in wanting to be near the tress, Yvonne will ultimately have to be near him as well. But he is also quick to differentiate between his approval of the spell and the nature of it: "how I loved her for [the tress], even while deriding the magic" (183-4). This dismissive comment towards the supernatural endowment of the tresses echoes his earlier dismissal of Mother Pêche's "foolery" in her reading of his palms (22). In fact, throughout the narrative he repeatedly refutes the power of the supernatural propounded by such people as Mother Pêche and Grûl. Yet this repeated skepticism towards omens and talismans is often an initial defensive

position on the part of Paul, one that is invariably belied by his strong desire to understand the meaning of such soothsayings and his decision to hold on to Mother Pêche's talismans in the event of future dangers or despair.

A third character in *A Sister to Evangeline* linked to the supernatural is Paul Grande, whom Roberts appears to have modeled on himself. For instance, at one point Paul and Yvonne are talking in her room and she refers to his abilities as a poet, noting that the "Acadian land, with its wonder and its beauty, has found no interpreter but you" (53). A more blatant comparison between Roberts and Paul is found later in the story when Marc describes Paul as "a star-worshipping, sonnet-writing, wonder-wise freak like you" who makes him "often doubt whether your verses, much as I like them, can be poetry, after all" (189). Readers familiar with Roberts would be aware of his abilities as a sonneteer, though they may not be acquainted with his "star-worshipping." It must be recalled that during his Windsor years Roberts learned horoscope-casting, and prior to Marc's comments Paul had been gazing at the stars and musing on his belief in the power of astrology: "A cold glimmer of stars came in by the narrow window, and I thought of them looking down on Yvonne, awake, not sleeping, I well knew. Were the astrologers right, I wondered. Good men and great had believed in the jurisdiction of the stars. I remembered a very learned astrologer in Paris, during the year I spent there, and futilely I wished I had consulted him" (187-8). Thus, in calling Paul a "wonder-wise freak" Roberts, through Marc, is mocking both his own interest in the supernatural and his abilities as a poet.

Roberts also has Paul digress several times in the narrative to comment on aspects of the supernatural. For example, upon his arrival at Grand Pré, Paul offers some reflections on the nature of superstitions:

> I am not by nature superstitious at all beyond the point of convenience. Such superstitions as please me I have ever been wont to cherish for the interest to be had out of them. I have often been strengthened in a doubtful intention by omens that looked my way, and auspicious signs have many a time cheered me astonishingly when affairs have seemed to be going ill. But the most menacing of omens have ever had small weight when opposing themselves to my set purpose. When a superstition is on my side I show it much civility: when it is against me it seems of small account. (15-16)

Here Paul is describing neither full acceptance nor complete skepticism towards omens and supernatural occurrences. His half-belief in such visions is telling in that he consciously chooses to embrace and respect only those visions that are favourable to his condition. His declaration that he pays no heed to bad omens foreshadows imminent events not to his liking.

Immediately following his reflections on omens, he admits that "that night I was more superstitious than usual" (16). He then sees a crow fly across his path, an omen that he "misliked" and "felt straightway well assured of some approaching rebuff" (16). But to his displeasure, no countering omen appears. Instead, two additional crows cross his path, forcing him to "conclude that the felicity which they prophesied was remote" (16). Here Paul is alluding to a rhyme from local folklore about counting crows. There are several variations of the rhyme, but the one he is drawing on is likely "one crow sorrow, two crows joy, three crows a wedding" because of his allusion to "felicity." Thus, he is faced first with an omen of "sorrow," then a second omen regarding "joy." Although Paul sees little comfort in the omens, Roberts is suggesting to the reader that the ensuing narrative will be a blend of pathos and comedy. Moreover, these omens, coupled with the unsettling images of the village

produce an overall phantasmagoric effect that leaves Paul feeling unsure about his sense of reality. He describes his experience as being in some sort of "waking and walking dream, not knowing well the substance from the shadow" (16). The phrase "waking and walking dream" implies he has left the material world behind and is entering a place that balks at reason and logic. It also echoes similar phrasings from supernatural stories such as "The Perdu," when the pool is described as "the gates of waking dream" (23).

Paul's next encounter with the supernatural occurs when an inexplicable force compels him to retrace his steps: "as I was about to turn into the yard of another farmhouse, one of those strange things happened which we puzzle over for a time and afterward set down among the unaccountable. Some force, within or without, turned me sharp about and faced me back toward Grand Pré" (92-93). Although he cannot clearly define the force that influenced his decision to turn around, he is conscious that it was a "strange event" that cannot be explained through philosophy or science, and so must be defined as "unaccountable," a category that echoes Roberts's use of the phrase "mystery of life" to describe his earlier supernatural stories. Moreover, the origin of this force could have come from "within or without," suggesting that he possessed an unconscious ability to channel such energy or that there was an external power that compelled him to return to Grand Pré. Either way, Paul recognizes that there are motivating forces in the universe that have no basis in rational thinking or biological pre-disposition. In fact, the need to trust in the power of the supernatural is a theme repeated by Paul throughout *A Sister to Evangeline*, most poignantly in Chapter Thirteen, "Unwilling to Be Wise." After several encounters with Grûl and Mother Pêche, he decides he has put too much faith in occult forces and should return to the trusted safety of reason in order to track down the Black Abbé and his followers: "I had been yielding to inauthoritative impulses and vague premonitions till the reaction had set in,

determining me to be at all costs coolly reasonable" (97). But in hindsight he realizes the mistake he has made, admitting to the reader that "Fortune with her fine irony loves to emphasize the fact that the slave of reason often proves the most pitiable of fools" (97). His decision after disembarking from the ferry to turn right rather than left is a costly mistake, for had he turned left and gone straight to Yvonne's farmhouse he might have prevented it from burning down.

Paul's most telling reflections on the power of omens and the supernatural, though, occur in the aptly titled chapter, "The Borderland of Life." Paul falls off a cliff and wakes up months later in a dark cave. He is unsure if he will live or die, and finding "no comfort in reason" he begins to "cast about, as one will when weak, for omens and auguries" (138). Immediately following this light-hearted comment he admonishes himself for belittling the supernatural: "[w]ho am I that I should dare to say I laugh at or deny them? I may laugh at myself for a credulous fool. And I have no doubt whatever that most omens are sheer rubbish, more vain than a floating feather. But again there are things of that kindred that have convinced me, and have blessed me; and I dare not be irreverent to the mock mysteries, lest I be guilty of blaspheming those which are true" (138-9). He then muses on Mother Pêche's "prophesyings" and "soothsayings" (139), and finds comfort in them, declaring that "these oracles [are] astute from the days of Delphi and Dodona" (139). He also fetches out "Le Veilleur," the mystic talisman she had given him and wonders at its abilities: "Little strange is it if simple souls ascribe to you sorcery and power" (140). He gazes at it, noting how its "eye waned and dilated in the dim light, as if a living spirit lurked behind it" (140). After musing over Mother Pêche's words that if he wears the talisman "what most you fear will never come to pass," Paul realizes his fear is not of dying or of the supernatural, but that Yvonne may become the wife of George Anderson. He cries out a "selfish prayer" to God

that she receive joy "through me, through me" (141), then flings himself upon his bed "as one dead" (141).

Paul's continuous commentary on the nature of omens and the power of the supernatural comes full circle at the end of the romance, for he finally experiences first-hand its inexplicable power. When Yvonne appears on the deck of the ship that carries Paul, she is no longer a woman but a ghostly figure: "The apparition made a wondrous stir on deck. To those who had ever heard of such a being, it appeared that the Witch of the Moon, in all indescribable magic of her beauty, had been translated into flesh" (246). For his part, Paul experiences a moment of clairvoyance below decks, conscious of her presence even though he does not see her: "of a sudden, a strange trembling seized upon me. It was in every nerve and vein, and my heart shook merely, instead of beating....With a faint laugh at the very madness of it I could not but say to Marc: 'I think that is Yvonne coming!'" (259). Although the connection between Yvonne and Paul is intended to suggest a romantic kinship, his extra-sensory experience of her presence is consistent with other supernatural phenomena described in Roberts's earlier supernatural stories, especially "The Perdu" when Reuben sees the vision of the white hand in the pool and "knows" something tragic has happened to Celia. This supernatural or clairvoyant element is likewise reinforced by the chapter title, "The Soul's Supremer Sense." Thus, Paul's final link to Yvonne is not a material one but a spiritual closeness.

As in *The Forge in the Forest*, Roberts establishes in *A Sister to Evangeline* a tension between proponents of the supernatural and those who question its validity. Although Paul Grande operates as an initial counter-perspective to characters such as Grûl and Mother Pêche, by the end of the romance he is more sympathetic to their abilities and view of the universe than Jean de Mer was in *The Forge in the Forest*. Moreover, Roberts includes not

one but two supernatural figures in his sequel, maintaining Grûl's stature as a soothsayer and sage figure from the earlier romance while introducing a female counterpart in the character of Mother Pêche, a witch of sorts endowed with a gift for soothsaying as well as the ability to cast spells, read palms, and carry magical talismans. Finally, the parallels between Paul Grande and Roberts strengthen the argument that the commentaries about the supernatural offered by Paul throughout the romance are close to that of Roberts himself, who used the character of Paul to work through some of his own thoughts and impressions about the impact the supernatural has had on his life.

Although elements of the supernatural do not dominate *By the Marshes of Minas*, there are several key aspects that warrant further analysis and reinforce Roberts's continued interest in the supernatural after the publication of *A Sister to Evangeline*. Of the twelve stories in the collection, at least five are linked in some way to the supernatural. Perhaps the most obvious linkage is the inclusion of the "Eye of Gluskâp," which originally appeared in *Earth's Enigmas* and served as the final story of the volume. Significantly, it occupies the same position in *By the Marshes of Minas*, thereby thematically and structurally reinforcing Roberts's belief in the importance of the supernatural in relation to Acadian culture.

Also of note are the two stories that appear just prior to the "Eye of Gluskâp." Although "Grûl's Gift" possesses little proof of the sorcerer's soothsaying abilities, the mere presence of the familiar white-wizard in the story harkens to Grûl's earlier supernatural exploits in *The Forge in the Forest* and *A Sister to Evangeline*. Moreover, although his description is less elaborate than in previous narratives, Roberts effectively establishes that Grûl is a sorcerer by noting that his cloak was "woven of black and yellow in a staring but mystical pattern" (212) as well as focusing the reader's attention on Grûl's "short wand of white wood, topped with a grotesquely carved head of vivid scarlet" (212). The second story,

"The Maid of the Drift," utilizes another supernatural figure from Roberts's earlier Acadian romances, namely Mother Pêche. In this story she plays a small but important role in helping subdue a New England soldier named Peter Cunliffe. He is in awe of the old woman, and based on her physical appearance he notes that "[s]urely...she would pass for a witch in New England" (244). She offers him a "well-spiced brandy toddy" (245), which he drinks willingly, only to discover later that it was a potion, employed to help put him to sleep so that he could be bound. As in "Grûl's Gift," Mother Pêche's supernatural abilities are alluded to indirectly but are not evoked explicitly by Roberts in the narrative since her reputation as a supernatural character has already been established in an earlier Acadian romance. Thus the final three stories in the collection include characters and elements that serve as a focused supernatural ending to the collection.

There are two additional stories earlier in the collection that deserve more sustained analysis because of their unique handling of supernatural elements. The second story of the collection, "The Bewitchment of Lieutenant Hanworthy," is about an English soldier who sets out for Port Royal for Thanksgiving. On his way Hanworthy passes near the De Belleisle place and recalls the Major warning him half-jokingly that a witch lives in the house. Unlike the Major, though, Hanworthy takes the subject of witches seriously: "Had [the Major] been a Salem man, he would not have spoken so lightly of witches" (27). This reference to Salem serves two purposes: first, it is a historical reference to the Salem Witch Trials; second, it serves as a possible intertextual reference to Nathaniel Hawthorne's romance, *The Scarlet Letter*. Roberts would have been familiar with the work; critics have also argued that it may have influenced aspects of *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* (see below). More importantly, this statement by Hanworthy demonstrates a shift in Roberts's handling of the supernatural "tension" in his fiction. Whereas in earlier works he began his narrative with characters who

were skeptical of occult forces, in this instance the reader is introduced to a character who is already sympathetic to such forces.

The second element of note is Mademoiselle de Belleisle, who has the ability to project herself into the mind of Lieutenant Hanworthy. As he passes the gates of her uncle's house, "of a sudden the face of Mademoiselle de Belleisle flashed upon the eyes of my soul. Her face–it could be none other; yet never, as I have already said, had I seen the maiden" (28). Not only does he witness a vision; Hanworthy is also careful to emphasize the occult nature of his experience by reminding the reader that he had never seen Mademoiselle de Belleisle before. Significantly, her name is likewise revealed to him through occult means: "I found myself muttering...Renée de Belleisle...Then I remembered that, to the best of my knowledge, I had never been told her name was Renée!" (28-29). Hanworthy's experience while passing the uncle's house is a form of clairvoyance, a projection of thoughts and images from one person to another. Not surprisingly, her name is confirmed when Hanworthy finally meets her:

> "You do not even know my name!" said she.
>
> "I have never heard it!" I assented.
>
> "I am Mademoiselle de Belleisle."
>
> "Your name is–Renée!" said I.
>
> She opened her eyes widely upon me, and my veins tingled under the look.
>
> "How do you know?" she asked.
>
> "It came into my heart that it was Renée." (41)

As we have already seen in Roberts's other romance stories, such as "The Perdu" and *A Sister to Evangeline*, Hanworthy's clairvoyant experience is linked to love; it is through "his heart" that Mademoiselle de Belleisle's beauty and name are communicated to him.

Contrasting the clairvoyant elements found in "The Bewitchment of Lieutenant Hanworthy" is the strange folklorish tale, "The Blue Dwarf of Belle Mare." Here Roberts is not concerned with tensions between material knowledge and otherworldly spirits or portraying aspects of psychic phenomena, such as clairvoyance or prophecy. Instead, he offers readers a distinctly folklorish tale involving a fairy-figure named Lys who lives deep in the forest with a servant dwarf. The first-person narrator is the sole survivor of the ironically named ship, "God's Providence," which was originally bound for Halifax from Boston. Although he counts himself lucky, he soon realizes that he is being tracked by Micmac Indians. He moves deeper into the forest and sees a young girl standing by a tree. He is astounded to find another human being in these woods and is in awe of her beauty, particularly her hair, which "was of a deep red, the strangest, most living red I had ever seen in a woman's locks" (131). Not surprisingly, his first question concerns her supernatural origins: "Are you a woman, or a fairy, or the witch of these wild waters, or a dream?" (132). Although she gives no answer, he concludes that she is not a woman, but a "half-enchantress, half-child, but all a queen, a queen of fairies" (145).

Reinforcing the girl's fairy roots is her dwelling, which is located in an enchanted area of the forest. She lives in a small cottage that "looked not perilous, unless its very magic were a peril" (135). She also has two protectors, a panther and a dwarf. Her relationship to the panther suggests a mysterious kinship between herself and the woodland folk; unfortunately, little is learned of this relationship because the panther quickly attacks the narrator and is killed. As for the dwarf, he is an unattractive figure the narrator pays little attention to at first; on closer inspection he notices that the dwarf's skin was blue in colour, a revelation that "at first...went far to shake my self-possession" (137). The narrator's troubling discovery of the dwarf's skin-colour echoes the kind of disruptions in material

knowledge that other protagonists experienced when confronted with supernatural forces in Roberts's early supernatural stories. As a servant to Lyse, the dwarf is compelled to protect her and attacks the narrator after the panther is killed. Being the better fighter, the narrator trips the dwarf, sending him into the pool. At first, the scene appears comedic in nature; the reader soon learns, however, that the dwarf cannot swim; more importantly, the pool is not stagnant but possessed strange "underground outlets" (139). The pool's supernatural characteristics are confirmed moments later when the narrator plunges into the water to save the dwarf: "[t]here seemed a cruel magic in it; or possibly it was the depressing influence of the cold, and of the strange, ghostly twilight now settling upon the pool, that deadened my forces. The light, seeming to wave across the water as an enchantment, was a mingling of the sunset's amber green with pinkish rays of a distorted moon just rising through the hilltop firs. Through this elvish atmosphere I swam painfully" (140).

The narrator saves the dwarf and prepares to leave, but once again is compelled to stay by the enchanted area and its inhabitants: "I felt that the neighbourhood of this mysterious maiden, this aristocrat of the wilderness, who kept panthers trained to tear red coats, and blue-faced dwarfs to leap upon unbidden visitors, was where my desire was straitly tethering me" (143). Rather than returning to the world of soldiers, the narrator longs to stay in this magical area of the woods. As the sun sets, he realizes he is far from the rational realm of civilization: "With the whitening moonlight the air of the valley grew chill; but there was no mist. The clearness was, somehow, like that of a magic crystal. The common world of men was eternities behind me" (145). To the narrator, this experience is unsettling since it does not resemble his understanding of reality. He looks to childish acts of reason to substantiate or discredit the events: "I pinched myself hard, and listened for some sound that might awake me from the delusion of all my other senses" (145). As in Roberts's

other supernatural stories, relying on material knowledge only leads to further questions about the point where reality ends and the realm of the supernatural begins. It is pointless for him to try to "awaken" himself from a dream, since these visions are not tricks of the mind; they are powerful, concrete manifestations of the supernatural.

Lys finally reveals to the narrator that she was brought to the woods by her father at the age of six, along with the dwarf, because her father had suffered "some great wrong at the hands of the English soldiery" (146). Her exile in the woods at a young age because of a parent, coupled with her kinship with panthers, suggests that Lys is a precursor figure to Miranda in *The Heart of the Ancient Wood*, a not wholly human yet not wholly woodland creature who wields strange powers and possesses occult knowledge of the area. As for the dwarf, in order to repay the narrator for rescuing him, he speaks to the Indians that come to the cottage and tells them that the narrator is Lys's cousin and they are to be married. The Indians believe his ruse and depart, for they "think him a kind of god" (149). The narrator, meanwhile, is excited by the dwarf's "gift in prophecy" (155) and is hopeful that he and Lys will marry. Although the story does not offer such a comedic ending, Lys does ask the narrator to stay "till the moon of the morning hoarfrosts" (155), implying that there may indeed be truth to the dwarf's "soothsaying."

Although *By the Marshes of Minas* is not as strong in supernatural elements as *Earth's Enigmas*, it contains several stories that complement the early collection in terms of Roberts's sustained interest in occult forces. Whether it be the clairvoyant experiences of Lieutenant Hanworthy or the enchanted forest creatures found in "The Blue Dwarf of Belle Mare," these two pieces reaffirm Roberts's commitment to exploring the supernatural in his work. More importantly, his inclusion of the characters Grûl and Mother Pêche in the latter portion of the volume as well as the placement of "The Eye of Gluskâp" as the collection's

final story serve to punctuate the integral role that the supernatural plays in *By the Marshes of Minas* and in the mythos of Acadian culture.

Between 1896 and 1900 Roberts fulfilled his own prophecy by contributing three significant works of fiction to the field of Acadian literature. Although largely dismissed by critics for their use of romantic convention and Acadian cliché, his two romances, *The Forge in the Forest* and *A Sister to Evangeline*, together with the short story collection *By the Marshes of Minas*, form an important functional group in understanding Roberts's overall oeuvre. His deliberate incorporation of supernatural elements into these works suggests that their literary value outweighed their monetary one. The structural tension between proponents of the supernatural pitted against skeptics and philosophers, first established in stories from *Earth's Enigmas*, finds renewed life through the recurring characters of Grûl and Mother Pêche as well as through Jean de Mer and Paul Grande. Roberts also endows his characters with a variety of psychic phenomena, including soothsaying, palm reading, astrology, and spell-casting, in order to keep his work fresh and to convey the breadth of his own occult interests. Finally, these works are not isolated instances of exploration but form part of a continuous link of supernatural inquiry that began years earlier while he was at King's College. Although they do not represent great works of literature, the supernatural elements found in these Acadian works offer additional evidence that Roberts's questions about the cosmos continued to occupy his mind and his writing well past his departure from King's College. But his portrayal of the supernatural did not end with the publication of *By the Marshes of Minas* in 1900. In that same year he published another text that would prove to be his most overtly occult text to date, *The Heart of the Ancient Wood.*

Chapter 5: *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* and Other Prose Fiction

By 1899, Roberts had achieved considerable success as a writer and editor. Unfortunately, none of these works became international best-sellers and he found himself needing to supplement his income with other work. Compounding his financial situation was his decision to move to New York in 1897, which placed additional financial burdens on him: he had to maintain an apartment in New York City as well as support his estranged wife and four children, who had moved back to Fredericton after his departure from King's College. Although he found work as an editor for the *Illustrated American*, it was not enough to assuage the ever-present levels of debt that came with maintaining his newfound bohemian lifestyle. To relieve some of this financial tension and to bolster his literary fortunes, Roberts decided that it was time to improve relations with his British publishers and editors. On 4 May 1899, he sailed to London with his brother Will and son Lloyd, where they established themselves in a boarding-house not far from Kensington Gardens. He had originally planned to return to North America in September for Lloyd to begin his fall term at school, but decided to prolong their stay until the end of November.

Although Roberts published little during this six-month period, his sojourn in London yielded three significant outcomes. The first event was a critical connection he made with *The Windsor Magazine*, which, as Adams (1986) points out, "became an unfailing market for his animal stories for two decades" (87). Second, over the course of the trip, Roberts made several important contacts as well as reconnecting with writers he had met in New York and through his time at King's College. Chief among his literary circle were William Sharp and Douglas Sladen, who were keen to repay Roberts's generosity from their stay in Windsor,

Nova Scotia a decade earlier, and Richard Le Gallienne, who "was the first...to greet him upon his arrival in England" (Adams 87).

The third event was Roberts's new novel. Described as his "best romance" in a letter to Edmund Clarence Stedman (February 3, 1900; *Letters* 257), *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* was first published serially in *Lippincott's Magazine* in the spring of 1900 before coming out in book form later that summer. It details the backwoods experiences of a self-exiled woman named Kirstie Craig, who chooses to make a new life for herself in the forest along with her daughter Miranda, who possesses strange powers and develops a special kinship with the animals of the forest. The book received favourable and enthusiastic reviews from Canadian and American periodicals, and also from English reviewers, one of whom praised Roberts for handling his "fantastic and somewhat difficult theme with a skill and success that deserve unstinted praise" (cited in Adams 1986, 92). Despite such accolades, *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* met the same fate as his earlier efforts, generating measurable sales but never becoming a best-seller.

Criticism of *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* is scarce. Apart from book reviews, less than a half-dozen studies have been published, which can be divided into two groups. The first area is Roberts's use of myth: Keith (1969) contends that "the least unsatisfactory way of approaching the book is to treat it as a moral fable" (68) and that "the insights he provides are to be received on a mythic level" (73). This charge is echoed by Joseph Gold (1974), who notes in his Introduction to the New Canadian Library edition of *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* that Roberts succeeds "by creating a fable and then transcends it by symbolically rendering his materials into genuine Canadian myth" (ix). Similarly, Mallinson (1975) expands on Keith's thesis by suggesting that the character of Miranda is reminiscent of "maiden archetypes" such as Catherine Earnshaw from *Wuthering Heights*, Eve before the

fall, and even the mythical maid Kore. The second and more recent area of critical inquiry defines the text along genre lines. Mathews (1984) argues that *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* is much more "philosophically significant" than the moral fable Keith claims it to be (161). He believes that the romance represents a uniquely Canadian literary genre known as the *roman de la terre* and is "the first non-Christian novel of the land in either [French or English] culture" (150). Whalen (1989), meanwhile, suggests that Roberts's sustained treatment of "fragile, chance reality" and "qualified...idealism" in the novel places him at the "sophisticated, explorative centre of the concerns of literary naturalism" (24). Significantly, no studies have been published on *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* since Whalen's short monograph.

The only critical consensus to emerge from these studies is the novel's literary debt to Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Keith, Gold, and Mathews all point to Roberts's use of these texts in the construction of his romance. In fact, Michael Hornyansky (1984) takes the influence of *The Tempest* on Roberts one step farther by suggesting that "Miranda will be the Prospero of this version" (167). Miranda's name certainly recalls that of Prospero's daughter; her kinship with the "furtive folk" as well as reactions of horror to the killing of animals in the story likewise echoes the innocence of the young woman portrayed in Shakespeare's play. Kirstie and Miranda's exile into the forest at the beginning of *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* reflects the condition of Prospero and his daughter in Act I, who have been living in exile on an island. Similarly, the anticipated return of Kirstie and Miranda to the Settlement at the end echoes the ending of *The Tempest* when Prospero and Miranda depart the island to return to civilization. And Roberts's portrayal of Kirstie as a persecuted mother who chooses exile with her daughter parallels the struggles of Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*, who is driven to exile over the

unwed birth of her daughter Pearl, a wild and independent spirit not unlike Miranda herself. Moreover, Hester's wearing of the scarlet letter "A" is transformed in *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* into the scarlet ribbon Miranda wears around her neck and the kerchief Kirstie wears around her hair.

Scholars discuss the two texts separately in relation to *The Heart of the Ancient Wood*, yet there is a common element among them that illuminates Roberts's novel, namely their use of the supernatural. In *The Tempest*, for example, Prospero is a magician, able to control the seas as well as command the services of a sprite named Ariel; as a result, his powers become an important catalyst for moving the plot forward. The supernatural also factors greatly in *The Scarlet Letter*, particularly through events such as the appearance of the scarlet "A" in the sky at midnight, the fact that the letter "A" is inexplicably carved into the chest of Dimmesdale, and the curious phenomenon of sunlight that follows Pearl but not her mother. Given Roberts's incorporation of supernatural themes into his previous fiction, it is probable that he was drawn to these two works because of the tension they display between Nature and the supernatural world, a tension that influences the construction of his own romance.

The opening paragraph suggests that Roberts's fictional ancient wood is not to be interpreted as a realistic landscape. Compare the following lines from the beginning of *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* to an excerpt from his early supernatural story, "The Perdu":

> ...tense, alertly and mysteriously expectant, was the silence of the forest. It was somehow like a vast bubble of glass, blown to a fineness so tenuous that a small sound, were it but to strike the one preordained mystic note, might shatter it down in loud ruin. Yet it had existed there flawless for generations, transmuting into its own

> quality all such infrequent and inconsequent disturbance as might arise from the far-off cry of the panther, or the thin chirp of the clambering nuthatch. (1)
>
> ...in all this stillness [of the landscape surrounding the Perdu] there was no invitation to sleep. It was a stillness rather that summoned the senses to keep watch, half apprehensively at the doorways of perception....If a common sound, like the shriek of a steamboat's whistle, now and again soared over across the hills and fields, it was changed in that refracting atmosphere, and became a defiance at the gates of waking dream. (22-23)

The forest in *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* resists all realistic intrusions: it is a mysterious, fragile landscape, capable of shattering under the weight of a single "mystic note" while possessing an alchemical ability to "transmute" animal sounds "into its own quality." Closely following this description of the land is a similar portrayal of the night air: "Its magical transparency was confusing to an eye not born and bred to it, making the far branches seem near, and the near twigs unreal, disturbing the accustomed perspective, and hinting of some elvish deception in familiar and apparent things" (2). Once again, Roberts infuses the landscape with supernatural qualities: the air has a "magical transparency" that tricks the eye and hints "of some elvish deception." The forest, then, is not made up of "familiar and apparent things"; it is an enchanted locale in which the impossible and the uncanny are likely to exist.

Linked to this awesome landscape are the animals that inhabit it. The initial intrusion of Old Dave Titus into the ancient wood, for example, prompts an immediate response from the "furred and feather people" (5), who stop all movement in order to watch him. Roberts views their ability to blend into the landscape as not only a matter of Darwinian survival, but

proof of their relationship with greater cosmic forces: "All were at one in the will to remain unseen; so all kept an unwinking immobility, and were swallowed up, as it were, in the universal stillness" (6). This link between the animals and the supernatural is reinforced a short time later when a wild-cat reacts nervously to Dave's presence because it "knew, perhaps through some occult communication from its far-off domesticated kin of hearth and door-sill, that in man he saw the one unvanquishable enemy to all the folk of the wood" (10). Roberts's use of the term "occult" is intentional here, for he is emphasizing the notion that *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* is not a realistic wilderness tale or a "backwoods myth" but a story of supernatural proportions.

A second animal linked to the supernatural is Kroof, the she-bear that adopts Miranda during the course of the narrative. In his article on *The Heart of the Ancient Wood*, Tim Murray (1975) notes that Kroof is not just a playmate for Miranda, but "imparts...esoteric information to her during their many sorties in the forest" (159). Early in the narrative Kroof also displays an appreciation for death rituals, for after discovering one of her cubs has been killed by a trap, she "turned around slowly twice, as if in an appeal to some power not clearly apprehended; then, without another glance at her dead, she rushed off madly through the forest" (74). The power she "appeals" to in her symbolic act is not Christian; on the contrary, the death of her cub was decided by "mysterious forest fates," which "dropped the curtain on his merry little play, as a reminder that not even for the great black bear could the rule of doom be relaxed" (70). This notion of fate as a controlling force in the forest echoes Roberts's earlier supernatural stories, especially those from *Earth's Enigmas* in which "the mystery of life and fate" played a key role.

The central figure of the romance is Miranda Craig. Described as an "elvish child" (46), she is constantly compared to creatures from folklore, a label begun by the narrator that

follows her into adulthood: "At seventeen she was a woman, mature beyond her years, but strange, with an elfish or a faun-like strangeness: as if a soul not all human dwelt in her human shape" (146). The notion of her possessing a "soul not all human" sets her apart not only biologically but also spiritually from the other characters. When Kirstie muses on leaving the cabin, for example, Miranda is horrified at the idea. But her mother quickly reminds her that there is a fundamental difference between them, one that is rooted in Miranda's supernatural nature:

> You were a queer baby – more a fairy or a wild thing than a human youngster – before ever you came to the clearing; and all the wild things seem to think you're one of themselves; and you see what other folks can't see – what the folks of the woods themselves can't see. Oh, yes! it's a sight different with you, Miranda. Your father used to watch you and say you'd grow up to be a faun woman or wood goddess, or else the fairies would carry you off. This place is all right for you. (185)

The ancient wood "is all right" for Miranda because it is the realm of the supernatural and thus a fitting place for "a fairy or a wild thing." It is also important to note that her parents recognized Miranda's "special" nature from an early age. In short, the young girl is not a product of the ancient wood: instead, her powers are merely enhanced by her interaction with the landscape and the animals that inhabit it.

One of Miranda's gifts is her unusual sense of sight. When she first identifies Kroof in the woods, her mother, Old Dave Titus, and his son Young Dave all disagree with the sighting; yet, as the narrator notes, "[i]t was the child's eyes, however, that had the keener vision, the subtler knowledge" (36). Reinforcing her "peculiar powers of vision" (121) is the fact that Miranda can see better than the animals, including Kroof, who fails to notice a group of partridge chicks during her walk with Miranda even though the young girl could see

them "distinctly" (122). Miranda's superior vision over the humans and the animals suggests that she defies conventional definitions of what a human being should be. Moreover, the linking of her vision with notions of a "subtler knowledge" is the kind of language used to describe an oracle or clairvoyant, since both are able to see future events or have secrets of the universe revealed to them.

The most informative passage about Miranda's supernatural sight is a description of her eyes that appears in Chapter Eleven: "Her eyes, in which, as we have seen, lay very much of her power over the folk of the wood, were very large and dark. They possessed a singular transparency, akin to the magical charm of the forest shadows. There was something unreal and haunting in this inexplicable clarity of her gaze, something of that mystery which dwells in the reflections of a perfect mirror of water" (147). Her eyesight is not that of a normal human being, but of a visionary.

Equally significant is the scarlet ribbon Miranda wears around her neck. Initially she chooses to wear the ribbon to mimic her mother, who wore a scarlet kerchief around her hair. But the ribbon quickly assumes greater significance in the story, since the animals are immediately drawn to it both for its colour and for their recognition that there is something unnatural about the object. This ribbon is not simply an accessory but another manifestation of Miranda's supernaturalism: "The scarlet ribbon which Miranda the woman, like Miranda the child, wore always about her neck, seemed in her the symbol of an ineradicable strangeness of spirit, while Kirstie's scarlet kerchief expressed but the passion which burned perennial beneath its wearer's quietude" (148). Reinforcing this link between the colour red and her supernaturalism is the fact that Roberts associates other supernatural figures in his fiction with the colour red, particularly characters from his recent Acadian romances. The wand that Grûl carries, for example, is a "white stick, with a grotesque carven head, dyed

scarlet" (*The Forge in the Forest* 78). Similarly, when Mother Pêche is introduced in *A Sister to Evangeline* the first thing the narrator notes about her appearance is the "red shawl wrapped over her head and shoulders" (17). Thus, Roberts not only endows Miranda with symbolism reminiscent of *The Scarlet Letter*: he also employs an established symbolism within his own oeuvre to mark her as a supernatural character.

The driving force behind the novel is the relationship Miranda develops with the animals, who come to know her "as a creature in some way not quite alien to themselves" (49). Her initial experience with the creatures of the forest is a gesture of comfort, since the animals do not view her as a threat. But this amicable arrangement soon takes on a spiritual dimension once Miranda bonds with Kroof. In the aptly titled chapter, "The Initiation of Miranda," Kroof hears Miranda's cry in the forest and comes to the young girl's defence by positioning herself between Miranda and a threatening panther. Upon seeing Miranda hide her face in the flank of the bear, the big cat decides that "if this child was a protégée of Kroof's, he wanted none of her" (82). The use of the word "protégée," coupled with the notion that Miranda is "initiated" into a fellowship with Kroof, suggests that she will soon receive special instruction from Kroof about the forest. Indeed, after the experience she begins to acquire "innumerable secrets of forest lore" from her animal mentor (89), a new level of knowledge that creates deeper kinship between Miranda and the ancient wood. The language Roberts uses to describe this new, higher phase of Miranda's relationship with the forest and its inhabitants resembles the type of rhetoric used to describe initiation rites by secret societies and mystery cults, a notion confirmed near the end of the novel when the narrator refers to Miranda's "semi-occult experience" with the animals (263).

Contrasting Miranda's genuine occult experience with the animals is the populist interpretation of her fellowship held by the townsfolk of the Settlement. When Old Dave

Titus recounts how animals would follow him back from Kirstie and Miranda's cabin because they smelled Miranda on the knitting he carried, his friends cannot contain their supernatural speculation:

> It was said by some that Kirstie and Miranda held converse with the beasts in plain English such as common mortals use, and knew all the secrets of the woods, and much besides that "humans" have no call to know. By others, more superstitious and fanatical, it was whispered that no mere animals formed the circle of Kirstie's associates, but that spirits, in the guise of hares, foxes, cats, panthers, bears, were her familiars at the solitary cabin. (131)

This notion of the animals being "familiars" for Miranda and Kirstie is reiterated later when two rogue lumbermen arrive at the cabin and demand food. Although Kirstie prepares a meal for them, the men are incensed that no pork is served. A fight ensues, but it is quickly ended by the emergence of Kroof from another room inside the cabin. Terrified, the two men run away and tell the people of the Settlement that "Kirstie's cabin was guarded by familiars, who could take upon themselves at will the form of bear, panther, wolf, or mad bull moose" (143). As for the townsfolk, there were "a few superstitious souls who believed this tale; while the rest pretended to believe it because it gave them something to talk about" (144). Although this passage focuses more on the superstitious nature of the townsfolk than on the possible truth behind the men's claims, it is significant that the title of the chapter in which this event takes place is called "The Routing of the Philistines." On the one hand, this title may be tongue-in-cheek on the part of Roberts; on the other, it may be his subtle point that the relationship between Miranda and the animals is a mystery not to be taken lightly.

Threatening Miranda's covenant with the "furtive folk" is Young Dave Titus, a hunter whose rational views of Nature serve as a foil to her spiritual idealism. At several

points in the novel he attempts to dispel what he sees as her illusions about Nature and irrational understanding of hunting. During their first encounter as adults, she chastises him for carrying a rifle and for being a hunter. He logically counters that "you've jest got to kill them, to live yourself" (159), but assures her he would never kill animals in her area of the wood. Young Dave's pragmatic defence of his calling establishes him as a rational thinking counterpart to Miranda's imaginative spirit. His attempt to appease her concern over killing her animal friends, however, reveals a less logical motive on his part, namely that he wishes to win her favour: "He was determined to break down Miranda's prejudice against his calling....He was determined, also, to overcome her deep aversion to flesh food. He felt that not till these two points were gained would Miranda become sufficiently human to understand human love or any truly human emotions" (204-5). Young Dave's true objective is not only to educate Miranda about his "rational conception of life" (204), but to win her love.

Young Dave's second attempt to win Miranda's approval occurs when he obliges her demand to seek revenge on the two lynx that had killed a young deer. Miranda is initially pleased with his actions, for he is a skilled marksman and manages to shoot both lynx. Yet when he tracks down and kills the two baby lynx to prevent them from suffering a prolonged death by starving, Miranda changes her opinion of him. His final attempt to make her aware of her humanity and femininity, however, occurs when she accompanies him to Gabe White's cabin to deliver medicine to Gabe's son Jimmy. Miranda is immediately drawn to the young boy's fragility and showers him with affection. Dave is pleased with her reaction because he believes that his emotionally charged encounter with the boy is a turning point in both Miranda and Young Dave's fortunes: "He felt at this moment that Miranda was now all

human, and could never quite go back to her mystic and uncanny wildness, her preference for the speechless, furry kin over her own warm, human kind" (255-6).

This continuous contrast between Miranda's "mystic wildness" and Young Dave's "rational conception of life" finds full meaning at the end when Miranda sacrifices her fellowship with the ancient wood in order to save Young Dave. Dave interprets her shooting of Kroof as proof of her feelings towards him: he exclaims that he loves her and promises to give up his career as a hunter and find more domesticated work as a lumber surveyor. Miranda, however, does not reciprocate such feelings. On the contrary, her decision to leave the ancient wood is an act of escape or resignation rather than a change motivated by any affection she feels for him. In fact, her statement that Dave has "killed the old life I loved" (275) implies that she blames him not only for Kroof's physical death, but also for her own spiritual death at the hands of his "rational conception of life." The spiritual sacrifice Miranda undertakes, which makes her become "all human" (256), is not a celebration of Christ's sacrifice for humanity but Roberts's rewriting of Christ's becoming human as a personal spiritual fall rather than humanity's cosmic gain.

Roberts wrote *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* surrounded by a literary coterie that held considerable interest in things occult. I have noted in Chapter 2 that William Sharp, Richard Le Gallienne, and Douglas Sladen participated in psychic phenomena and wrote about occult subjects. Evidence from Pomeroy and Adams also suggests that Roberts spent considerable time with these men while in London. Both biographers, for instance, describe how Sladen introduced Roberts to his London literary circle shortly after Roberts's arrival (Pomeroy 155-7, Adams 87). Pomeroy adds that during his time in England "Roberts often visited Le Gallienne at his home in Chiddingford, Surrey. He also renewed his friendship with William Sharp and visited him and his charming wife at their home in Milton's village,

Chalfont-St. Giles" (158). Although we do not know to what extent these men were involved in the shaping of the text or its supernatural themes, we know that Roberts consulted Le Gallienne at least once about his project, a discussion that resulted in Roberts changing the title of the book (Pomeroy 161). It is also perhaps no coincidence that shortly after the publication of *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* he refers to a recent visit to a "gipsy fortune-teller" in a letter to his daughter Edith before declaring that he is glad that she loved his new book (Pomeroy 163).

Given Miranda's gifted sense of sight, the red ribbon she wears around her neck, and the mysterious relationship she has with Kroof, it is difficult to accept the "backwoods myth" interpretation of *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* put forward by Keith. Mathews's more recent argument that the romance falls under the genre of the *roman de la terre* offers a better entry into the text, yet even his reading neglects to consider the extent of Miranda's supernatural make-up. Further distancing the text from both readings is Roberts's choice of *The Tempest* and *The Scarlet Letter* as literary models for the structure of the romance, especially since one of the common elements among the three texts is their use of the supernatural. A better way of thinking about the romance is to focus on its supernatural themes. Joseph Gold (1974) suggests that *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* is a "spiritual quest" on the part of Miranda (x). Likewise, Terry Whalen (1989) sees "the plot of the novel [as] an initiation plot: an initiation first into the wonder of the wilderness, and secondly into its copresent, menacing aspects" (21). Certainly Miranda's "initiation" into the secrets of the forest and kinship with the animals would support such a notion. Moreover, her "fall" from this fellowship at the end offers additional proof that she was experiencing life on a different spiritual level from her rational counterpart, Young Dave Titus. Moreover, her view of the cosmos may be read as another manifestation of Roberts's preoccupation with the

irreconcilable tension that exists between proponents of the supernatural and the opinion of materialist skeptics, a tension that can never be fully integrated. Keith argues that "Miranda's view of the natural world is shared neither by Roberts nor by the reader" (69). Perhaps her view of the world is not shared by Roberts, but it is a relationship with the cosmos that he longs to experience.

The Heart of the Ancient Wood marks the beginning of a shift in Roberts's creative exploration of the supernatural in his fiction. In the early stories from *Earth's Enigmas* this exploration took the form of otherworldly forces in a remote setting, whose existence often challenged the materialist viewpoint of the protagonist. His Acadian works followed a similar creative line by having supernatural characters such as Grûl and Mother Pêche occupy key positions of power in the narrative and influence the outcome of the plot through their use of strange powers, abilities that are continually revered but questioned by men like Jean de Mer and Paul Grande. In *The Heart of the Ancient Wood*, however, this tension between human proponents of the supernatural and their skeptical counterparts takes a new turn by suggesting that the supernatural is not restricted to human experience; there, the supernatural may be equally felt by the inhabitants of the forest, as evidenced by the panther's "occult communication" with its domestic cousin or Kroof's "initiation" of Miranda into the mysteries of the forest. More importantly, this movement away from the human side of supernaturalism towards the natural represents a change in his philosophy that would come into sharper focus in 1902 with the publication of two markedly different works of fiction: *Barbara Ladd* and *The Kindred of the Wild.* Although both volumes possess elements of the supernatural, *Barbara Ladd* would prove to be a weak echo of his previous human-supernatural interactions, whereas *The Kindred of the Wild* would reaffirm Roberts's growing interest in the cosmic connections between nature and the supernatural.

Barbara Ladd is Roberts's most financially successful book, selling more than 80,000 copies in the United States alone. Set in New England before and during the Revolutionary War period, this romance is a coming-of-age story of a young woman named Barbara Ladd who wishes to break away from the rural trappings of Second Westings, Connecticut. Through the generosity of her distant uncle, she eventually gains the opportunity to experience the aristocratic lifestyle of New York City. It is a short-lived affair, however, for she quickly realizes that she is not of their world and will never be fully accepted by them. This realization, coupled with the growing threat of war, moves her to return to the comfort of Second Westings. She then learns that her childhood home is no longer a place of comfort or neutrality; instead, the upcoming conflict has divided family against family, and even brother against brother, for Drs. Jim and John Pigeon find themselves fighting for opposite causes. Similarly, Barbara's friendship with Robert Gault is strained to the point of breaking by his decision to enlist in the King's army. The romance ends on a happy note, though, for a few months later Barbara discovers Robert half-dead in the woods, and while helping Old Debby get him to a safe place for treatment of his wounds she professes her love. Overjoyed by her words, he proclaims that he will never fight in combat again.

Despite its reliance on revolutionary pathos for narrative effect, *Barbara Ladd* includes some mention of the supernatural. The land around Second Westings at night, for instance, possesses "mystic shores" and a "vast stillness" that makes Barbara feel "as if the soul of the silence had taken palpable shape before her eyes" (78). Also of note are the trees in the area, which in the moonlight "seemed afloat [like] bubbles of glass and silver on a sea of dream... fairy-lit glooms, haunted but unterrifying!" (235). This reference to trees being

like "glass and silver on a sea of dreams" is significant, for it echoes the opening of *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* when the forest is described as a "vast bubble of glass" (1).

Related to the story's supernatural wood is the fact that *Barbara Ladd* represents a lesser version of *The Heart of the Ancient Wood*, complete with its own Miranda Craig and Young Dave Titus. For example, in addition to being a wild spirit and wearing a "long scarf of red silk" (50), Barbara Ladd possesses a special affinity for the woods and its creatures as well as an uncanny sense of vision: "[s]o keen and so initiated were her young eyes that she discerned the sleeping nighthawk on his branch" (77). Her male counterpart, Robert Gault, is introduced as a youthful dreamer who enjoys hunting, although his appreciation for nature is not as refined as that of Dave Titus. His willingness to learn allows Barbara to teach him much about the mysteries of the forest: "Barbara's woodcraft went immeasurably beyond his, – and perceiving this, her last resentment faded out and she began to initiate him" (183). Equally significant is Barbara's special friendship with an aged and isolated member of the community, Debby Blue, who through her wearing of a "dull red kerchief" (22) and "knowledge that savoured of witchcraft" (55) makes her a variant of Mother Pêche, the white witch from *A Sister to Evangeline*.

Despite such links to *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* and *A Sister to Evangeline*, *Barbara Ladd* does not possess in kind or quantity the supernatural elements that help define his two previous fictions. On the contrary, the above examples are isolated moments of supernaturalism that are quickly cast aside in favour of more popular themes. Once Barbara and Robert attain adulthood and leave the comforts of Second Westings, her kinship with the wood is replaced by courtly adventures and heated moments of political tension. Likewise, Old Debby's links to witchcraft are alluded to early in the novel but are never explained or elaborated on, nor does her occult knowledge play a key role in the outcome of the plot in the

manner that Mother Pêche's powers did in *A Sister to Evangeline*. If there is any consistency in Roberts's evocation of the supernatural between this latest fictional effort and his previous works, it is his description of the woods and the powers that emanate from it rather than the abilities or supernatural experiences of the human characters that link *Barbara Ladd* to *The Heart of the Ancient Wood.*

Contrasting this minor supernatural effort is Roberts's influential collection of animal stories, *The Kindred of the Wild.* Although he had published only a few animal stories prior to Ernest Thompson Seton's *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1898), after the success of Seton's collection he refocused his efforts on the genre and *The Kindred of the Wild* became his first book-length publication of animal stories. It received enthusiastic reviews from several critics about his realistic portrayal of the wild, including praise from the Toronto *Globe* for his knowledge of woodcraft as well as a flattering notice in *The Nation*, which declared the collection "a masterpiece of its kind" (Adams 94). But *The Kindred of the Wild* also caught the attention of John Burroughs, a respected American naturalist, who published an essay the following year in *The Atlantic Monthly* that criticized Roberts and several other writers for their inaccurate depictions of animal life in recent nature stories. Contrasting the work of Roberts, Ernest Thompson Seton, and Reverend William J. Long with the naturalist writings of Fannie Hardy Eckstorm and Dallas Lore Sharp, he condemns the former for "making too much of what we see and describe, – of putting in too much sentiment, too much literature" (299). Seton and Long are especially chastised for duping readers into thinking that the stories are accurate portrayals of the wild and that the actions of the animals are "true" depictions of nature: "True as romance, true in their artistic effects, true in their power to entertain the young reader, they certainly are; but true as natural history they as certainly are not" (300). Roberts, on the other hand, is only mildly rebuked for his perceived

misrepresentation of a porcupine, but on the whole "one finds [in *The Kindred of the Wild*] much to admire and commend, but little to take exception to" (299). This essay caused a great stir among the American reading public, eventually sparking a series of debates between writers and naturalists that would come to be known as the "nature fakir" controversy, a term coined by U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt who published an article in *Everybody's Magazine* in June 1907 accusing Roberts, Ernest Thompson Seton, William J. Long, and Jack London of being "nature fakirs."

Almost as controversial as Roberts's accurate depiction of animals is his introductory essay to *The Kindred of the Wild*, "The Animal Story," which has garnered as much attention from critics as the stories themselves. In it he describes the evolution of the genre, from its modest beginnings as primitive pictorials to more contemporary works like Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* and Margaret Marshall Saunders's *Beautiful Joe*. Defining the modern animal story as "a psychological romance constructed on a framework of natural science" (24), he contrasts his work and that of Ernest Thompson Seton with Kipling and Saunders, suggesting that stories like Seton's "Krag, the Kooteny Ram" represent a new way of presenting animals in literature, a mode that offers "the personality, individuality, mentality, of an animal, as well as its purely physical characteristics" (28). Scholars have since used this essay to define his animal story technique along mainly oppositional lines; that is, they argue whether his stories represent naturalist observations or inventive, fictitious prose; whether the animals presented are realistic or anthropomorphic, and if they display instinct or reason; and more generally, whether he was scientifically influenced via Darwin or Romantically inspired when he wrote the stories.

What critics fail to notice is that Roberts also ascribes to the animal stories an element of the supernatural. He suggests that going into the wild is not simply a matter of

pleasure or revelation of biological ancestry, but that "[l]ooking deep into the eyes of certain of the four-footed kindred, we have been startled to see therein a something, before unrecognised, that answered to our inner and intellectual, if not spiritual selves. We have suddenly attained a new and clearer vision" (23-24). This use of the phrase "before unrecognised," coupled with the suggestion that interaction with animals may stir our "spiritual selves," suggests that there is an occluded form of cosmic kinship between humans and animals. To Roberts, the modern animal story is not only a narrative of pleasure, but also a catalyst for spiritual revelation: "[the animal story] leads us back to *the old kinship of earth*, without asking us to relinquish by way of toil any part of the wisdom of the ages....The clear and candid life *to which it reinitiates us*, far behind though it lies in the long upward march of being, holds for us this quality" (29; emphasis added). Here he is ascribing a distinctly occult aspect to the wild by suggesting that it possess an older knowledge of the earth, a wisdom that is spiritual in nature, and that by reading the animal stories we will not only gain an appreciation for the wild but "reinitiate" ourselves into its mystery.

Roberts first alluded to this relationship between supernaturalism and the animal stories in his 1894 postscript letter to Carman about the central theme of *Earth's Enigmas*. In the category of tales that best explore "the mystery of life and fate," he includes the animal stories "Do Seek Their Meat From God," "The Young Ravens That Call Upon Him," and "Strayed," alongside supernatural stories such as "The Perdu," "The Stone Dog," and "In the Accident Ward." This deliberate pairing of story types suggests that Roberts not only recognized significant links between his animal stories and the supernatural ones, but hoped others would also recognize them. As for the stories included in *The Kindred of the Wild*, at different points in the collection he directly links the animals to the supernatural by suggesting, for instance, that the woodsman in "Watchers of the Camp-Fire" is "learned...in

the occult ways of the otter" (263). A more revealing example may be found in "The Lord of the Air," in which an old Indian is promised fifty dollars from a rich American to snare a great white eagle. It is not so much the tale itself that is supernatural in nature, but the way in which the eagle's disappearance is felt by the other woodland creatures: "News of the great eagle's mysterious absence spread quickly among the woodfolk, – not by direct communication, indeed, except in the case of the crows, but subtly and silently, as if by some telepathic code intelligible alike to mink and woodmouse, kingfisher and lucifee" (81). This "telepathic code" is equally shared by the eagle's mate, who psychically receives news of his fate shortly after her return from hunting: "The knowledge of all the woodfolk around the lakes had been flashed in upon her, and she knew some mysterious doom had fallen upon her mate" (82). To Roberts, the psychical phenomena he explored while at King's College in the late 1880s is not unique to humans: it is a force that applies equally, if not more forcibly, to the creatures of the wild.

This shift in Roberts's perspective on the supernatural in *The Kindred of the Wild* to emphasize its place in nature is reinforced by his treatment of the subject in subsequent novels. One would expect *The Prisoner of Mademoiselle* (1904) to follow the same supernatural path expounded in his previous Acadian romances, *The Forge in the Forest* and *A Sister to Evangeline*, yet nothing of the sort appears. *The Prisoner of Mademoiselle* is little more than a charming, plot-driven romance about an Acadian aristocrat who falls in love with her English officer-prisoner. Comparatively, *Red Fox* (1905) reasserts Roberts's notion of a supernatural presence in nature. Classified as his first "animal novel," *Red Fox* resembles a kind of animal bildungsroman in which a red fox grows up in the forest and must overcome many threats to his survival, including a clever woodsman named Jabe Smith, other animals, and even a forest fire. Yet Roberts's declaration that he has kept well "within

the boundaries of fact" about foxes in the novel (viii) is belied by his frequent references to concepts such as fate, the occult, and telepathy.

Early in the novel the narrator mentions the "capricious fate of the woodfolk" (16), a force that eventually dictates whether Red Fox's father lives or dies. Similarly, a rabbit caught in one of Jabe Smith's snares and dangling in mid-air is "a limp little figure of pathetic protest against fate" (140). This same mysterious force governs the life of Red Fox as well: during a lean season, for instance, he refuses to go to the hen-roosts in nearby farms because he does not wish to "invite fate" (102). The mysterious power of Fate, then, is what rules the forest; it is a notion that has appeared in several of Roberts's previous works, especially *Earth's Enigmas*, *The Heart of the Ancient Wood*, and *The Kindred of the Wild.*

Other examples in *Red Fox* that link the forest creatures to the supernatural include Roberts's suggestion that woodland creatures can employ psychic phenomena. When one of Red Fox's young is being chased by dogs, he hears approaching voices but does not believe it is his own scent they follow. Moments later, the true nature of the situation is swiftly and mysterious revealed to him: "all at once that subtle telepathic sense which certain individuals among the wild kindreds seem to possess signaled to him that the dogs were on a new trail. It was *his* trail they were on. *He* was the hunted one, after all" (59). This description of Red Fox's "telepathic sense" links the animal to forces outside the natural realm and echoes Roberts's earlier employment of the concept in "The Lord of the Air" from *The Kindred of the Wild.* But the most telling example of Red Fox's supernatural abilities is described later in the novel when Jabe Smith decides to set out with his dogs in order to capture Red Fox:

> For some inexplicable reason, just at this juncture Red Fox's anxiety and apprehension increased amazingly. It was as if the stir of hostility down in the valley were conveyed to him by some subtle telepathic force, or as if some inquisitive blue

> jay, having overheard Jabe Smith's plans, had brought word in an occult way to Red Fox of the mischief brewing against him. Let the scientist, if he will, take the one explanation, and the lover of fairy-tale and fable the other. (164)

Roberts's vision of the animal world thus encompasses a tension in which the rationalist world of science and natural observation is counter-balanced by his firm belief in the ability of animals like Red Fox to employ "telepathic forces" and communicate "in an occult way" with other woodland creatures.

Red Fox represents a new chapter in Roberts's approach to supernaturalism. The link between nature and the supernatural, first alluded to in his letter to Carman about *Earth's Enigmas* and asserted more clearly in *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* and *The Kindred of the Wild*, finds full voice in his latest animal story effort: *Red Fox* is his first full-length fictional attempt to suggest that animals are influenced by otherworldly forces. Yet the mysterious forces he ascribes to the natural world in *Red Fox* would not be Roberts's last word on the supernatural. On the contrary, the subject of the supernatural would continue to haunt him even after he left North America. In fact, it would resurface shortly after he left the United States and confront him in the most indiscriminant of places: a small flat in Munich, Germany. Here Roberts would turn his pen once again to supernatural themes and begin to write his most experimental work of fiction.

Roberts left New York for Europe in 1907, and for the first three years spent much of his time between France and England. But in the summer of 1910 he decided a change was in order and moved to Munich. There he found an apartment that was supposedly haunted by a young girl who had committed suicide. The flat had been rented twice before, and both tenants lasted only a couple of days. Roberts, however, was not dissuaded by such stories and signed a one-year lease. Not longer after he began to sense the girl's presence at night,

and even tried to talk to it; eventually he discovered that the only way to deal with the restless spirit at night was to leave a light on the floor in his doorway (Pomeroy 226-8). It is in this haunted flat that Roberts began to write his experimental work of pre-history, *In the Morning of Time* (1919).

The two opening chapters were written in Munich and serve as a kind of prologue to the rest of the novel. Chapter One describes the harsh and ruthless Age of Dinosaurs from the perspective of a large plant-eating dinosaur called Diplodocus, who manages to avoid death several times from meat-eaters before tragically stepping into quicksand. Chapter Two moves ahead a few hundred thousand years to a transitional period in evolutionary history when mammals begin to overtake the dinosaurs. Here old world meets new when a Triceratops confronts a six-horned mammal called a Tinoceras. Although the Triceratops kills its mammal adversary, both it and its mate are soon lured into a herd of Tinoceras by a clever early man seeking revenge on the Triceratops for the deaths of his wife and child. The chapter ends with the trampling of the dinosaurs and the man setting off in search of a new mate.

The remaining chapters were written after Roberts moved to London in 1912, four before the outbreak of World War One and the rest once he returned from the Front (Adams 126). These chapters form a more coherent narrative around Grôm, an unusually intelligent warrior and early human ancestor, who undertakes a series of adventures, including saving his female counterpart A-ya from an enemy tribe, discovering fire while searching for a new home for the tribe, and fighting off giant dragonflies. Fittingly, at the end of the novel the tribe's chief, Bawr, is killed by a mammoth, thus leaving Grôm with the responsibility of guiding the tribe safely away from migrating beasts and finding it a new home.

The book received warm praise from reviewers for its captivating story and originality (see Adams 126-7). As for Roberts, years after its publication he repeatedly told friends that it was a significant part of his oeuvre. He mentions in a letter to Roderick Stuart Kennedy, an advertising manager for the *Montreal Star*, that *In the Morning of Time* was perhaps "the best" work of fiction he had ever produced (January 26, 1937; see Adams 126). The following year he would express similar sentiments in a letter to Florence Partridge, Assistant Librarian of the Ontario Agricultural College, by declaring that the novel was "a favourite of mine among my prose books" (December 12, 1938; *Letters* 556). Perhaps the reason why it occupied such a special place in Roberts's writings was because he identified strongly with its main character: in a revealing letter to the Kingston poet, Wallace Havelock Robb, he admits, "Yes–I was Grôm" (July 7, 1931; *Letters* 407).

Despite Roberts's favouring of the book and its unique subject matter, scholars have largely ignored it. Of the little criticism that exists on *In the Morning of Time*, only a few relevant discussions have emerged, the most important area being the book's relationship to his other fictions. Pomeroy (1943) hints that the novel is not an anomaly among his writings but is in keeping with his overall artistic vision: "What is still more striking and significant...is the fact that so much of the author's philosophy is woven into the many psychological studies of these prehistoric people" (253). A more compelling reading of *In the Morning of Time* is put forward by Keith (1969), who suggests that "although written towards the end of Roberts's writing life, its themes provide an excellent introduction to the animal-stories" (80). Certainly Roberts's portrayal of humankind's ancestors and his depiction of early animals invite such an approach. But to use this text as a starting point for the animal-stories would belittle Roberts's achievement, since it implies that *In the Morning of Time* is not the apotheosis of his ideas about animals, but instead a de-evolution in his

philosophy. A better way of approaching the novel is to keep in mind Joseph Gold's (1984) suggestion that what Roberts is attempting in *In the Morning of Time* is to achieve "a synthesis which is so clearly and troublingly elusive elsewhere: man as an animal that thinks, feels, reasons, talks, plans ahead and yet fully participates and is part of the natural world" (85).

Certainly Gold's type of "synthesis" is achieved at several points in the novel. For instance, at the end of the novel a migrating herd of sambur do not display fear or hostility towards the tribe but "seemed rather to welcome the companionship of the tribe" (187). Similarly, when Grôm is trying to rescue A-ya from the enemy-tribe, his cunning is not that of a man, but resembles more closely the actions of an animal: "not daring to lift his head to look about him, he had to trust his ears and his hound-like sense of smell for information as to what was going on. And sometimes it was only his tireless immobility that saved him from the stroke of a startled adder or a questioning and indignant crotalus" (98-99). Yet this fictional meeting place where man and animal are close in evolutionary proximity is likewise a focal point for the supernatural. Many of the elements that have appeared in Roberts's early supernatural tales and more recent animal stories also find a voice in this novel. Early in the narrative, for example, Bawr asks the rest of the tribe to heed the counsel of his father, Alp, who is physically blind but possesses the gift of second-sight: "behind their darkness [Alp's eyes] see many things that we cannot see. They have seen that all these disasters which have lately come upon us have come out of the east. They see that there must be a reason. They see that other terrible dangers must also be coming out of the east" (53-54). It is Alp's prophetic power that eventually sways his son and the other tribe members to search for a new home.

Equally significant are the dinosaurs and early mammals that appear in the novel, many of which are not just depicted in scientifically accurate terms, but are also described using supernatural comparisons. In Chapter One, the narrator notes how a large flying dinosaur's wings "were not the wings of a bird, but of a bat or a hobgoblin" (10). Likewise, Grôm's first encounter with a gigantic dragon-fly is recounted in distinctly fantastic terms:

> In shape it was exactly like a dragon-fly, but the length of its flaming violet body was greater than that of Grôm's longest arrow. The spread of its two pairs of transparent, crystal-shining, colourless wings was even greater than the length of its body. Its enormous eyes, wells of purple fire which took up the whole of the top and sides of its monstrous head, seemed to see everywhere at once; and Grôm shivered with the feeling that they had spied him out and were peering into his very soul. (143)

To Grôm, the dragon-fly is not simply a large animal but a new discovery, an uncanny creature with "wells of purple fire" that are capable of seeing "everywhere at once" and can peer "into his very soul." Unlike Roberts's earlier animal stories, in which he endows his creatures with supernatural abilities, in this novel he has little need to do so since the prehistoric creatures are so fantastic and foreign to twentieth-century readers that as a matter of course they appear as mythical or supernatural beings.

The world in which the hill-people live is also governed by the now familiar force of Fate, which is evoked several times by the tribe, especially in the penultimate chapter when the tribal hunting-grounds begin teeming with wild game. Although this plentitude of food lasts over a week, in the midst of their feasting the tribe felt "something sinister in the whole matter, something ominous; and they would stop at times to wonder anxiously what stroke of fate could be hanging over the Caves" (164). Similarly, when a hoard of frantic beasts begins to overrun the Caves, Bawr and Grôm decide that the tribe should escape by raft. Because

they have only enough rafts to carry the tribe, they decide to build additional rafts as a safety provision; just as they are about to commence their labour, "Fate refused to grant the time" (169) and the tribe is forced to flee without additional rafts. The most telling use of this force is when Roberts evokes the Classical notion of Fate in reference to the plight of the tribe. Although many of the tribe members succeed in boarding the rafts and navigating away from the animal horde, their escape by water is not guaranteed, for a few miles downstream "the Fates, which had of late been pursuing them would have it, the worn travellers found themselves once more in the line of the hordes of migrating beasts" (184). Roberts's use of the capitalized, plural word "Fates" is not coincidental; on the contrary, his evocation of the Classical figures echoes his use of the concept in the title-page image that adorns the first edition of *Earth's Enigmas*, a collection that inextricably links the idea of Fate to the supernatural. Hence, his use of the concept of Fate in *In the Morning of Time* is both intentional and consistent with previous fictional works.

Complementing Roberts's employment of Fate is his suggestion that the People of the Little Hills possess concrete ideas about the afterlife. When Grôm and A-ya discover fire, for example, Grôm is quick to equate it with the supernatural, declaring that "[i]f they are gods, those bright, dancing things...they will save us. If they are devils, I will fight them" (62). This discovery of fire is a moment of initiation for Grôm, because his witnessing of the flames is a kind of ecstatic vision, signaling his passage into a new realm of consciousness: "Ideas, possibilities which he could not yet grasp, seethed in his brain. Dimly, but overpoweringly, he realised that he had passed the threshold of a new world" (65). This mystical link between Grôm and the fire is reinforced a short time later when the narrator remarks that he "stood staring into the fire, his eyes clouded with visions" (66). Bhojawni (1979) has noted that Grôm's discoveries are clearly meant to be interpreted as supernatural

experiences: "Roberts wishes to suggest perhaps that Grom's bright ideas are an improvement on the gods of mythology...and usually come 'as if' from sources external and occult" (32). As for A-ya, she marvels at Grôm's ability to control the fire; he "seemed to her a God" (66).

When Grôm returns to the tribe and attempts to explain his discovery, the other members become fearful of the uncanny force that lies beyond the hills and of Grôm, who because of his mastery over the "Bright One" they now regard as "a dangerous wizard" (80). Despite their fears, Bawr decides that the tribe should move to this new location. Shortly after they arrive, Grôm demonstrates his command of the fire to the chief, who immediately perceives the mystical power of this element: "[w]ith the air of a high-priest he picked the brand up, and held it...into the flames" (85-86). This link between Bawr's recognition of the fire's mysterious properties and the narrator's description of him as a "high-priest" pushes Grôm's discovery of fire beyond the physical realm into the world of the supernatural. In fact, what Roberts is describing is not just a new phase in human civilization through scientific discovery but the birth of a new pagan religion. As Bawr declares:

> the service and understanding of the Bright One should not be allowed to the people, but should be kept strictly to ourselves, and to those whom we shall choose to initiate. I shall appoint the two best men of my own kin, and two others whom you shall select, as servants of the Bright One. And I will make a law that the people shall henceforth worship only the Bright One, instead of, as heretofore, the Thunder, and the Wind, and unknown Spirits, which, after all, as far as I can see, have never been able to do much either for or against us. But this Bright One is a real god, such as we can be sure of. And you and I shall be his priests. And only we shall be allowed to understand him. (88-89)

This description of Bawr appointing "priests" who will be "initiated" into the mysteries of the fire suggests that the "Bright One" offers a kind of occult knowledge that can be revealed only to certain individuals. Such rhetoric echoes phrases used in Roberts's other prose fiction involving the supernatural, especially when Miranda is "initiated" into the secrets of the forest in *The Heart of the Ancient Wood.* Roberts's portrayal of the birth of a pagan mystery cult is a defining moment in his own philosophy, for here humanity, nature, and the supernatural conflate into a single symbolic ritual.

In his Introduction to the *Collected Letters,* Fred Cogswell links *In the Morning of Time* to what he perceives as Roberts's sense of "cosmic consciousness" (21). More specifically, he notes that Roberts's "enthusiasm, expressed in several letters, for his phantasy *In the Morning of Time* and its projected successor is significant, provided that one sees his hero, Grôm, as a Promethean instrument of cosmic consciousness who forces by his genius savage animals to become human. In this work, almost the last that he undertook in prose fiction, Roberts had returned fully to his first direction" (22). If cosmic consciousness was Roberts's "first direction," then it is a direction informed by his interest in the supernatural. His employment of supernatural elements such as prophecy and the power of Fate as well as the evocation of pagan religion pushes *In the Morning of Time* beyond the genre boundary of pre-historical fiction into something richer and more spiritual. *In the Morning of Time* is not so much a story about our biological origins but an exploration of humanity's moral, mental and spiritual evolution.

Cogswell's reference to "cosmic consciousness" is a curious choice of term, since it recalls Richard Maurice Bucke's book of the same name, a pseudo-scientific treatise based on principles that have much in common with the tenets of Theosophy. If this is the link that Cogswell is implying, it is no coincidence that one of the book's champions was Dr. Ernest

Fewster. Pomeroy notes how Fewster encouraged Roberts to publish his intended sequel to *In the Morning of Time*, *Overlords of Earth*, and even created a map of the fictional world for Roberts to include (338). Equally significant is an article that appears in the May 1925 issue of the *Canadian Bookman* that describes Roberts's visit to the Vancouver Poetry Society, an event in which "Dr. Fewster supplemented [Roberts's] poetical readings by a selection from *The Morning of Time*[sic]" (89). Given Fewster's passion for the book as well as his dedication to Theosophy, one can only speculate that what he identified with in the text was not so much the novel's storyline or its imaginative depiction of pre-history, but the ways in which Grôm's discoveries depict in a concrete way Fewster's theosophical belief in man's spiritual evolution.

Several of Roberts's later prose publications reaffirm his commitment to incorporating supernatural elements in to his fiction. But it was not so much a continuation of the tension between proponents of the supernatural and those of a materialist viewpoint; instead, with the publication of *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* Roberts began to shift his focus from the human side of supernaturalism to the role it played in the shaping of the natural world itself. Although Miranda is the story's protagonist, from the outset she is not considered as "fully human" until her spiritual fall at the end of the novel. Moreover, her gift of supernatural vision and portrayal as a "fairy," coupled with her initiation into the mysteries of the wood through the teachings of Kroof, aligns her more closely with mysterious forces at work in the natural world than the human one. Also of note are the animals themselves, who like their human counterparts are now capable of experiencing psychic phenomena, such as the panther who communicates in an "occult" way with its domestic cousin.

Similarly, in *The Kindred of the Wild* Roberts suggests that the animal story acts as a kind of spiritual medium that can "re-initate" readers into a deeper relationship with the earth. Moreover, in stories such as "Lord of the Air" the creatures possess telepathic powers by which they communicate to one another tragic or perilious events, a notion reiterated later in *Red Fox* when the fox is mysteriously warned of approaching hunters. Finally, in the pre-historic tale, *In the Morning of Time*, Roberts attempts to portray a time when animals and humans were closest in ancestral terms. His employment of supernatural elements such as the presence of Fate in the lives of the Hill-People and the occult way in which mysteries of the universe are revealed to Grôm through his discovery of natural phenomena such as fire, places the novel within a distinctly supernatural context. Moreover, linked to these ideas is Roberts's description of an ancient "initiation" rite by the tribe near the end of the novel, a notion he describes earlier in *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* as Miranda's "semi-occult experience." In his last novel, then, Roberts returns to the origins of human spirituality by portraying a time in history when nature, humanity, and the supernatural were closely linked.

The manifestation of the supernatural in Roberts's fiction is pervasive. From its beginnings as stories of supernatural tension in *Earth's Enigmas* and portrayal of mysterious figures in his Acadian romances, to more complex treatments of the supernatural in nature, as evidenced in *The Heart of the Ancient Wood*, his animal stories, and *In the Morning of Time*, the supernatural has occupied a place of importance for Roberts in his prose. But it held equal sway for him in his verse, and so it is to Roberts's poetry that the discussion now turns in the hopes of substantiating that the supernatural is an area of influence that can "hold his corpus together."

Chapter 6: Supernaturalism in Roberts's Poetry

Roberts's poetry has received the same, if not more, attention from scholars as has the rest of his works combined. Since Arthur Stringer proclaimed that Roberts was the "Father of Canadian Poetry" in 1904, scholars have afforded him special status as the leading figure of the Confederation group of poets. During his long poetic career, which spanned more than sixty years, he produced nine major collections of verse, several smaller chap-books, and his own *Selected Poems* (1936). Critics divide his poetry along chronological lines into two major periods. The first begins with the publication of *Orion, and Other Poems* in 1880 and ends in 1907, the year in which he published *Poems*, an edition of his collected works. The second covers the years 1919 to 1942: in 1919 he published *New Poems* while he was still living in Britain; and his last poem, "Resurgant," was published in the summer of 1942, a little over a year before the poet's death. Scholars also subdivide his first period into the four collections published before he moved to the United States, and the two volumes that appeared while he was living in New York City: *New York Nocturnes* and *The Book of the Rose*.

Despite Roberts's prodigious output, critics have chosen a surprisingly small group of poems through which to define his poetic vision. Although single articles have appeared on *Orion, and Other Poems*, *New York Nocturnes*, and *The Book of the Rose*, most scholarship focuses on two of his early collections: *In Divers Tones* (1886), which contains Roberts's "Canadian" poems and "The Tantramar Revisited," and *Songs of the Common Day and Ave!* (1893), which has been studied at length for its opening series of sonnets and for Roberts's lengthy ode to Shelley, *Ave*! A more disturbing critical trend is that Roberts's poetry has

received increasingly less attention from scholars during the last twenty years, and only recently does there appear to be a resurgence of interest in the Confederation group at all, as evidenced by Bentley's *The Confederation Group of Canadian Poets* (2004) and Nick Mount's *When Canadian Literature Moved to New York* (2005).

Of the recent publications *The Confederation Group of Canadian Poets* warrants special attention from Roberts scholars. In the chapter entitled "Supernaturalism," Bentley argues that the religious rupture that occurred in Victorian society over the rise of Higher Criticism and the popularity of Darwin's theory of evolution impacted the core members of the Confederation group; as a result each of them branched out from traditional Christian upbringing to explore alternative forms of spirituality. His discussion of Roberts, compelling but regrettably limited, centers on the idea that both he and Carman were in "spiritual transition in the late 1880s and early 1890s" (213) and includes brief mention of several of Roberts's early poems as evidence of the poet's struggle.

Bentley's inclusion of Roberts forms one part of a sporadic, but long-held critical belief regarding the poet's interest in the supernatural. Cappon, for instance, conjectured in his conclusion to *Charles G.D. Roberts and the Influence of His Times* (1905) that Roberts's next volume after *The Book of the Rose* will "have airs from the *New Mysticism* and of Miss Fionna[sic] Macleod and the Celtic School" (51). Pacey (1958) points out that "The Flight" and "One Night" from *Orion, and Other Poems* represent "the vein of the weird, the macabre, the nightmarish" (45). And L.R. Early (1981) links the opening of "Orion" to the landscape paintings of Emily Carr and Lawren Harris, two modern Canadian artists who in his opinion possessed the ability to "imbue [the landscape] with supernatural feeling" (13). Roberts himself includes a section in his 1936 *Selected Poems* entitled "Poems Philosophical and Mystical." It should also be remembered that his first biographer, Elsie Pomeroy,

published an article on his use of dream-imagery in the September-October 1959 issue of *The Canadian Theosophist*.

These few critical instances aside, no critic has fully addressed the breadth or impact of the supernatural on Roberts's verse. Despite his claim that he embraced no single poetic vision and that from youth to old age he was always "keenly aware of contemporary currents of thought, action and emotion" ("Prefatory Note" to *Selected Poems*, vii), appearing continually throughout his career are poems that draw on images of the supernatural for dramatic or philosophical effect. Whether he drew on elements of the gothic, the mystical, figures from classical or native mythology, or more overtly occult traditions such as Spiritualism, Alchemy, and Theosophy, Roberts continually returned to the supernatural as a source for poetic inspiration. It is a subject that he would treat in each of his major collections, beginning with his earliest and perhaps most famous volume, *Orion, and Other Poems*.

As a landmark text in Canadian literary history, *Orion, and Other Poems* has few rivals. At the age of twenty, Roberts boldly sent copies of his newly published book to Tennyson, Arnold, Swinburne, Longfellow, Holmes, and Whitman, and much to his delight, he received praiseworthy responses from Arnold and Holmes (Pomeroy 38-39). This unexpected feedback not only helped fuel Roberts's future poetic aspirations: it also became part of the Canadian literary lore that surrounds Roberts's first collection of poetry, a volume that kept Archibald Lampman up all night "reading and re-reading" it ("Two Canadian Poets: A Lecture" 94). Yet Early claims it to be "probably the most famous unread book in Canadian literature" (8), and criticism of the collection suggests a superficial approach to the book on the part of scholars. Indeed, critics have historically dismissed it as the work of an

apprentice, focusing on the prosody of individual works or evidence of his early literary influences.

Only one full-length study attempts to explore the themes and ideas of the collection. In "An Old-World Radiance: Roberts' *Orion, and Other Poems*," Early argues that the volume is not simply the work of an apprentice, but "a young man's book with the indivisible virtues and faults of youth, exuberance and excess" (10). He spends considerable time exploring what he calls Roberts's "mythological narratives" (18), placing particular emphasis on the collection's title poem as well as on "Ariadne," "Launcelot and the Four Queens," and "Memnon." Near the end of the article, however, he makes the remark: "Swinburne may be the principal inspiration also for 'The Flight' and 'One Night,' which are anomalies not only in *Orion* but in Roberts' whole oeuvre" (24). Why Early would feel compelled to include this passing reference to two of Roberts's least known poems is puzzling. Perhaps he was recalling similar comments made by Pacey some twenty years previous: "in 'The Flight' and 'One Night,' Roberts uncovers a vein which one wished he had chosen to explore again – the vein of the weird, the macabre, the nightmarish" (45). Whatever the reason, it is important to note that although both critics are quick to recognize a similarity of theme in the two poems, neither Early nor Pacey studied enough of Roberts's work to realize that these pieces are not "anomalies", but represent two early examples of what became a sustained interest in aspects of the supernatural.

In a letter to Charles Leonard Moore, Roberts dismisses "The Flight" and "One Night" as "entirely imaginative, founded upon nothing more substantial than a mood" (July 14, 1884; *Letters* 40). Yet both poems reflect his calculated effort to create convincing supernatural narratives. "The Flight," for instance, is about a woman who smothers a child to death, then flees into a haunted wood "[w]here the pale ghosts moan and shiver" (18).

Energized by the sight in the thicket of a dead body whose head has been crushed "with a stone" (29), she continues on until she reaches a "yawn-mouthed hollow / Where a goodly company feast" (36-37). This "goodly company" turns out to be a group of witches, who welcome the woman as "our own" (46); the poem ends with her joining in the feast. In addition to the supernatural subject of the poem, Roberts endows the haunted wood with gothic details such as "poisonous shades" (19), "night-shades" (20), and "hemlock" (23). He is also careful to include stark images such as a dead body lying in the woods and the devilish reveling of witches. In short, Roberts's attention to such supernatural details for dramatic effect suggests more than a youthful attempt to create a "mood": they reflect the piqued interest of a young poet who is discovering a potent area of influence.

In his recent edition of *Orion, and Other Poems*, Ross Kilpatrick (1999) suggests that "One Night" may have been inspired by Thomas Hood's "The Dream of Eugene Aram" (97), a haunting narrative in which a man dreams that he murders someone, drops the body into a dark pool, then is suddenly overcome by guilt. The poem follows a similar narrative and theme structure, although Roberts's poem is not as explicit as Hood's. For example, in Hood's poem the act of murder is described in graphic detail, whereas the speaker's actions in "One Night" are merely implied by his horrified reaction when the "dead eyes woke and with mine met / Familiarly" (25-26). In this way, Roberts presents a more psychologically titillating poem, since the cause of death is suggested rather than stated. Moreover, Roberts's poem has a sense of redemption for the speaker at the end: in the midst of his guilt, an unnamed figure appears who "pitied me" (36), then touches the body so that it "sank down / Beyond my sight" (37-38). More compelling is the positive change that comes over the speaker and surrounding landscape once the body disappears: "the trunks were dry and my hands were clean; / The breath of laughing leaves was sweet: / And he left me in this

pleasant scene" (42-44). This "cleansing" of the speaker's hands, coupled with the playful 'breath of laughing leaves" (43), signals a note of purgation and chance at new life for the speaker.

Roberts's "dark night of the soul," "One Night" serves as an important supernatural companion to "The Flight," a notion reinforced by the fact that the two poems appear together in *Orion, and Other Poems*. It is also interesting to note that "The Flight" and "One Night" are poems fourteen and fifteen in a volume of thirty poems, making them the structural and possibly thematic centre of the collection, anticipating the kind of supernatural poetry Roberts would praise several years later in his 1890 review of William Sharp and Graham Tomson.

A different manifestation of Roberts's early interest in the supernatural may be seen in his repeated references to prophecy and visionary experiences. Included in "Orion," for example, is a short section following the hunter's blinding in which nymphs prophesize his "redemption and healing," a notion reinforced by the fact that the section is written in dactyltic hexameter, "the metre of oracles" (Kilpatrick 79). In "Ballad of the Poet's Thought," the poet leaves the city because the city-dwellers do not like to listen to his "truths" (4). More importantly, when he goes to the forest Nature "spake with him, nor denied him aught, / In waking vision or visioned sleep" (13-14). Likewise, in "Ode to Drowsihood," the speaker experiences visions that begin with an "agéd Druid in his robe of fur" (15), a distinctly non-Christian image that is more closely aligned with pagan forms of nature worship. These passages suggest that even in his early poetry Roberts viewed Nature as a catalyst for visionary experiences, possessing secrets of the universe which could be revealed to those capable of receiving such knowledge.

Roberts's most compelling treatment of the supernatural in *Orion, and Other Poems* is "A Blue Blossom," a short four-stanza lyric that Pomeroy (1943) suggests belongs to a "philosophic-mystical group" of poems that was "to become perhaps the dominant characteristic" of his poetry (30). The speaker suggests that the flower "Hath mightier spell to move my soul / Than even the mightiest notes which roll / From man's perfect minstrelsy" (2-4). This "spell" the flower casts is its ability to channel visionary experiences to the speaker, thus allowing him to bear witness to the unspoken mysteries of the universe: "A flash, a momentary gleam, / A glimpse of some celestial dream" (5-6). The flower operates as an oracle of sorts, whose beauty enables it to communicate visions of the divine: "Methinks immortal memories / Of some past scenes of Paradise / Speak to my spirit through the flower" (19-21). The suggestion that the blossom speaks using a secret, mystical language is reinforced in the final stanza when the speaker links the message of the flower to the communication of esoteric knowledge:

> Forgotten is our ancient tongue;
>
> Too dull our ears, our eyes too blind,
>
> Even quite to catch its notes, or find
>
> Its symbols written bright among
>
> All shapes of beauty. But 'tis hard,
>
> When one *can* hear, to be debarred
>
> From knowledge of the meaning sung. (22-28)

Although the speaker suggests he is capable of recognizing that some secret of the universe is being conveyed, implied by the phrase "'tis hard / When one *can* hear" (26-27), he is unfortunately not fully initiated into its kinship and thus is "debarred / from knowledge of the meaning sung" (27-28). This final passage of "A Blue Blossom" forms the core of what

would become a central theme of Roberts's supernaturalism, namely, that although he recognizes and acknowledges that otherworldly forces exist in the universe, he cannot penetrate their mysteries or incorporate their secrets into his world view.

Included at the beginning of *Orion, and Other Poems* is an epigraph from Plato's *Phaedrus*, a treatise that discusses among other things the four divisions of the divine madness of inspiration (Kilpatrick 74). It is no coincidence that the first two divisions mentioned are "prophetic" and "mystic" because Roberts drew on these concepts in his first collection, a volume marked not so much for its individual apprentice works but for the ways in which the supernatural manifested itself in a young poet's first book. Laurel Boone (1989) suggests that Roberts sent Longfellow a copy of *Orion, and Other Poems* because the older poet had written about Grand Pré in his famous *Evangeline*, a place close to the young poet's heart (27). Yet Early remarks that only a few poems about Orion preceded Roberts's piece, one of which was Longfellow's "The Occultation of Orion" (12). Given Roberts's use of supernatural elements, it is equally possible that he sent his book to Longfellow because he saw deeper, more esoteric similarities between his work and that of the American poet than simply geography.

Roberts's next collection, *In Divers Tones* (1886), is comprised of poems written prior to the start of his tenure at King's College. Critics recognized its improvement over his verse technique in *Orion, and Other Poems*. Logan and French, for example, note that there is "an advance in variety of inspiration, in his forms and metres, and in finish of technique" (118). Likewise, Pacey (1958) suggests that "*In Divers Tones* is still the work of an apprentice, but of an apprentice who has gone a long way toward independent mastery" (46). The majority of scholars, however, focus on what may be called the emergence of Roberts's "Canadian sensibility": Cappon (1905) points out that the collection represents a transition in

Roberts's depiction of nature from "fanciful delineations of nature" to "descriptions of actual Canadian scenes" (15), a sentiment echoed by subsequent early critics, including Logan and French and Pelham Edgar (1943). Likewise, Pacey (1958) argues that the collection marks "the beginning of that fanciful rendering of the Canadian scene which...has characterized his poetry throughout his verse" (121).

Certainly the sonnets are technically polished. The nationalist sentiment expressed in "Canada," "Collect for Dominion Day," and "Ode for the Canadian Confederacy" also deserves some mention by critics from a literary historical standpoint if not from an aesthetic one. Nor can it be denied that "The Tantramar Revisited" is worthy of the critical attention it has received for its incorporation of ideas propounded by the Romantic poets into a distinctly Canadian scene. But the scholarly focus on whether Roberts's poetic landscapes have become either "Canadian" or "Romantic" has obscured the fact that *In Divers Tones* also contains poems that express Roberts's growing frustration with his Anglican upbringing and signal the start of a new chapter in his supernatural explorations.

Cogswell (1983a) suggests that "the contents of [*In Divers Tones*] reveal a mind in conflict with his personal desires, on the one hand, and the demands of duty, on the other, a conflict the more disturbing in that it had only partly surfaced in Roberts's consciousness and in that it was now unaided by his father's faith" (205). Cogswell's suggestion that Roberts's poems reflect a growing chasm between his views about the afterlife and his father's orthodox faith is most apparent in "The Marvellous Work." The epigraph of the poem, taken from Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself*, immediately suggests that the ensuing verses will not only celebrate the individual spirit, but also the inescapable link that exists between the individual and the supernatural: "Rise after rise bow the phantoms behind me." The poem itself is an important commentary on the religious tension in Victorian society between

traditional Christian views about creation and the advances being made in the geological and biological sciences, especially in the area of evolution. The speaker notes, for instance, how "large increase of knowledge in these days / Is come about us, fraught with ill for them / Whose creeds are cut too straight to hold new growth, / Whose faiths are clamped against access of wisdom" (8-11). Contrasting the views of the orthodox are the opinions of those who welcome this new wisdom as a form of knowledge that need not be feared: "for the enfranchised spirit, this expanse / Immeasurable of broad-horizoned view, – / What rapt, considerate awe it summons forth, / What adoration of the Eternal cause" (23-26). The remainder of the poem is a series of statements by the speaker in which he offers "evidence" of the presence of a deity within the shifting evolutionary periods of Earth's history. He suggests, for example, that "the Eternal's unconcern of time, – / Omnipotence that hath not dreamed of haste, – / Is graven in granite-moulding aeons' gloom" (32-34). More striking is a passage near the end of the poem that reflects Roberts's direct poetic linking of science to the supernatural:

> In the obscure and formless dawn of life,
> In gradual march from simple to complex,
> From lower to higher forms, and last to Man
> Through faint prophetic fashions, – stands declared
> The God of order and unchanging purpose. (48-52)

The changing life-forms "from simple to complex, / from lower to higher forms" (49-50) is a thinly veiled reference to evolutionary theory. Moreover, the suggestion that within this process may be found "The God of order" (52) reveals Roberts's belief that science and nature possess their own mark of the divine. The evolution of "Man" is witnessed not so much through strict observance of the scientific method, but through "faint prophetic

fashions" (51). This poem represents a key moment in Roberts's break from his Anglican roots.

Equally significant is Roberts's esoteric treatment of classical myth in "The Pipes of Pan." Pomeroy (1943) notes that it is not so much a classical piece of verse but "a mystical poem with a classical theme" (48). It begins by evoking Tempe, "the vale of the gods" (2), then describes a place in Nature away from mortals that is "sacred and secret forever" (8). Soon the goat-god appears, and with "pipes outworn breaking and casting away, / Fits new reeds to his mouth with the weird earth-melody in them" (24-25). But rather than continue his focus on Pan, the narrator follows instead the journey of the discarded pipes which, in spite of their condition, have "God-breath lurk[ing] in each fragment forever" (31). Every mortal that discovers the pipes undergoes a mystical transformation, for after playing the reeds "Creeps strange fire in their veins, murmur strange tongues in their brain, / Sweetly evasive; a secret madness takes them" (40-41). This notion of a "secret madness" not only suggests the presence of the divine but also recalls the epigraph from *Orion, and Other Poems* in which Plato describes poetic inspiration as a "divine madness" (Kilpatrick 74). The effect on the player is two-fold: on one level, s/he develops an aesthetic appreciation for the beauty of Nature. On a second, more esoteric level, while gazing at Nature possessed by "secret madness," the souls of the converted "Gather a magical gleam of the secret of life, and the god's voice / Calls to them, not from afar, teaching them wonderful things" (45-46). This notion of divine revelation and the teaching of "wonderful things" is a concept already encountered in "A Blue Blossom."

Bentley (1979) notes that "for Roberts, Pan was a dynamic force compelling man to read and teaching him to understand the books of Life and Nature" (67). Likewise, Cogswell (1983a) suggests that "Roberts' choice of Pan as the force to deify nature can be construed as

a not so subtle rejection of Christianity" (211). Indeed, by evoking the supernatural figure of Pan and implying that the pipes possess occult powers, Roberts is suggesting in "The Pipes of Pan" that wherever nature and myth intersect, the supernatural is not far behind.

A third manifestation of the supernatural is Roberts's use of native mythology in "The Departing of Clote Scarp." At first glance, it is a poetic rendering of a native legend. But upon closer inspection, the poem may also be read as a Melicite version of the Christian feast of Pentecost in which the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus's disciples and they began to speak in different languages. After giving the animals nourishment, Clote Scarp tells them he must leave because the ways of men "were evil grown" (20). Saddened, the animals watch him depart on his birch canoe, but when they "lifted up their voices in their grief, / Lo! on the mouth of every beast a strange / New tongue!" (40-42). This native myth, which resonates with a central Christian belief, is Roberts's attempt to mimic comparative mythology studies put forth by Max Müller and John Fiske. It also expresses his heterodox view that the stories and teachings of the Bible are not unique to Christianity, and that similar supernatural narratives may be found in other cultures.

In "Canada," one of the three patriotic poems in the collection, the speaker alludes to several events in Canadian history, but then jars readers with the following stanza: "O mystic Nile! Thy secret yields / Before us; thy most ancient dreams / Are mixed with far Canadian fields / And murmur of Canadian streams" (49-52). If, as critics suggest, Roberts is beginning in *In Divers Tones* to write about "Canadian" landscapes, it is curious to note that one of his most overtly nationalist poems links a mystical river from the East to quiet "Canadian streams" (52). Given his esoteric treatment of myth in "The Pipes of Pan" and "The Departing of Clote Scarp," as well as the spiritual tensions he expresses in "The Marvellous Work," this stanza is not jarring at all, but symbolizes the point at which Roberts

began to encounter the supernatural in the Canadian landscape. *In Divers Tones* marks the beginning of his investigation into alternative forms of spirituality.

Songs of the Common Day and Ave! (1893) is the most discussed collection in Roberts's oeuvre, mostly for its two major poetic feats: a sequence of thirty-seven sonnets that forms the first third of the collection, and *Ave!*, a three-hundred line ode in which Roberts celebrates the life and work of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Roberts's literary debt to Shelley is well-documented, and many critics discuss at length the achievement and weaknesses of *Ave*, most recently Susan Glickman, who argues in *The Picturesque and the Sublime* (1998) that the poem is a "deliberate and confident appropriation of the Romantic ethos and aesthetic" (82). As for the sonnets, early critics such as Logan and French and A.M. Stephen discuss the technical merits of the sonnets, whereas subsequent critics, including Lorraine McMullen (1976), Noonan (1982), Precosky (1988), and Bentley (1989), explore the sequence's underlying structure and themes. This collection has also received almost unanimous praise from scholars. Cappon (1905), for instance, declares the sonnet sequence that begins the volume as "the most important poetic work Dr. Roberts has so far produced" (25), while Keith (1969) argues it is "the only book of Roberts' poems that can be commended as a volume of uniformly high quality" (47). Precosky (1988) describes the sonnets as "among his finest poetical works" (22).

One important, albeit marginally discussed area of scholarly interest in *Songs of the Common Day* is the volume's supernatural elements. Mathews (1972), in his rebuke of Keith, discusses Roberts's "mystical insight" (54) and refers to several of his sonnets as depictions of a "mystical experience" (55). Noonan (1982) offers a more compelling argument for the presence of spiritual or mystical concepts in the collection by demonstrating that Roberts fused "evolutionary theory with Christianity" in the sonnets (452). Bentley

(1989) responds to Noonan by declaring his reading a "welcome one" (404), although he contends that "the strands being brought together [in poems such as 'The Mowing'] are not 'evolutionary theory [and] Christianity' but, rather, biology...and hermeticisim or alchemy" (404).

The presence of supernatural elements in *Songs of the Common Day* is first witnessed in the collection's prologue, "Across the fog the moon lies far." In the first stanza, the speaker describes the night as "Transfused with ghostly amethyst" (2) and that it operates as a "charm to wonderment" (3). Reinforcing the mystery of the scene is the second stanza, in which the speaker not only addresses the night as "Mysteriarch," an ancient female guardian of mysteries, but also suggests she can make "dull, familiar things divine" (6). Indeed, by the end of the stanza night has transformed itself from an aesthetically pleasing form into a supernatural figure with the gift of prophecy, a power that the speaker devoutly wishes to possess: "O grant of thy revealing gift / Be some small portion mine!" (7-8). Moreover, if given this gift, his vision will become "sane and clear" (9), an act that will enable him to see "what beauty clings / In common forms, and find the soul / Of unregarded things!" (10-12). In short, what the speaker wishes to be granted is the power to understand the mysteries of life that lay occluded in nature.

Several poems from the volume's sonnet sequence employ images of vision and prophecy. In "The Fir Woods," for example, what begins as the speaker's view of the trees is quickly transformed by "Mystic dream-dust of isle, and palm, and cave" (5) into a dream-like vision whose "realms of rose" (6) seem "More radiant than ever earthly gleam / Revealed of fairy mead or haunted wave" (7-8). Also of note are "Midwinter Thaw" and "The Flight of the Geese," two seasonal sonnets that appear side-by-side in the collection and link signs of spring to notions of prophecy: in "Midwinter Thaw," for instance, the sudden

warming of the ground "wakes through all the air a watery rune – / The babble of a million brooks atune, / In fairy conduits of blue ice concealed" (6-8). More importantly, following this event the speaker acknowledges a second mysterious sign, how "In the air / Some shy foreteller prophesies with skill – / Some voyaging ghost of bird, some effluence rare" (10-12). Likewise, in "The Flight of the Geese" the sound of birds overhead is not only a signal of spring's imminent return, but the oracle of a seasonal mystery: "The height / Of heaven grows weird and loud with unseen flight / Of strong hosts prophesying as they go!" (6-8). Unfortunately for the speaker, the meaning of these oracles is not clear, and although he recognizes that a powerful mystery is being conveyed by the geese, the sound of their voices is but "an awe profound, / A boding of unknown, foreshadowed things" (13-14).

A more overt manifestation of Roberts's interest in the supernatural and the powers of prophecy occurs in "The Valley of the Winding Water." Critics ignore this poem, perhaps because it appears in the collection between Roberts's second Tantramar poem, "The Tides of Tantramar," and another important classical poem, "Marsyas." Yet "The Valley of the Winding Water" serves as an important link between the supernatural poems in Roberts's earlier collection and those in *Songs of the Common Day and Ave!* because it represents one man's clairvoyant experience about a dead woman. The lyric is divided into four stanzas, the first two of which establish the speaker's vantage point of a beautiful summer scene: "Still break the fields of opening June / To emerald in their ancient way. / The sapphire of the summer heaven / Is infinite as yesterday" (5-8). The drama of the poem, however, hinges on a marked contrast between the beautiful scene before him and his dreary mood, a state revealed at the end of stanza two: "of all this kindly gladness, / My heart beholds not anything" (11-12). The real cause of his melancholy is not pathos, however, but clairvoyance: "in a still room far away, / With mourners round her silent head, / Blind to the

quenchless tears, the anguish – / I see, to-day, a woman dead" (13-16). It would be easy to explain the poem's ending as a result of the speaker's imagination. But given Roberts's participation in occult activities during this time, as well as the speaker's emphasis on the fact that he "sees" the bereavement scene, it is equally plausible to read the concluding stanza as a moment in which the beauty of the natural scene acts as a conduit for the speaker's supernatural experience.

Contrasting the lesser-known poems of *Songs of the Common Day and Ave!* are the often discussed "In the Wide Awe and Wisdom of the Night" and *Ave*. Lorne Pierce (1927), for example, refers to a kind of "cosmic consciousness" at work in "In the Wide Awe and Wisdom of the Night" (72). Likewise, Pomeroy (1943) categorizes the sonnet as one of Roberts's "most profound expressions of philosophic mysticism" (115). More recently, Bentley (1989) suggests that the sonnet demonstrates "an investigation rather than an endorsement of the 'poetic' or 'natural'" (406), arguing that Roberts's philosophical position in the poem "is neither obviously occult nor narrowly Christian, but more closely aligned...with the tenets of Natural Theology" (406). The poem is about a speaker who contemplates the night sky, and marks "the march to which is set no pause, / And that stupendous orbit, round whose rim / The great sphere sweeps" (5-7). By the end of the sonnet, however, his meditation leads to a moment of transcendence, a sense of oneness with the mysteries of the cosmos: "At last I came before Him face to face, – / And knew the Universe of no such span / As the august infinitude of Man" (12-14). Although the speaker alludes to a Christian God in his reference to "Him," the poem's final declaration that the speaker "knew the Universe" as the "august infinitude of Man" suggests that he experienced an esoteric revelation about his place in the universe.

Reinforcing Roberts's cosmic treatment of nature in "In the Wide Awe and Wisdom of the Night" is his poetic ode to Shelley, *Ave*. First published as a chapbook in 1892, *Ave* has long been identified as a significant part of Roberts's oeuvre as much for its flaws as for its achievements. Cappon (1905) notes that while the poem contains moments of "imaginative brilliancy" (32) and succeeds as "a splendid rhetorical effort" (35), it ultimately fails as a poetic whole since its "transition from one theme to another is forced and unnatural" (32). Contrasting this view is Archibald MacMechan (1924), who proclaims it to be "Roberts' best poem and probably the best poem *de longue haleine* ever written by a Canadian" (122). Leisner (1984) views *Ave* as his "most comprehensive mystical poem" (273), while Ware (1984) and Glickman (1998) read the poem as a work that remains "faithful to a Wordsworthian view of nature" (Ware 51). What these critics fail to consider, however, are the ways in which the supernatural informs this extraordinary work, and makes it not so much a "Wordsworthian view of nature" but what Conway (1984a) describes as a "moment of vision" (80).

At the outset of the poem, the speaker evokes the Tantramar river as a supernatural force that since childhood has stirred his "inward sight" (I.10) and "Instruct[ed] my ears in your most secret spell; / And sometimes in the calm / Initiate[d] my young and wondering eyes / Until my spirit grew more still and wise" (III.27-30). This mesmerizing body of water, which as the speaker notes is named after a "mystic river" (VI.51), has a spiritualizing effect on him, which enables him to receive the holy communion of poetic inspiration: "Purged with high thoughts and infinite desire / I entered fearless the most holy place, / Received between my lips the secret fire, / The breath of inspiration on my face" (IV.31-34).

The mystical and channeling force of the Tantramar succeeds in awakening the speaker's muse. Yet the river that inspires the speaker does not become the object of his

inspiration; instead, the speaker-poet, after witnessing the power and mysterious forces contained in the water, is reminded of his literary predecessor, Percy Bysshe Shelley, "the avatar" (XI.103) of poetry whom "chief of all whose brows prophetic wear / The pure and sacred bays / I worship" (XI.107-9). It is significant that the term Roberts uses to describe Shelley is an "avatar": it relates to Hindu mythology, and refers to "the descent of a deity or released soul to earth in bodily form" (OED). For Roberts, the Romantic poet is neither priest nor Christ-figure, but the manifestation of an Eastern deity with the gift of prophecy.

Following his evocation of Shelley and his description of the poet's early years, the speaker proceeds to summarize Shelley's career and adult years by offering grand sweeping stanzas that mention such works as "Alastor," "To a Skylark," *Prometheus Unbound*, and *Adonais*. The most striking of these poetic flashes is stanza XIX, in which Roberts explicitly aligns Shelley with a supernatural tradition:

> The domes of Pisa and her towers superb,
>
> The myrtles and the ilexes that sigh
>
> O'er San Giuliano, where no jars disturb
>
> The lonely aziola's evening cry,
>
> The Serchio's sun-kissed waters, – these conspired
>
> With Plato's theme occult, with Dante's calm
>
> Rapture of mystic love, and so inspired
>
> Thy soul's espousal psalm,
>
> A strain of such elect and pure intent
>
> It breathes of a diviner element. (181-90)

The "psalm" Roberts is referring to is possibly "Epipsychidion," which Shelley wrote while in Pisa. More important, though, is his suggestion that the inspiration for Shelley's poem

involved three ingredients: the beauty of Pisa and its surrounding landscape, "Dante's calm / Rapture of mystic love" (185-6), and "Plato's theme occult" (185). Although many critics have discussed this passage and even quoted the reference to Dante, all have chosen to gloss over Roberts's mention of Plato's "theme occult," most certainly a reference to Shelley's interest in Neo-Platonism, an occult philosophy that originated with the Roman philosopher Plotinus and underwent a revival in the nineteenth century. Roberts, then, was not only conscious of the influence of the supernatural on his own work, but recognized its effect on the poetry of his mentors.

Following this reverie on the life and work of Shelley, the speaker returns to the beauty of the Tantramar, acknowledging once again the quiet power of that supernatural river whose "wizard flood, / With every tribute stream and brimming creek, / ponders, possessor of the utmost good" (XXX.295-7). The ending of the poem is not emblematic of a strict Wordsworthian view, as Ware and Glickman would argue, but instead is in keeping with earlier poems in Roberts's oeuvre that depicted nature as a conduit for supernatural experience. Or as Conway (1984a) puts it, the structure of *Ave* is "a vantage point for vision and a temporary refuge from experience" (80).

Whereas Roberts's early collections drew on a variety of supernatural sources as a means for him to explore mysteries about the afterlife, in *Songs of the Common Day and Ave!* he begins to treat more directly the relationship between nature and the supernatural through a series of sonnets that employ landscape as a conduit to mystical revelation. Whether it is the thawing of frost or the sound of geese, the infinite spectacle of the night sky or the seemingly innocent beauty of a June landscape, under Roberts's supernatural gaze each of these "common" occurrences becomes an oracle of seasonal and spiritual change. Complementing this approach in the sonnets is the collection's other bookend, the mystical

ode *Ave* in which the Tantramar river acts as a poetic gateway for him to explore the life, work, and spirit of Shelley. A similar thematic structure may also be found in "The Valley of the Winding Water," a haunting lyric in which the summertime landscape of June brings no joy to the speaker, but instead the vision of a dead woman lying in state, surrounded by mourners. But *Songs of the Common Day and Ave!* would not be the apotheosis of Roberts's interest and poetic application of the supernatural. On the contrary, his exploration of the supernatural would find further voice in what is considered by many to be his most mystical volume, *The Book of the Native*.

Published in the same year as *Earth's Enigmas* and *The Forge in the Forest, The Book of the Native* (1896) is a collection in which the supernatural dominates. Ironically, this same treatment of the supernatural is what has historically left scholars with much to criticize and little to praise. Cappon (1905) notes that although the philosophic-mystical poems in the volume "are an interesting reflection of the general attitude of our age in matters of faith and knowledge" (39), he concludes that "one would not consider the poetry which reflects this attitude so naively to be much of a contribution to the interpretation of life" (40). A similar but less discerning argument is offered by Brown (1943), who declares "[i]t is typical of [Roberts's] temper and mind that these [philosophical ideas of nature] are set forth obscurely, in a fashion which indeed prevents *the rapid reader* from deriving anything beyond a vague notion that all is mysteriously well" (48-49; my emphasis). Fifteen years later Pacey (1958) would echo Brown's sentiments when he suggested that the philosophy expressed in the mystical poems was "vague and derivative" (52).

Of all the critics to explore this collection only a few have championed its mystical verse: Leisner (1984) contends that the volume is "of central importance" to understanding what he calls Roberts's "nature mysticism" (275). He also suggests that although "it is

hazardous to epitomize Roberts' mystical poems as found together in any one volume, since he seems constantly in search of new facets, each with its own peculiar luster, there is nevertheless a distinctive essence to most of the mystical poems in this volume when taken together" (275-6). Likewise, Cogswell (1983 and 1985) who, while not explicitly mentioning *The Book of the Native*, refers to several poems from the collection when discussing Roberts's mystical verse, an area of the poet's work which, in his opinion, "[has] never received sufficient credit" (1985, xxxi). Also of note is Conway (1984b), who suggests that the collection's symbolism "clearly announces its astrological concerns" (12).

That supernaturalism pervades *The Book of the Native* is unquestionable. Some pieces, such as "The Witches' Flight" and "The Vengeance of Gluskâp," are less esoteric in terms of their supernaturalism. "The Witches' Flight," for instance, is a continuation of earlier, more macabre pieces such as "The Flight" from *Orion, and Other Poems*. It mentions several attributes commonly associated with witches: at the outset of the poem, for instance, the speaker (herself a witch) summons a "Red Mouse" (1) and "Black Cat" (2), so that they may go to see "what the goat / And toad are at" (3-4). Cats, mice, and toads are animals traditionally used in folklore to represent a witch's familiar, a demon spirit who takes on an animal form in order to serve her. In the second stanza the witches also undergo a transformation, as their flight becomes an activity in which "the withered breast / Grows young and fair; / And the eyes grow bright / With alluring light, / And the fierce mouth softens" (11-15). This change represents a literal and metaphorical experience for the witches: on one level, it expresses their freedom at having broken free of earth's bonds; on another level, the transformation Roberts describes is consistent with popular legend, since folklorists maintain that witches often take the form of old hags or seductive young women.

In the next two stanzas, the witch summons her "White Sisters, / Naked of Limb" (17-18) to join the flight so that they may participate in the suggestively sexual aerial: "With strange embraces, / And maddened faces, / And streaming tresses, / We twist and fly" (29-32). The implied liberal sexuality of the women is another stereotype associated with witches. This particular detail is also reinforced in the concluding lines of the poem, for as the witches are returning to earth to avoid the light of dawn, the speaker laments that "brief is the night / Of our delight, / And brief the span / Of our secret sin" (37-40). On the one hand, the witches' "secret sin" could be interpreted as their supernatural ability to fly; on the other hand, their "sin" could be a reference to the fact that witches are often thought to be brides or lovers of the Devil. "The Witches' Flight" demonstrates Roberts's familiarity with specific folklore details about witches as well as proof that he held a continued interest in wanting to portray them in his own work.

In addition to his poetic "return" to folklore, Roberts evokes native mythology in the ballad "The Vengeance of Gluskâp," a Micmac legend that draws heavily on supernatural elements for dramatic effect. It begins with Gluskâp leaving the village in order to bring some help to another community. Unfortunately, a group of "wandering wizards" (5) decide to attack the unprotected village using fantastic weapons such as "shock of thunder and the lightning's slings, / And flame, and hail, and all disastrous things" (8-9). That the "wizards" are probably white colonials from Europe does not detract from the mythical language used to describe them; on the contrary, Roberts's description of these marauders as evil creatures, capable of using elements from nature as weapons, serves to heighten their supernatural significance.

Enraged by the destruction of his village, Gluskâp calls forth whales from the sea in order to "bare him to the demon-haunted land, / Where, in malign morass and ghostly wood /

And grim cliff-cavern, lurked the evil brood" (16-18). Here Roberts not only emphasizes the mythical stature of Gluskâp through the hero's ability to command the creatures of the sea, but also reinforces the supernatural nature of the wizards, who are not mortals but an "evil brood" that lives in a "ghostly wood" (17, 18). The wizards, however, prove no match for the awesome power of Gluskâp, who after forcing them out of their hiding place using only his gaze, touches them one by one with his finger so that "their hearts grew stone" (27). With swift supernatural vengeance, Gluskâp punishes the evil wizards for their heartless deeds and turns them to "stiffened clay" (28), reminding readers that the power of the gods is awesome and unforgiving.

In *The Book of the Native* is a group of what may be called "cosmic" verses. In these poems Roberts inextricably links nature with the supernatural, but unlike in poems from *Songs of the Common Day and Ave!*, he suggests in this group that Nature is not so much a catalyst for supernatural experience but a source for esoteric knowledge. In the first poem of the collection, aptly titled "Kinship," the speaker begins by expressing his wish to regain a mystical relationship he once had with Nature: "Back to the bewildering vision / And the border-land of birth; / Back into the looming wonder, / The companionship of earth" (1-4). The notion that he wishes to experience "bewildering visions" and "looming wonder" recalls firstly some of Roberts's earlier poems and fictions in which the concept of a visionary or clairvoyant experience dominated. Moreover, the phrase "border-land of birth" implies a host of physical and spiritual binaries, such as life and death, mortality and immortality, dream and reality. Given Roberts's participation in psychical activities during this period, "borderland of birth" is also reminiscent of the tenets of Spiritualism, in which the soul of the dead straddles planes of existence.

The repetition of the word "back" is also significant, for it operates as a mantra through which the speaker wills himself into a heightened state of awareness. It appears nine times in the first half of the poem and does not disappear until he names his final spiritual destination: "Back to wisdom take me, Mother" (29). "Mother" Nature becomes for the speaker the source of all spiritual "wisdom," and he must journey to her first before moving into higher levels of spiritual consciousness. Thus, the earth is not only a location of aesthetic beauty, but a place of "ancient stillness / Where the wise enchanter weaves" (13-14), as well as a source of "Strong enchantments, strange successions, / Mysteries of old and new" (23-24). Roberts's use of the words "enchanter," "enchantments," and "Mysteries" help reinforce the notion that the place the speaker wishes to reach is distinctly supernatural.

More crucial to the speaker than reaching Mother Nature is the type of knowledge he wishes to receive; after all, his quest is first and foremost spiritual: "Tell me tales the world's forgetting, / Till my spirit understands" (31-32). He also hopes nature will explain "how some sightless impulse, / Working out a hidden plan, / .../ Wakes to find itself a man" (33-34, 36). The description of a "sightless impulse" becoming "a man" (33, 36) is an allusion to the process of evolution; at the heart of this biological fact is a mystery, implied by the fact evolution is driven by a "hidden plan" (34). A second subject puzzling the speaker is the mystery of life itself, because he cannot understand "how the life of mortal, / ... / Hurtles from the loom of death" (37, 40). The mystery that completely eludes the speaker, however, is how he can possess such an uncontrollable desire to attain "the wisdom and the stillness / Where they consummations are" (43-44). Thus, his longing for kinship with Nature is not a physical or emotional journey, but a spiritual pilgrimage towards the origins of existence, a quest in which the divine "wisdom" of the universe will be revealed.

Related to the esoteric ideas expressed in "Kinship" is the powerful lyric "Origins," which immediately follows "Kinship." The poem begins in the "dark sublime" (3), but quickly becomes a journey "Out of the pregnant stir / Where death and life confer" (11-12) into "The dark and mystic heat / Where soul and matter meet" (13-14). Here Roberts is describing the birth of the soul and human life; both owe their mysterious origins to an emanating spirit: "the averted Face / Beyond the bournes of space" (5-6). Following this acknowledgement of a higher power is the speaker's statement about his second belief, namely that mortality is a state of existence beyond our control and that "In ignorance we stand / With fate on either hand, / And question stars and earth / Of life, and death, and birth" (23-26). This passage represents how Roberts perceives his own spiritual struggle, namely that "fate" is an influential force in our lives and that only by exploring issues of "life, and death, and birth" (26) can we begin to understand it.

The speaker suggests next that to explore deeper issues involving the cosmos humans typically choose to "scan the kindred skies" (28) for answers, but that during this exercise "through the common grass / Our atoms mix and pass" (29-30). In short, Nature takes hold of humanity even as we continue to star-gaze, until without even being fully aware we arrive at a place of spiritual revelation: "Suddenly comes a word / In other ages heard" (41-42). This sudden conveyance of esoteric knowledge through a moment of kinship with nature is a mystical experience in which we are "borne to unknown goals, / And past the bournes of space / To the unaverted Face" (44-46).

Another variation on Roberts's cosmic consciousness can be found in "The Unsleeping." Although few critics have explored this poem in depth, two deserve mention because they were close acquaintances of Roberts: Stephen (1929) suggests that "the perspective [in this poem] is that of the seer, the mystic who has had a glimpse of truth

unveiled" (57), while Pomeroy (1943) argues that "The Unsleeping" is about "the predominance of man's spirit, and the ultimate triumph of man's soul through the long procession of the ages" (117). Since both scholars were close to Roberts and separately indicate a supernatural or mystical element operating in the poem, it is important to explore "The Unsleeping" to understand what role the supernatural played in shaping this piece.

At the outset of the poem the speaker envisions himself a deity, capable of performing supernatural feats, such as soothing "to unimagined sleep / The sunless bases of the deep" (1-2), "heav[ing] aloft the smoking hill" (5), wrapping himself "in the sightless germ / An instant or an endless term" (9-10), and "hush[ing] the comets one by one" (13). This ability to control the greatest and smallest elements of nature suggests that the speaker exists outside the confines of mortality. Indeed, his powers appear to be greater than the cosmos itself: "Space, in the dim predestined hour, / Shall crumble like a ruined tower. / I only, with unfaltering eye, / Shall watch the dreams of God go by" (21-24). By suggesting that only he will be left to "watch the dreams of God go by" (24) once the cosmos ceases to be, the speaker is implying that although he is not a god, he possesses powers that enable him to transcend such boundaries. "The Unsleeping" is thus a visionary poem of sorts, in which the speaker recognizes a spark of divinity within himself.

A final poem to consider is "Earth's Complines," particularly for the ways in which it resembles "A Blue Blossom" from *Orion, and Other Poems*. The speaker is inexplicably drawn into the garden by an unnamed force whose "call I knew" (2), and as he stands among the beautiful flowers and sweet scents, he begins to enter into a heightened awareness of nature's forms: "I heard the spent blooms sighing, / The expectant buds replying; / I felt the life of the leaves, / Ephemeral, yet undying" (13-16). This sensual experience of nature, suggested through the speaker's ability to "hear" the blooms and "feel" the life of the leaves,

is a fleeting transition for the speaker, because soon after he becomes equally conscious of a spiritual presence at work in the garden: "The spirits of earth were there, / … / Serving among the lilies, / In an ecstacy of prayer" (17, 19-20). Furthermore, the language spoken by these spirits is one he recognizes but "could not tell" (21). The flowers have little trouble communicating with the spirits because "the sap in each green cell, / And the pure initiate petals, / They knew that language well" (22-24). Roberts's use of the word "initiate" to describe the flowers' ability to communicate with the "spirits of earth" resembles occult rhetoric. More importantly, it suggests that nature possesses a kind of occult knowledge of the universe that humans can sense but not fully comprehend.

In spite of his inability to enter into communion with the garden, the speaker's heightened awareness of its physical and spiritual beauty allows him to feel his "own soul kin to these" (28), creating a moment of kinship between himself and the earth that transcends the material landscape: "And a spell came out of space / From the light of its starry place, / And I saw in the deep of my heart / The image of God's face" (29-32). The use of the word "spell" to describe this mystical moment suggests that although the speaker sees "the image of God's face" (32), he is quick to distance the moment from a distinctly Christian moment of divine revelation, or as Keith (1974) points out, "Roberts' God…is rarely to be identified directly with the God of Christianity" (95). Moreover, Roberts's use of the flower garden as the thematic catalyst for spiritual revelation, coupled with the suggestion that the flowers possess an occult language the speaker recognizes but cannot use, links "Earth's Complines" to "A Blue Blossom," but with one significant difference: whereas in "A Blue Blossom" the speaker expresses his struggle in the end to attain full fellowship with the earth, in "Earth's Complines" there is no longer any struggle, just the speaker's recounting of a moment of transcendence in which he catches a glimpse of the deity.

Although *The Book of the Native* was published in 1896, it was written mostly while Roberts was still teaching at King's College during the height of his participation in occult activities. Bentley (2004) has argued that the collection "contains many pieces in which heterodox and agnostic inclinations are redirected along lines that do not contradict a Christian reading" (218). It is important to point out, however, that "The Witches' Flight," "The Vengeance of Gluskâp," as well as several of the cosmic poems, including "Kinship" and "Earth's Complines," do not support a Christian reading of the collection either. What we are witnessing in *The Book of the Native* is a combination of new and old uses of the supernatural by Roberts: some of the poems draw on previous elements of influence, such as folklore and myth, while other poems rely on newer, more cosmic instances of poetic inspiration that employ Nature not so much as a catalyst for divine revelation but as the source of spiritual attainment.

The year after he published *The Book of the Native*, Roberts moved to New York and stayed there for the next decade. Although the majority of his writing during this period was fiction, he also published two collections of poetry: *New York Nocturnes* (1898) and *The Book of the Rose* (1903). Neither volume has garnered much attention from scholars: only one full-length essay in the last one-hundred years has been published on each collection, and both in the same year: Bentley's "Half Passion and Half Prayer: the New York Nocturnes" (1984a) and Glennis Stephenson's "The Bitter-Sweet Rose: the Conception of Woman in Roberts' *The Book of the Rose*" (1984). The remaining criticism on these two volumes is slim and less than praiseworthy: Edgar (1943), Pacey (1958), and Keith (1969), for example, concur that *New York Nocturnes* and *The Book of the Rose* demonstrate "a marked decline from the standard of his best earlier work" (Keith 36-37). As for *New York Nocturnes*, it is generally viewed as a disappointing group of love poems, modeled on the

erotic poetry "of the Rossetti school" (Cappon 1905, 43). Or as Pacey (1958) describes it: "Most of the poems in this book are completely lacking in distinctiveness of thought or expression" (53).

That the *New York Nocturnes* contains fewer poems of a supernatural or mystical nature is evident. Leisner (1984), for example, concedes that "a mysticism of the city [for Roberts] is at most the reassertion of the spirit in its vast alliance with the sublimity of nature" (277). Likewise, Pacey (1958) suggests that "the general trend of the volume is away from rural vignettes and mystical visions to lyrics of love and loneliness" (53). Regardless, a number of poems in the volume still draw on supernatural imagery to enhance their poetic effect. For instance, in "The Solitary Woodsman" the speaker refers to "All the faint, prophetic sounds / That foretell the winter's coming" (47-48), a notion consistent with some of Roberts's earlier poems that link seasonal changes to mysterious events. Similarly, in "My Garden" the lush flowers in the speaker's apartment are kept hidden in the day-time and "[o]nly at night the magic doors disclose / Its labyrinths of lavender and rose" (11-12). Also of note is the manner in which the speaker links his lover's breath to a kind of supernatural scent: "Is it thy breath or some enchanted air / From afar, uncharted realms of mystery / Which I have dreamed of but shall never see?" (18-20).

A third poem from *New York Nocturnes* is "The Ideal," which serves as the prologue to the collection and, as Bentley (1984) argues, represents "transcendence of the natural realm in the direction of the miraculous and supernatural" (62).The speaker, who is distraught by the loneliness and stresses of city life, experiences mystical solace in the arms of a woman who "touched my lips with tenderness, / Till life was born anew" (11-12). Moreover, following this moment of rebirth the "city's clamour died in calm; / And once again I heard / The moon-white woodland stillnesses / Enchanted by a bird" (13-16). The

woman here acts not only as comforter but as a kind of faith healer, thus enabling the speaker to transport himself from the doldrums of city life to spiritually cleansing scenes of nature.

The most engaging and overtly supernatural piece found in *New York Nocturnes* is "Beyond the Tops of Time." Dubbed by Leisner (1984) as Roberts's "supra-cosmic poem" (278), it is the second longest poem of the collection after "A Nocturne of Consecration." According to Pomeroy (1943), it also belongs to Roberts's group of "philosophical-mystical poems" (151), partly for its themes but also for its genesis:

> ["Beyond the Tops of Time"] was almost entirely written in a dream. When the poet awoke he was able to write down many stanzas and the essential part of the rest. This mystical poem with its haunting vision of the dead who cried, "Give us the dream for which we died," belongs to the same class as the two sonnets, "In the Wide Awe and Wisdom of the Night" and "O Solitary of the Austere Sky." (151-2)

Roberts's own comments about the poem likewise reinforce a supernatural reading. In a letter to Robert Underwood Johnson, who was an editor for the *Century*, he disagrees with Johnson's main criticism for rejecting the poem, noting that "My purpose was…to introduce the concrete & material figure boldly into the region of the spiritual, and so get a more definite grip on the latter in a way" (May 2, 1896; *Letters* 223).

This tension between the "concrete and material" and the "region of the spiritual" is apparent from the outset of the poem. The speaker, who inhabits a "narrow room / Up, up beyond the reach of doom" (5-6), has been watching and waiting for signs from below. Suddenly he witnesses "a light more red than flame – / No sun-dawn, but the soul laid bare" (7-8), and from his window he sees "the mountains fall, / The ages wither up and pass" (15-16). These haunting images of crumbling mountains and time being destroyed are soon reinforced by additional apocalyptic images, in which the speaker sees faces of men "who

had been, men long dead" (20) who are looking up to the heavens and crying "Give us the dream for which we died!" (24). Contrasting these apocalyptic scenes are the images of spiritual harmony appearing in the sky above the dead men. Described by the speaker as a "high pageantry of dreams" (30), these visions consist of "Cities of sard and chrysoprase / Where choired Hosannas never cease; / Valhallas of celestial frays, / And lotus-pools of endless peace" (31-34). Significantly, the celestial cities are not strictly Judaeo-Christian, for alongside the singing of "Hosannas" can be heard praises from other belief-systems such as Norse mythology ("Valhallas") and Buddhism ("lotus-pools").

The speaker, moved by the scene below, soon notices that "here and there a face / Shone, and was lifted from its place, / And flashed into the moving dome / An ecstasy of prismed fire" (41-44). This supernatural if not blatantly spiritual image in which the dead men transform into "an ecstasy of prismed fire" (44) serves to reinforce the spatial and material chasm that separates the speaker from the scene he is witnessing. Moreover, the speaker believes that he has witnessed "A soul...come / To the deep zenith of desire" (45-46), even though the experience has left him with more questions than answers: "But still I wondered if it knew / The dream for which it died was true" (47-48). The musings are cut short, however, by another supernatural event, in which a figure "with eyes of bliss / And brow of calm and lips of prayer" (56-57) appears before the speaker. He learns that the figure is one of the dead men who had "cried / So long in that tumultuous deep" (62-63), and asks the spirit his burning question: "Which dream was true? / For many were revealed to you!" (65-66). The spirit is quick to explain that "To the soul made wise / All true, all beautiful they seem. But the white peace that fills our eyes / Outdoes desire, outreaches dream" (67-70). Thus, the mysterious location to which the dead men have been transported is neither sensual ("desire") nor mental ("dream"): it is a place of spiritual light "Where always we

behold God's face!" (72). Moreover, although the final image refers explicitly to "God's face," we have already seen in other poems that Roberts's evocation of "God" does not necessarily demonstrate his firm belief in orthodox Christianity. His use of supernatural imagery in "Beyond The Tops of Time" places the poem within a growing body of Roberts's poetic works that purposefully engage with the supernatural as a strategy for exploring the mysteries of the cosmos.

Roberts's supernaturalism wanes somewhat in *New York Nocturnes*. While several poems contain mystical or cosmic images, the supernatural is a much less prominent feature of *New York Nocturnes* than of his previous collections, and only "Beyond the Tops of Time" resonates with the kind of spiritual exploration and intensity displayed in earlier books like *The Book of the Native*. The overall lack of supernaturalism in *New York Nocturnes*, however, does not signal Roberts's transition away from this sphere of influence. On the contrary, he would return to the subject of the supernatural five years later in *The Book of the Rose*, a volume anchored by the mystical symbol of the rose that would reassert Roberts's continued interest in aspects of the otherworldly.

Pacey (1958) and Stephenson (1984) allude to the fact that Roberts's use of the rose as a central symbol in the collection is linked to the early Rose poems of W.B. Yeats, although his verses "quite lack [Yeats's] symbolic complexity and suggestiveness" (54). This critical opinion is echoed by Keith (1969), who argues that *The Book of the Rose* displays "the weakness of the early Yeats" (37-38) and that in these poems "we detect a suggestion of the rhythms of the Celtic Twilight" (38). Keith's allusion to the Celtic Twilight is no doubt a response to the much earlier suggestion by Cappon (1905), who speculates after his analysis of *The Book of the Rose* that "Bye and bye, I suppose we shall have airs from the *New Mysticism* of Miss Fionna [sic] Macleod and the Celtic School" (51). Both Keith and

Cappon's comments are significant, since several members of the Celtic Twilight, including Yeats, William Sharp, and "AE" (George Russell), were heavily influenced by occult ideas. Furthermore, Pacey and Stephenson suggest that a second influence operating in *The Book of the Rose* are the late French symbolists, another nineteenth-century literary movement known for its ties to the occult through writers such as Mallarmé and Gérard de Nerval.

This critical linking of Roberts's collection to two movements known for their writers' use of occult symbolism obliges readers to consider if he employed similar imagery in his volume. Not surprisingly, what we discover is that this is indeed the case. In "The Rose's Avatar," for instance, the poem begins with the linking of the rose to a distinctly mystical tradition: "There grew a rose more wonderful / Than ever Saadi sang. Its loveliness occult and strange" (1-3). In addition to his explicit use of the term "occult" as a way to explain the beauty of the rose, Roberts links the symbol to Saadi, a Persian poet known for his religious verse, particularly *The Rose Garden* (1258). This potential relationship between the Rose and Eastern culture is reinforced a few lines later when the speaker suggests that the rose's "warm deeps were the avatar / Of unassuaged desire" (7-8). The term "avatar," which also appears in the poem's title, was first employed by Roberts to describe Shelley in *Ave*, and as Stephenson (1984) points out, suggests "a mysterious eastern deity, not an idealized Christian figure" (60). It is the final lines of the poem, however, that best express the rose's relationship to the supernatural, because at this point the flower undergoes a mystical transformation: "Its soul was all the mystic East, / Its heart was all the South, – / Till love and tears transmuted it / To the dark rose of thy mouth" (13-16). Not only does Roberts validate the Eastern "occult" nature of the rose by declaring that "[it]s soul was all the mystic East" (13): he also links the rose to alchemy by suggesting that it was "transmuted" (15) by love and tears into a woman's lips; the word "transmute" is a term used by alchemists to

describe the mystical change from lead into gold. Thus, the rose operates as both an aesthetic and an occult object in this poem.

Roberts's use of alchemical rhetoric is not unique to "The Rose's Avatar." In "Lines for an Omar Punch-Bowl," the disembodied voice of the twelfth-century mystic poet, Omar Khayyam, suggests that "When the garden glows with June / Use me through the scented noon, / Till the heat's alchemic art / Fashions me in every part" (7-10). He also directs the reader to "Slow distil my dreams to wine, / Till by many a sweet rebirth / Love and joy transmute my earth" (18-20). The use of the phrase "alchemic art" (9), coupled with the term "transmute," reinforce the notion that Roberts was either interested in alchemy during this period or reading other poets who made use of its symbols and rhetoric. Moreover, the phrase "many a sweet rebirth" implies the notion of reincarnation, a distinctly eastern religious belief that serves to distance Roberts's poem further from a Christian mindset. It should also be noted that Omar's mystical work *Rubaiyat*, translated by Edward Fitzgerald in 1858, contains several references to the alchemist's art and was immensely popular among nineteenth-century occultists.

Related to this image of the alchemist is Roberts's portrayal of a wizard in "The Rose of My Desire." In the first stanza, the woman introduced at the beginning of the poem is a "wild, dark flower" (1) that was created by "An eastern wizard [who] made you / Of earth and stars and fire" (3-4). The speaker then relates the process by which she came into being: first, the wizard took "The hot, sweet mould of the garden /...from a secret place" to create her body and face (9-11); next, he "drew down star on star, / And breathed them into your soul / That your soul might wander far" (14-16); finally, "From the night's heat, hushed, electric, / He summoned a shifting flame, / And cherished it, and blew on it / Till it burned into your name" (21-24). The wizard's command of the elements, evidenced by his skill to

take the "mould of the garden" (10), draw down "star on star" (14), and summon "a shifting flame" from the night (22), suggests that his powers are pagan in nature, and possibly linked to the black arts or even alchemy. Moreover, this poetic recounting of the woman's creation is a distinctly non-Christian version of Genesis, since it is not God but an "eastern wizard" who transforms elements from nature into the "rose of my desire" (28).

Two other poems that display elements of the supernatural are "The Great and Little Weavers" and the strange, haunting lyric "New Dead." In "The Great and Little Weavers," Roberts returns to his interest in mythology and folklore by suggesting that behind the ever-changing universe are mysterious figures who "work in the height and the glory, / ...toil in the dark and the deep" (3-4). Much of the poem is spent cataloguing images of beauty that decay or disappear, such as the "rainbow that melts with the shower" (5) or "The love that made lips immortal / [That] drags by in a tattered hearse" (35-36). Contrasting these images of death is the poem's underlying tone of hope, since the objects of beauty "have not faded forever, / They have not flowered in vain, / For the great and the little weavers / Are weaving under the rain" (9-12). The "great and little weavers" possess potent skills that allow them to renew life; their description as "great and little weavers" also conjures images of elves or some other creature from folklore through Roberts's use of the adjectives "great and little." Finally, the fact that the mysterious creatures are "weaving in heart and brain" in the last line of the poem serves to reinforce their supernatural origins, since they exist not only as external manifestations of an otherworldly spirit that govern the universe, but also as an internal, mitigating force capable of penetrating our "heart and brain" (48).

Complementing the mythological content of "The Great and Little Weavers" is the disturbing perspective of "New Dead." Here the speaker is neither mortal nor immortal, but as the title suggests, someone who has recently died: "Ah, world, when did I pass / Beyond

your smile, – / Forget you, for a long / Or little while?" (9-12). Ironically, the speaker is initially unaware that he is dead, and so muses on his condition, noting that he has moved outside the physical realm but knows not whether it has been "for a long / Or little while" (11-12). This notion that the speaker is unaware of his own passing is reminiscent of similar late nineteenth-century fantastic tales such as Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" (1891), in which Peyton Farquhar is sentenced to death by hanging, but dreams that he is escaping from his captors in the midst of his strangling. Moreover, as the speaker begins to analyze details of his state, he is suddenly faced with an epiphany: "Ah, now I know why stirs / No more my breath! My mouth is stopt with dust, / My dream with death" (17-20). Confronted by the reality that his "seed of self" is beginning to "slip" (21, 25), the speaker resigns himself to his fate and moves towards the final rest "So to be strong when I / Arise, new born!" (27-28). Thus, at the end of "New Dead" the speaker prepares for a journey towards second death. More importantly, while his passing at the beginning of the poem relates to his physical death, this second embrace of "sleep" pertains to his mental and spiritual death, a theme already encountered in Roberts's early supernatural tale, "In the Accident Ward."

Leisner (1984) suggests that in *The Book of the Rose* "burns the culminating rose of Roberts' mysticism" (288). Although it is difficult to categorize the collection as the "culmination" of Roberts's interest in the supernatural, *The Book of the Rose* does possess a number of pieces that employ images of the otherworldly. Some of these verses strike a new note in Roberts's supernaturalism, particularly through his use of alchemical references in the Rose poems, whereas other pieces, such as "The Great and Little Weavers" recall his earlier use of mythology as a means to explain greater mysteries of the universe. Finally, in "New Dead" Roberts invites readers to experience the phantasmagoric perspective of a

speaker who does not realize he has died, a haunting notion that echoes with Roberts's earliest gothic pieces, "The Flight" and "One Night." Hence, *The Book of the Rose* is not so much a "culmination" of Roberts's concern for things supernatural as it is a reassertion of his continued interest in the otherworldly.

Roberts published few new poems after 1903, and the only volume of his verse to appear over the next few years was a revised edition of his collected works in 1907. That same year he left New York for Europe and would not return to Canada for almost two decades. What emerged during this self-imposed exile was a single collection, aptly titled *New Poems*, which was published while he was living in London after the war. It was a slim volume with no North American distribution, and was reviewed mainly by English journals to mixed opinion. Roberts believed the poems had merit, for he included the entire contents of the volume in *The Vagrant of Time* (1927), a collection that would mark his poetic return to Canada.

Almost no criticism exists on *The Vagrant of Time*. Elsie Pomeroy makes little mention of it while John Coldwell Adams offers only slightly more information by including comments about the book's mixed reviews (145-6). Nor does Roberts provide insights into the collection, for although there are several references to *The Vagrant of Time* in the *Collected Letters*, the majority of them involve requests by Roberts for copies from The Ryerson Press. As for other scholarship on the collection, few critics have even ventured to analyze it, and those that do tend to discuss it in generalities. Pacey (1958), for instance, devotes only a single paragraph to *The Vagrant of Time*, even though he declares that the poems are "almost all good, and that they reveal a genuine development in Roberts' poetic technique" (55). Keith (1969) offers no criticism at all, except to dismiss the collection with a single question: "What can one say, we ask in irritation, of a poet who is capable of

opening a poem in 1927 with the line 'I know a maiden like a flower'?" (58). In fact, only Adams (1978) and Leisner (1984) demonstrate any real critical commitment to the volume. Adams, for example, presents an overview of Roberts's work from 1926 to 1942, and dedicates the first few pages to a discussion of poems from *The Vagrant of Time*. Unfortunately, his analysis reads more like a biographical gloss of the poems than focused criticism. Leisner, on the other hand, offers short, meaningful discussions of *New Poems* and *The Vagrant of Time* in relation to Roberts's interest in mysticism, arguing that "for Roberts a mystical sublimity is most effectively secured in the sheer medium of nature, by a sort of translation of the human spirit into the grand beauty and tremendous forces of nature" (281).

Two poems from *The Vagrant of Time* that originally appeared in *New Poems* and utilize supernatural imagery are "The Unknown City" and "O Earth, Sufficing All Our Needs." The first poem represents an allegorical "city inaccessible, / Where the dead dreamers dwell" (1-2). More medieval kingdom than modern-day city, it is a realm far removed from everyday life, with "domes and towers enskied, / Its battlements and balconies one sheen / Of ever-living green" (12-14). Reinforcing the uncanny nature of this "unknown" city are its chambers, "memoried with old romance / And faëry circumstance" (23-24), from whose windows any "love may lean some time / For love that dares to climb" (25-26). The phrases "old romance" and "faëry circumstance" recall at once a long-standing literary tradition that draws heavily on notions of myth and supernaturalism for effect, while the last two lines are a direct reference to the Brothers Grimm fairy-tale, "Rapunzel." More importantly, the speaker declares that this is not a city of the imagination, but a spiritual place that "babe and seer divined / With pure, believing mind" (27-28), and that "here the visioned eyes / Of them that dream past any power to do, / Wake to the dream come true" (30-32). As in previous poems, the figure of the "seer" and notion of the visionary

experience help punctuate the piece's supernatural significance; the phrase "Wake to the dream come true" (32) also harkens to his earlier cosmic poem, "Beyond the Tops of Time," particularly to the dead men who were given "the dream for which we died."

The other work of note is the apostrophe "O Earth, Sufficing All Our Needs," which appears immediately after "The Unknown City" in *New Poems*. Here Roberts takes as his central theme the idea that we need not search for the spirit of the divine in heaven because it already exists in nature. The poem begins with the speaker suggesting that the earth has "room for body and for spirit" (2). This notion of "body" and "spirit" immediately recalls the tension displayed in Roberts's early supernatural stories between the materialist viewpoint and the world of the supernatural. Moreover, following this acknowledgment of the earth's spiritual space the speaker admonishes organized religion for its Apollonian approach to spirituality: "How patient [you are Earth] while your children vex their souls / Devising alien heavens beyond your blue!" (3-4). The depiction of how humans "vex their souls" and "devise alien heavens" is an unflattering comment by Roberts likely directed towards his Anglican upbringing and to other forms of orthodox Christianity.

Contrasting the speaker's negative opinion of organized religion is his new-found worship of the earth, which has become for him a supernatural "dwelling of the immortal and unseen" (5). More compelling are the poem's middle stanzas, which are almost certainly a reference to Roberts's psychical experiences as a young man:

> Not far and cold the way that they have gone
> Who through your sundering darkness have withdrawn;
>
> Almost within our hand-reach they remain
> Who pass beyond the sequence of the dawn.

Not far and strange the Heaven, but very near,

Your children's hearts unknowingly hold dear.

At times we almost catch the door swung wide.

An unforgotten voice almost we hear. (9-16)

The speaker notes that the dead are "almost within our hand-reach" (11), and that "at times we almost catch the door swung wide. / An unforgotten voice we almost hear" (15-16). Such a description of the close proximity between those who are living and those who are dead recalls Roberts's 1895 letter to Susan Hayes Ward and his affinity for concepts related to Spiritualism: "I do believe that the physical change called death interposes between ourselves and those who have passed ahead a less absolute barrier than is generally supposed. It has seemed to me at times, & in private, that the barrier was quite thin! (March 7, 1895; *Letters* 195).

At the end of the poem, the speaker admits his embarrassment at having followed those who "devise alien heavens," but acknowledges that the earth possesses the true spirit of divinity: "I have sought God beyond His farthest star– / But here I find Him, in your quickening dust" (19-20). This ending is another example of Roberts's complicated use of the term "God," for even though the speaker appears to use the term in a distinctly Christian context, the fact that he challenges organized religion earlier in the poem ultimately suggests a pantheistic or at least heterodox viewpoint on the part of Roberts.

Two poems that form part of the new verses in *The Vagrant of Time* are "Hath Hope Kept Vigil" and "To-Day." The first piece, a short twelve-line lyric, compares lilies in winter to the death and burial of the speaker. The first two stanzas describe the lilies in bereavement terms, as if they are bodies in a coffin already underground: "Frail lilies that beneath the dust so long / Have lain in cerements of musk and slumber, / While over you hath fled the

viewless throng / Of hours and winds and voices out of number" (1-4). This comparison is reinforced at the beginning of the second stanza, when the speaker puts forth the following question: "Pulseless and dead in that enswathing dark / Hath hope kept vigil at your core of being?" (5-6). It is also important to note that lilies are traditionally used as a symbol of death.

The last stanza offers a firm comparison between the lilies and the speaker's fate. His musing upon the life and death struggle of the flowers, as well as the "unextinguished spark" (7) that dwells within them, prompts him to reflect on his mortality: "Once more into the dark when I go down, / And deep and deaf the black clay seals my prison, / Will the numbed soul foreknow how light shall crown / With strong young ecstasy its life new risen?" (9-12). Although the question is not answered, what is interesting to note about this stanza is not so much its tone of hope, but the way in which the beginning line, "Once more into the dark when I go down," implies that the speaker has died before and that his experience will be a form of reincarnation or spiritual evolution. If this is how readers are meant to interpret the line, then "Hath Hope Kept Vigil" becomes a subtle but powerful piece of evidence concerning Roberts's awareness and interest in theosophical concepts.

Another poem from *The Vagrant of Time* that draws on elements of the supernatural is "To-Day." According to the University of New Brunswick archives, it was originally composed in September 1926, the same month Roberts wrote "Hath Hope Kept Vigil." It also represents a return to his early use of classical mythology as a vehicle for spiritual exploration. The opening of the poem, for instance, situates the reader in a locale far removed from everyday life: "As once by Hybna's emerald flow / The goatboy saw in dream / The old gods to their hunting go" (1-3). The reference to the Greek god Pan ("goatboy"), coupled with the mysterious "emerald flow" of the Hybna, serves to punctuate the poem's

supernatural context, a context reinforced by the fact that the Hybna is the place where Pan's dream takes place. This wondrous mythological landscape is not the only source of dreams, though: the speaker suggests that a similar experience can be found near his own New Brunswick river: "So I, by Nashwaak's amber stream, / See gods and heroes pass" (5-6). But neither scene can match the vision that awaits the speaker after death: "astonished, I shall know / The splendor of To-day, / When men outdare the old gods, and grow / In reach more vast than they" (13-16). For Roberts, each successive human age has its share of men and women who transform old myths of "beauty and glory" into new and wondrous visions. Likewise, it is an achievement of the spirit, not the mind, that allows us to "grow in reach more vast" than the gods of old.

During the short period between his return to Canada in 1925 and the release of *The Vagrant of Time*, Roberts had reestablished himself as an important literary figure: by the spring of 1927, he had given poetry tours around the country, developed new friendships through the Vancouver Poetry Society, and participated at the Muskoka Assembly. Moreover, in the year prior to the publication of *The Vagrant of Time*, he published "My Religion," an essay already discussed for its theosophical content. As for the poems from *The Vagrant of Time*, given his portrayal of spiritualist imagery in "O Earth, Sufficing All Our Needs," his inclusion of visionary experiences in "The Unknown City" and "To-Day," as well as the theosophical notion of spiritual evolution implied at the end of "Hath Hope Kept Vigil," one can only attribute such elements to the fact that Roberts had not discarded his interest in the supernatural while abroad. On the contrary, his return to Canada marked not only the start of his "Indian summer" as a poet (Pacey 1958, 54), but also his re-acquaintance with supernatural ideas.

Criticism of Roberts's next volume, *The Iceberg and Other Poems* (1934), is also sparse. In addition to Adams's 1978 overview article on Roberts's later poetry, only Conway (1984), McLeod (1984) and, to a lesser extent, Leisner (1984) treat *The Iceberg and Other Poems* as a collection worthy of critical investigation: Conway, for instance, demonstrates that "The Squatter" is a successful experiment in modern free-verse, while McLeod explores Roberts's portrayal of "evolutionary idealism" in the volume's title poem. As for Leisner, he focuses on Roberts's use of mysticism in the collection, declaring that "It is a momentous fact, and highly significant for his mysticism, that in a volume as late as *The Iceberg and Other Poems* his tremendous passions should again come to the fore, and, as through a swift recapitulation of a lifetime's griefs and fears and open clashes with fate, loom up ecstatic for a crown of light" (282). These few articles aside, the majority of scholars limit their comments to short discussions of "The Iceberg," as evidenced by Edgar (1943), Pacey (1958), and Cogswell (1983a). Keith does not even mention *The Iceberg and Other Poems* in his monograph.

The year before *The Iceberg and Other Poems* was published, Roberts gave a speech to the Elson Club in Toronto that expresses similar notions to those found in "My Religion." In "Canadian Poetry in its Relation to The Poetry of England and America," Roberts not only discusses key attributes of his generation of writers, but also links the occult explicitly to the Confederation group of poets by suggesting that some of them worship "mystical theosophy" or "Neo-Platonic pantheism" (82). Given Roberts's close friendships with a number of poet-theosophists during this time, as well as his expressed opinions on the subject in the essay "My Religion" and in his speech for the Elson Club, one should expect that the supernatural would manifest itself in *The Iceberg and Other Poems*. In fact, some of Roberts's most spiritually engaging poems appear in this twilight volume, particularly "Re-birth," "To a

Certain Mystic," and "Presences." In these poems Roberts would reaffirm the staying influence of a subject that by 1934 had held his interest for over fifty years.

In "Presences," the speaker is attesting to the fact that the soul persists after physical death. Moreover, what begins as an inexplicable moment soon becomes a series of related phenomena that reassure the speaker he is not alone in the material world. The poem begins with the speaker noticing that the "shadow of the poplar / Beside my cabin door / Has trembled on the floor" (1-3), even though there is no wind. Following this anomaly the speaker is confronted with a second event: he notices some flowers swaying "Tho' up and down the forest glade / No other blade or bough / Stirs from its slumber now?" (16-18). The third phenomenon, however, is a climactic moment for the speaker:

> I hear
> A footfall drawing near
> Tho' no sound breaks the noonday hush.
> A sweet breath stirs my hair, –
> But there is nothing there!
> What gracious presences
> Are these I cannot see
> Tho' they come close to me? (20-27)

By shifting the phenomena from visual anomalies, such as the inexplicable movement of trees and flowers, to increasingly intimate and sensual events, evidenced by the sound of the footfall (21) and the feeling of "sweet breath" stirring the speaker's hair (23), Roberts succeeds in enhancing the intensity of the mystery. Moreover, the poem's depiction of unseen spirits who are "felt" by the speaker recalls some of Roberts's earliest supernatural stories in which a materialist protagonist confronts the inexplicable felt presence of a

supernatural force. But unlike Roberts's earlier stories, in "Presences" the speaker's encounter with an otherworldly spirit is not something he fears, but is a phenomenon that he finds comforting: "I think I shall have pleasant dreams / In silence charmed and deep / When I lie down to sleep" (28-30).

The second poem of note is Roberts's overtly theosophical work, "Re-birth." Although this lyric has never been analyzed by scholars, and only glossed by Pomeroy (1943) as a poem on the subject of reincarnation (334), Roberts himself has left readers and critics with a valuable clue about the ideas being explored in the piece. In a letter to Frederick George Scott, he thanks Scott for having sent him a copy of his *Selected Poems* but regrets that he cannot review it; he also attaches a copy of "Re-birth" with the response. What is remarkable about the letter, though, is how he describes the attached poem: "It may strike you as a bit heterodox! But I do not think one life is quite enough for us, in which to fit ourselves for eternity" (May 1, 1933; *Letters* 446). His suggestion that the poem is "heterodox," coupled with his belief that "one life is [not] quite enough for us," suggests not only that "Re-birth" is a work far removed from his Anglicanism, but that its theme bears special affinity to the theosophical notion of spiritual evolution, and to the idea of reincarnation more generally.

This notion of spiritual evolution is evoked in the first line of the poem, when the speaker describes his journey as a stumble "up thro' Time from the slime to the heights" (1). Roberts's use of the word "slime" alludes to the sea as well as to early life forms. Comparatively, "heights" implies not only the movement of creatures from sea to land, but the allegorical concept of a spiritual height, a notion reinforced by the last line of the poem: "the Vision and the Height" (24). Following this reference to evolution, the speaker describes his first death not as a religious event but as a stoic state: "[I] slept for an age without a

dream or stir / Till a voice came, troubling the pools of sleep" (5-6). Significantly, the "voice" that calls to him represents a mysterious and perhaps spiritual force, but nowhere in the poem is it aligned with the explicit notion of a deity. Contrasting this stoic state are the next three stanzas, which recount his journey from death to new life. In stanza three, the speaker emerges from death as a "naked soul...bathed in the light ineffable" (9), then in stanza four recalls how he "swam through the veil [of light] / And sank through shadows to a blissful gloom" (13-14). Finally, in stanza five he achieves mortality through what appear to be the acts of conception and pregnancy: "I heard a craving, faint cry. / I was darkly aware of moving warmth / I thirsted, and my groping thirst was satisfied; / And I slumbered, wrapt and folded in the warmth" (17-20).

In the last stanza Roberts affirms his theosophical viewpoint by having the speaker declare that "Once again was I snared in the kindly flesh of man" (21). He then notices that "before the mists of temporal forgetting shut me in / I had seen, far off, the Vision and the Height" (23-24). The phrase "the Vision and the Height" alludes to an emanating spirit, thus linking the speaker's rebirth to a moment of spiritual awakening. Moreover, Roberts's comment to Scott that "one life is not enough for us" in reference to the theme of the poem is remarkably similar to a theosophical statement he made in his essay, "My Religion" a few years earlier: "I prefer to think that I might have a few more lives, a few more ages, in which to develop" (27). Thus, "Re-birth" depicts one of Theosophy's central tenets.

One final piece of evidence concerning Roberts's interest in the supernatural is his ambiguously spiritual epistle, "To a Certain Mystic." In this poem, the speaker addresses an unnamed mystic who sometimes "saw what others could not see" (1) and "heard what no one else could hear" (2). After acknowledging the mystic's supernatural abilities, the speaker asks the mystic a number of rhetorical questions about his visionary experiences including

the following significant query: "did dawn show you driftage from strange continents / Of which we dream but no man surely knows,– / Some shed gold leafage from the Tree Eternal, / Some petals of the Imperishable Rose?" (9-12). The allusion to "strange continents" that "no man surely knows" is a possible allusion to the lost continent of Atlantis, a location often evoked by occultists. Similarly, the phrase "Tree Eternal" refers to the mystical tree from the Kabbalah, or even the mythological tree from Norse mythology that was depicted on the original 1896 edition of *Earth's Enigmas*. Also of note is the term "Imperishable Rose," a phrase employed by late nineteenth-century occultists such as Aleister Crowley and W.B. Yeats; significantly, this term appears in Yeats's 1902 prose publication, *Celtic Twilight*.

The most extraordinary part of "To a Certain Mystic" is the final stanza, in which the mystic does not achieve the spiritual heights the speaker hoped he would attain. Pomeroy (1943) notes that this stanza underwent a great deal of revision, and includes in her biography the version that persisted for "some time" (333). Here is the original stanza:

> But you came empty-handed and your tongue
> Babbled confusion; and men mocked at you!
> Yet some, we half believed you wistfully,
> Having illusions, too, –that might prove true! (Pomeroy 333)

By comparison, the published stanza reveals a more skeptical tone on the part of the speaker:

> But you came empty-handed, and your tongue
> Babbled strange tidings none could wholly trust.
> And if we half believed you, it was only
> Because we would, and not because we must. (21-24)

In the early version of the stanza, the speaker appears more sympathetic to the mystic's world and points out that in spite of the men who "mocked at you," there are those who "half

believed you wistfully"; the speaker also hints that he has experienced similar visions through the line "Having illusions, too, –that might prove true!" Comparatively, in the published stanza the mystic brought back tidings that "none could wholly trust" (22). Roberts then reinforces this skepticism by adding the conditional "if," even though the speaker's "half-belief" is now the result of choice ("would") rather than desperation or command ("must"). What the revised stanza suggests is that for some reason Roberts decided to occlude his sympathetic viewpoint of the mystic in favour of a more tempered and ambiguous conclusion. Regardless, "To a Certain Mystic" stands as a final poetic testament to the pervasive influence that the supernatural had over Roberts's life and literary career.

What began for Roberts as a small group of poems on the subject of the uncanny, a group that Early claimed was an "anomaly" in his oeuvre, developed into a life-long fascination with the supernatural. In *Orion, and Other Poems* he demonstrated an early interest in the supernatural through "The Flight" and "One Night," as well as an affinity for notions of prophecy and visionary experience in "Orion." Equally significant is his esoteric piece "A Blue Blossom," in which the speaker expresses frustration about a form of occult knowledge he recognizes but cannot interpret, a notion that anticipates future poems of a similar theme. Roberts's second collection, *In Divers Tones*, marks a transition point in his interest in the supernatural through his esoteric treatment of myth in "The Pipes of Pan" as well as his symbolic rejection of his Anglican roots in "The Marvellous Work." Similarly, in Roberts's two "King's College" collections, *Songs of the Common Day and Ave!* and *The Book of the Native*, he draws on images of prophecy in "Across the fog the moon lies far" and "The Flight of the Geese," as well as depicting a clairvoyant experience in the haunting lyric "The Valley of the Winding Water." He also returns to his interest in mythology, as evidenced by "The Vengeance of Gluskâp" and "The Witches' Flight." One of the

dominating poems from these two collections, however, is *Ave*, a visionary work in which Roberts relives the life and works of Shelley while gazing at the Tantramar river. Equally significant are the cosmic poems "Kinship" and "Origins" from *The Book of the Native*, both of which describe notions of an earlier, more mysterious relationship humans had with the earth, a mystical place where "soul and matter meet" ("Origins", 14).

Roberts's interest in the supernatural did not disappear after his move to New York. Although it did wane in *New York Nocturnes*, even here we find traces of the uncanny, particularly in the love lyrics "The Ideal" and "My Garden," and in his "supra-cosmic" poem, "Beyond the Tops of Time." Comparatively, *The Book of the Rose* contains a number of poems that draw on the occult symbol of the rose, as well as incorporating aspects of alchemy into ""Lines for an Omar Punch-Bowl" and "The Rose of My Desire." Also of note is the phantasmagoric "New Dead," in which the speaker slowly realizes he has died, as well as "The Great and Little Weavers," a deceptively innocent piece that portrays mysterious forces at work in the universe.

With Roberts's return to Canada in 1925 came both a rediscovery of his poetic career and a resurgence of his interest in the supernatural. Several poems from *The Vagrant of Time* display themes that link this volume to his earlier collections: "Hath Hope Kept Vigil," for instance, is reminiscent of his earlier poem, "New Dead," while "The Unknown City," through its portrayal of a romanticized kingdom and dead inhabitants "who wake to the dream come true," reads like a variation on "Beyond The Tops of Time." Likewise, in "O Earth, Sufficing All Our Needs" Roberts returns to the subject of Spiritualism through his treatment of the thin boundary that exists between the living and the dead. Of his later poetry, though, none treats the subject of the supernatural as acutely as the poems found in *The Iceberg and Other Poems*, especially the spiritualist lyric "Presences," the overtly

theosophical piece, "Re-birth," and Roberts's sympathetic portrayal of a visionary figure, "To a Certain Mystic."

In his 1941 letter to Ralph Gustafson, who at the time was compiling the *Penguin Anthology of Canadian Poetry* (1942), Roberts asks him to substitute his sonnet "In an Old Barn" for the lyric "The Unsleeping." Although the request itself warrants no further explanation, Roberts's rationale for wanting the change demands consideration: "A very large portion, & the most important portion, of my work, in my deliberate judgment,– the most original & distinctive portion,– has to do with what [William] Archer called my 'cosmic consciousness.' I want that portion represented, of course! 'The Unsleeping' is the *shortest* of all these poems" (January 22, 1941; *Letters* 600-1). Although Roberts uses the phrase "cosmic consciousness" instead of "supernaturalism" to describe this "original and distinctive portion" of his work, it is not too far a stretch to substitute the former term for the latter. Early in his career Roberts rejected the orthodox stance of his Anglican upbringing because he could not reconcile it with his heterodox views about the afterlife and the spiritual world. This tension led Roberts to spend the rest of his career attempting to articulate his belief about the inner workings of the universe, a quest in which he used a number of supernatural traditions to help work out his central spiritual dilemma. Whether he drew on elements of the gothic, the mystical, figures from classical or native mythology, or employing more overtly occult traditions such as Spiritualism, Alchemy, and Theosophy, Roberts always treated these subjects in his verse with a single goal in mind: to understand once and for all the mystery of life and fate.

Conclusion

Scholarship over the last hundred years concerning Charles G.D. Roberts's interest in the supernatural has been sparse and largely tenuous. Although several critics over the decades have made either unsubstantiated claims or offered limited analysis concerning his incorporation of supernatural elements in to his works, none has broached the topic in the context of Roberts's entire oeuvre. Yet when viewed as a whole, these disparate commentaries establish a critical mass by which to investigate further Roberts's personal writings and published works for additional evidence of his interest in the supernatural.

The resulting scholarly exercise has yielded significant results. A reexamination of Roberts's personal writings and acquaintances during key moments in his life, for instance, reveals a bio-critical void in Roberts scholarship that has effectively obscured his affinity for esoteric ideas and for artists who held similar interests. During his King's College years, Roberts interacted with many internationally recognized literary figures, including William Sharp, Douglas Sladen, Richard Hovey, and his younger cousin, Bliss Carman. Each of these men was dedicated to their literary craft, but they also held considerable interest in esoteric traditions, and many of them drew on such traditions for inspiration. Similarly, while in New York Roberts's intimates included Elsa Barker, who became popular among students of the occult (Pomeroy 170), as well as Richard Le Gallienne, a good friend of William Sharp whose writings reflect considerable awareness and interest in occult subjects. On his return to Canada in 1925, Roberts reunited with Bliss Carman and through him began new friendships with several people associated with the Vancouver Poetry Society, including Dr. Ernest Fewster and A.M. Stephen, who were not only writers but also students of Theosophy. Of equal interest are comments he made in his correspondence to people such as

Susan Hayes Ward concerning his affinity for aspects of Spiritualism, the psychical activities he engaged in while at King's College, and an article he published in the *Manitoba Free Press* that reveals his sympathy for tenets of theosophy.

The biographical evidence that emerged as part of this study has also led to a reconsideration of Roberts's published writings to determine if and to what extent his interest in the supernatural was a source of inspiration in his work. Again, what we discover is that the supernatural manifested itself in his poetry and prose fiction throughout his career. In his prose fiction, one can ascertain a supernatural presence in his work that begins with the publication of "The Stone Dog" in 1885 and persists until the appearance of his last novel, *In the Morning of Time*, in 1919. In terms of poetry, each major collection of his verse between 1880 and 1934 contained poems that explored supernatural topics or employed images of a distinctly supernatural nature. Moreover, although "supernatural" is a broad term by which to explore Roberts's writings, he demands that such an approach be taken since he did not ascribe to one single esoteric tradition. Having rejected the High Anglicanism of his father, Roberts explored a variety of supernatural traditions, including Spiritualism, Theosophy, Alchemy, and other aspects of mysticism, and drew on these experiences for inspiration in his writing in order to articulate his struggle to understand "the mystery of life and fate."

Although a more strict chronological reading of Roberts's corpus may have better demonstrated potential cross-pollination of supernatural tropes between genres, a number of important observations about Roberts's supernaturalism emerge from this study. First, throughout his fiction he portrayed contrasting characters who reflect a central tension between the materialist viewpoint and the supernatural perspective. Whether it is first-person protagonists pitted against stone dogs or apparitions of dead bodies, skeptics like Jean de Mer and Paul Grande placed in opposition to strange figures such as Grûl or Mother Pêche,

the realist perspective of young Dave Titus against the spiritual idealism of Miranda, Roberts maintained in each instance a character dialectic that helps punctuate the role of the supernatural in each story.

A second observation about Roberts's use of the supernatural is his shift after 1900 in the prose fiction from addressing strictly human-centred experiences of the supernatural to the role that the supernatural plays in the shaping of nature. Whereas the early stories and romances portrayed the effect that the supernatural had on the lives of characters such as Desbra, Reuben Waugh, Paul Grande, and Lieutenant Hansworthy, in the later fiction he evokes instead the "occult communication" between a house cat and a panther, the governing force of Fate on the lives of the animals in the ancient wood, and the telepathic abilities of a female eagle or Red Fox. Even Miranda's "semi-occult experience" can be read as the result of Kroof's "initiating" her into the secrets of the forest.

A related, but different transition occurs in Roberts's poetry after 1898. In his later collections, such as *The Book of the Rose*, *The Vagrant of Time*, and *The Iceberg and Other Poems*, he explores more fully the poetic potential of specific esoteric traditions such as Spiritualism, Alchemy or Theosophy. Yet in the earlier collections he explores more general concepts about the supernatural, such as clairvoyant experiences, the depiction of spirits, and the portrayal of nature as a conduit or source for supernatural experience. This transition may simply reflect the evolution of his interest in such traditions as he struggled to distance himself from his Anglican roots.

In both his poetry and prose fiction Roberts associated the supernatural more often with the acquisition of knowledge instead of divine revelation. In "A Blue Blossom," for instance, he speaks of being "debarred / From knowledge of the meaning sung" (27-28). Sixteen years later, he writes in "Kinship" of his desire to attain "the wisdom and the

stillness / Where they consummations are" (43-44). Thirty-years later he prophesizes in "To-Day" the time when "men outdare the old gods, and grow / In reach more vast than they" (15-16). As for his fiction, several of the early supernatural stories hinge on the protagonist's ability to incorporate "new knowledge" of the universe into his world view. Similarly, Grûl's main gift is his ability to provide critical counsel to characters rather than wield supernatural powers. Also of note is the "initiation" of Miranda into the secrets of the forest, as well as Grôm's discovery of fire and the resulting "initiation" rite that Bawr creates in order to keep the "knowledge" of the fire occluded from other members of the tribe.

Supernaturalism is not the only approach by which to consider Roberts's work. Nor is this study an exhaustive look at Roberts's interest in the supernatural: the scope of this project has invariably resulted in some limited discussions, particularly in the areas of Roberts's poetry and animal stories. Future in-depth studies on the people with whom he associated during his New York years or while in London would also help to round out the biographical void this study has only begun to remedy. More generally, this study calls for the need for further research on the cultural movements that helped shape Roberts's interest in the supernatural, namely, the place that Spiritualism and Theosophy occupied in Canadian letters during the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. What this study offers is an analytical alternative to the dominant critical frameworks currently available to Roberts scholars. The present study also builds on work recently put forward by Bentley (2004), not only from a chronological standpoint, since Bentley's discussion ends in 1897, but also from a genre perspective, since he limits his commentary to Roberts's poetry.

Roberts's work reflects not so much the celebration of the ecstatic vision, as is commonly accepted among scholars, but instead the recognition of unknowable forces in the universe, spirits outside the material realm that shape and govern our lives. In one of his later

supernatural poems, "To A Certain Mystic," Roberts refers to the speaker's "half-belief" in what the mystic told him. Most critics view this poem as his rejection of what the mystic represents. Yet the speaker's admitting that he "half-believed" the mystic can also be read as a confession on the part of Roberts; that is, his rejection of Anglicanism at an early age caused him to search for a spiritual alternative, and although he never fully embraced a particular brand of supernaturalism, he found in these traditions perspectives on the afterlife that could help him articulate his spiritual struggles.

In his 1988 review of David Pitt's biography on E.J. Pratt, A.R. Kizuk speculates: "Recalling Mackenzie King's spiritualism, Tom MacInnes's Taoism, or Wilson MacDonald's theosophy, one wonders how deeply rooted such esotericism might be in Canadian intellectual history" (165). If Charles G.D. Roberts's interest in the supernatural is any indication, then the roots surely run deep.

Endnotes

Notes to Chapter 1

1 See, for example, Alexandra Hurst's *The war among the poets: issues of plagiarism and patronage among the Confederation poets* (1994), Tracy Ware's *A Northern Romanticism: Poets of the Confederation* (2000), and D.M.R. Bentley's *The Confederation Group of Canadian Poets, 1880-1897* (2004). The modern critical approach of grouping Roberts, Carman, Lampman, and Duncan Campbell Scott is the legacy of Malcolm Ross, whose championing of the term "Confederation Poets" in 1960 has led to a general tendency to read and teach Canadian poets during the late 1800s as a group rather than as individual artists. Roberts argued in a 1927 interview with Lorne Pierce that there were no cohesive elements between himself and his contemporaries:

> Pierce: Would you say that the group of sixty influenced each other?
>
> Roberts: Not at all. We worked separately and very independently. (Whalen 1987, 71)

2 I use the term "monograph" loosely: Cappon's first study is 52 pages long, while his second study is a reworking of the earlier pamphlet and includes a considerable selection of Roberts's own verse. Keith's study is 136 pages long. Cogswell's study is 46 pages long. Terry Whalen's study is 56 pages long.

3 See John Coldwell Adams, "A Preliminary Bibliography," in *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium* (1984), pp. 243-4.

4 The only other study that attempts a sustained reading of Roberts's oeuvre is Donald Conway's Ph.D. Dissertation, "The Sufficient Vision: A Reading of the Poetry and Prose Fiction of Charles G.D. Roberts" (University of New Brunswick), 1982.

5 Roberts did, however, publish several shorter pamphlets during these later years: *The Sweet o' the Year and Other Poems* (1925), *Twilight over Shaugamauk, and Three Other Poems* (1937), and *Canada Speaks of Britain and Other Poems of War* (1941).

6 *New Poems* was 44 pages long, *The Vagrant of Time* 46 pages, and *The Iceberg and Other Poems* 31 pages. Comparatively, *In Divers Tones* was 134 pages long; *Songs of the Common Day and Ave!,* 126 pages.

7 See Bentley (2004), pgs. 71-78 for an in-depth discussion of the poem.

8 See, for instance, Adams, "Sir Charles G.D. Roberts: Post Biography" (1987). See also Desmond Pacey (1958), Laurel Boone (1984), and Fred Cogswell (1984b).

9 For a summary of the debate, see Gerald Lynch's recent entry on "Animal Stories" in *The Encyclopedia of Literature in Canada* (2002). For a more general discussion of Roberts's and Seton's contribution to the genre, see Michael Poirier's "The Animal Story in Canadian Literature" (1929), W.J. Keith's chapter on "Stories of the Wild" in *Charles G.D. Roberts* (1969), and Alec Lucas's "Nature Writers and the Animal Story" in *The Literary History of Canada* (1977).

10 Roberts wrote more than 230 animal stories, a number of which are still in print, as evidenced by Terry Whalen's recent Canadian Critical Edition, *Charles G.D. Roberts: Selected Animal Stories* (2005) as well as Exile Edition's recent edition of *The Kindred of the Wild* (2001). Roberts's animal stories were also implicated in the "Nature Fakir" controversy that began in 1903, which sparked a series of public disagreements between nature writers and naturalists concerning the "realistic" portrayal of animals. Far from

being a local affair, this controversy eventually caught the attention of then President Theodore Roosevelt, whose comments were printed in the June 1907 edition of *Everybody's Magazine*. For an informative summary of the controversy, see T.D. MacLulich's "The Animal Story and the 'Nature Faker' Controversy" (1986).

11 See, for example, William Owen's "Vision and Revision in Roberts' Acadian Romances" (1984) and Janice Kulyk Keefer's "Fortunate Falls and Propitious Expulsions: Anglophone Fictions and the 'Acadian Question'"(1994). Of related interest is Elizabeth Waterston's "Roberts, Parker, and the Uses of History" (1984), which explores Roberts's fictional attempts in romances such as *The Forge in the Forest*, *A Sister to Evangeline* and *The Prisoner of Mademoiselle* to bridge cultural tensions between Anglophones and Francophones.

12 See also Ware's 1984 Ph.D. dissertation, "A Generic Approach to Canadian Romanticism."

13 In his Preface to *A Northern Romanticism*, for instance, Ware argues that with the publication of *Songs of the Common Day*, "[his]commitment to Romantic nature poetry and Maritime rural life...fused in two ambitious works: the twenty-six sonnets that form the titular sequence; and 'Ave! An Ode for the Centenary of Shelley's Birth'" (66). Similarly, in her chapter on Roberts in *The Picturesque and the Sublime* (1998), Susan Glickman argues that *Ave* "demonstrates a deliberate and confident appropriation of the Romantic ethos and aesthetic" (82). Cappon (1905) and Early (1981) have paid particular attention to Keats's influence in *Orion, and Other Poems*; and Pacey (1958) and Ware (1983) have discussed to some length Wordsworth's influence on Roberts, although Pacey argues that his presence is more pronounced in *Songs of the Common Day* than in "The Tantramar Revisited" (50). Regarding his prose fiction and animal stories, Morley (1977),

Keith (1969), and Thomas Dunlap (1987) have noted how Roberts weaves the Romantic tradition into his animal stories while Mallinson (1975) has suggested there are two readings of *The Heart of the Ancient Wood*: "the first, Wordsworthian...the other...Darwinian" (47).

14 "The World of Books: A New Life of Shelley," *Progress* 1:29 (Saint John, N.B.), 17 November 1888, 6.

15 See, for instance, "Notes on Some of the Younger American Poets" (1884), "Miss Thomas's Second Volume of Verse" (1888), and "A Note on Modernism" (1931).

16 Roberts mentions in a letter to his son Douglas that "here at Dove Cottage Wordsworth wrote his best poems" (July 19, 1933; *Letters* 453).

17 Little has been said of the connections between American writers and their influence on Roberts's fiction. The only substantial link I have encountered is an essay by Terry Whalen (1984), who argues that Roberts's animal stories are informed by Jack London and the school of American Naturalism.

18 Cappon mentions in his study that Roberts, like Whitman, displays a kind of "cosmic touch" in his best work (24); Mallinson, on the other hand, links Whitman to Roberts's later poetry in a less flattering way: "Most of Roberts' late attempts at free-verse are pale imitations of Whitman" (36). Also of note is Stevenson (1926), who suggests that Whitman's influence was felt by all the late nineteenth-century Canadian poets: his vision was "fundamental in the Canadian poetic outlook" (52).

19 In his 1927 interview with Lorne Pierce he mentions that he read Thoreau, although he declares he "had no idea of being a Thoreau myself. It was simply another part of life to me" (72).

20 With the exception of an epigraph from *Song of Myself* appearing in his poem "The Marvellous Work," Roberts's only other published acknowledgement of his literary debt to Whitman is found in a letter to Henry Scholey Saunders: "I am, of course, a Whitman lover, in the same sense exactly as I am a Shakespeare lover or a Keats lover or a Browning lover. I worship him simply as a master poet, & not (deeply though I am in sympathy with his philosophy of life) as a teacher" (May 22, 1926; *Letters* 340). Similarly, he notes in a letter to Lorne Pierce that he considers Longfellow "a very true poet, who is now unjustly disregarded. But I have no points of resemblance to him except that I have written much of Nova Scotia–which he for his part did not know" (January 25, 1938; *Letters* 534). He did, however, send both Whitman and Longfellow copies of *Orion, and Other Poems* when it was first published (see Pomeroy 1943, 38-39). He also discusses their verse briefly in his review, "Notes on Some of the Younger American Poets." *The Week*, 24 April 1884: 328-9.

21 See, for instance, "Notes on Some of the Younger American Poets"; "The World of Books: Some American Criticism." *Progress* 1.5 (2 June 1888): 6; ""The World of Books: Mr. Lowell's New Poems." *Progress* 1.17 (25 August 1888): 6.

22 Roberts's mother Emma, née Emma Bliss. Her great-grandfather, was Reverend Daniel Bliss, who was also great-grandfather to Emerson.

23 The *Rubaiyat* enjoyed a resurgence of interest in the nineteenth century, particularly among occult groups.

Notes to Chapter 2

1 A brief survey of the critical terms employed to describe Roberts's supernaturalism includes, but is not limited to, the following: mysticism, evolutionary mysticism, cosmic process, cosmic fire, cosmic consciousness, mystic idealism, cosmic vision, and ecstatic contemplation. Perhaps the most original and least helpful of these terms comes from Cogswell (1984b), who suggests there is a "pantheistic, existential transcendentalism" operating in Roberts's poetry (126).

2 Cappon would drop this reference to Fiona MacLeod (the pseudonym for William Sharp) in his 1925 study. As Alaya (1970) points out, most people did not know that Fiona Macleod was Sharp's alter ego until after his death. Oddly enough, Cappon gives no reason why he felt Roberts would draw on Macleod's Celtic mysticism. Perhaps he was referring to the popularity of the Celtic Twilight group Sharp was affiliated with, which included W.B. Yeats and "AE" (George William Russell). Given his use of Sharp's pseudonym, it is doubtful Cappon knew the extent of Sharp's occult interests or his relationship with Roberts. See my "The Celtic Twilight in Canada: William Sharp's early Occult Influence on Charles G.D. Roberts and Bliss Carman" (2004).

3 H. Pearson Gundy suggests that Carman's interest in the occult in his later years is in many ways a return rather than a beginning: in the introduction to Chapter 14 of *Letters of Bliss Carman*, Gundy notes that "Carman attributed his ability to stand up to the gruelling pace he had set himself, to new friendships and to his new (or renewed) interest in the 'mystic truth' of theosophy" (316).

4 Whitman is typically aligned with the teachings of Theosophy; his poetry appeared in many early occult journals such as *The Path*, *Lucifer*, and the Canadian theosophical

journal, *The Lamp*. This belief is still current, as evidenced by Walter Raubicheck's recent article in *The Quest* (1999), "Theosophical Whitman."

5 Also of note during this time is A.M. Stephens, "The Poetry of Charles G.D. Roberts" (1929). Stephens, a West-Coast poet and theosophist, was an acquaintance of Roberts in his later years; they met through Roberts's activities with the Vancouver Poetry Society. He refers frequently to Roberts's "cosmic" verse, declaring him an "interpreter and seer" (49), whose perspective "is that of ...the mystic who has had a glimpse of truth unveiled and who knows that he is the silent watcher who will remain when our little systems have passed away" (57). At the end of his essay Stephens shies away from his mystical analysis, concluding "except in a few moments of inspiration, [Roberts] remained a Wordsworthian" (63).

6 As early as 1884, Roberts demonstrates his familiarity with Bucke by mentioning his recent biography of Walt Whitman in a review for *The Dominion Annual Register*: "An important and in some respect unique addition to our biographical literature is Dr. R. Maurice Bucke's, *Study and Life of Walt Whitman*. This work is full of interest, being we believe the only source from which can be obtained accurate and full information concerning the Poet of Democracy. It abounds in apt and well considered criticism, though written from the standpoint of an ardent partizan, an enthusiast; and is still further enriched by a gathering together of the many eulogies which Whitman has called forth from the finest spirits of the age." ("Literature" in *The Dominion Annual Register and Review for the Seventeenth Year of the Canadian Union, 1883*, 1884).

7 Stevenson published several poems in *The Canadian Theosophist*. He was also a member of the Vancouver Poetry Society, whose President was the well-known theosophist, Dr. Ernest Fewster. Stevenson recounts in the history of the Vancouver Poetry Society (1946)

how his first meeting as a member was held in the "Julian Lodge of the Theosophical Society" (17).

8 See "A Poet's Dream World." *The Canadian Theosophist* 40.4 (1959):89-93, and "The Poetry of Robert Norwood." *The Canadian Theosophist* 39.1 (1958):4-9.

9 Pacey argues in his 1961 lecture on Roberts that his best animal stories and poems are the result of an ability to offer "accuracy of observation [and a] strong sense of design" (191).

10 After several failed attempts to find a professorship at more reputable schools in Upper Canada and the United States, he eventually resigned his post at King's College in the spring of 1895.

11 See C.E. Bechofer Roberts, *The Truth About Spiritualism* (1932), 11.

12 For a concise summary of the Foxes' experiences, see Gauld (1968), 3-13.

13 Ibid., 11-12.

14 Ibid., 29. Gauld is quick to point out that such numbers must be "greatly exaggerated," although he maintains that despite such over-estimations, "there can be no doubt about the astonishing success of early Spiritualism." In contrast, Bruce F. Campbell (1980) indicates that "the number of participants at the height of the spiritualist movement around 1855 has been estimated at between one and two million" (16).

15 McMullin mentions that the Moodies participated in séances with Kate Fox at the home of their eldest sister, Elizabeth Ousterhout, in Prince Edward County, Ontario (22). For an exploration of the Moodies' involvement in Spiritualism, see Carl Ballstadt, Michael Peterman, and Elizabeth Hopkins, " 'A Glorious Madness': Susanna Moodie and the Spiritualist Movement" (1982-83) and John Thurston's " 'The Casket of Truth': The Social Significance of Susanna Moodie's Spiritual Dilemmas" (1994).

16 The American Society for Psychical Research began three years later in 1885. Although the Canadian Society for Psychical Research was not established until 1908, similar activities were being performed during the 1880s and 1890s in Ontario, mostly by medical practitioners such as Dr. John Sumpter King, Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke, and Dr. Johne E. Hett. For a discussion of King and Hett, see McMullin's chapter on "Dr. John King and Psychic Research" in *Anatomy of a Séance.*

17 For an extensive exploration of the Toronto Theosophical Society as well as Albert Smythe, see Gillian McCann's recent Ph.D. dissertation, *A New Dharma for the Nation: The Toronto Theosophical Society and Albert Smythe* (University of Toronto), 2003.

18 Roberts's affection for his father is borne out by the fact that he dedicated his first collection of poems to him; he also includes a character in *The Heart That Knows* who is a thinly disguised portrait of his father.

19 Cogswell is not the first to notice evidence of Roberts' "spiritual crisis." In his 1949 address to the Canadian Humanities Research Council, Alfred G. Bailey (1972) concludes in part that "Carman and Roberts [had] experienced a crisis of the spirit after the political battle [of Confederation] had been lost, and something of the world along with it" (56).

20 As John Coldwell Adams (1992) points out in "Elsie Pomeroy and Sir Charles G.D. Roberts," Roberts claimed that her biography "was almost a 'camouflaged autobiography,' and stressed that he had worked 'tremendously hard over it.' He gave [Lorne] Pierce (and others) the impression that he was practically dictating his memoirs to Elsie" (98).

21 See, for example, Leon Surette's *The Birth of Modernism: Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, and the Occult* (1993); Graham Hough's *The Mystery Religion of W.B. Yeats* (1984); and George Mills Harper's *Yeats and the Occult* (1975).

22 In his October 21, 1893 review of *Songs of the Common Day*, for instance, Sharp proclaimed that "of the younger Canadian poets none has won so wide-spread and, it may be said at once, so deserved a repute as Professor Charles Roberts" (from *The Academy*; cited in Pomeroy 131).

23 The Witch of Dunmore is mentioned in the introduction to "The Son of Allan." Sharp writes: "Allan, son of Allan, Chief of the Colquhouns, had wooed and won Adair, daughter of Malcolm McDiarmid; but on the day the nuptials were to have taken place she was carried off in willing flight by MacDonald of the Isles. Allan pursued with twenty of Lord Malcolm's men, but arrived on the lonely Argyll sea-board only an hour too late...The ballad opens on the eve of this duel [between Allan and MacDonald]. Allan...waits the fixt hour at the hut of one known as the Witch of Dunmore. She foresees the fatal result of the duel to her clansman as well as to his foe, and strives to dissuade him from the combat—recalling her past experiences to him and mentioning signs and portents, hoping thus to convince him of the truth of her vision" (42).

24 In 1892, he wrote to Arthur Stedman expressing interest in writing an article on Sharp: "By the way, I believe Messrs[sic] Webster& Co are going to bring out a volume of Sharp's poems. If they care to send me a copy, I should take great pleasure in making it the subject of a short study, in my department of 'Modern Instances,' in the *Dominion Illustrated Monthly*" (June 5, 1892; *Letters* 150). He also wished to review Sharp's book *Vistas* for *The Chap-Book*: in a letter to Hannibal Ingalls Kimball, Roberts points out that Kimball sent him the wrong book to review and that his wish had been to review Sharp: "By the way, you did not send Sharp's *Vistas*, but Ibsen's *Little Eyolf* instead. I will review this latter; but please send along the Vistas, as I want to make a separate paper on Sharp" (January 16, 1896; *Letters* 218). But the review never appeared. And in a letter to Miss

Holly a few years later, he inquired about reviewing a collection of Fiona MacLeod's work for *The Bookman*: "Please ask Mr. Maurice if he wants a brief review, from me, of Fiona MacLeod's new poems just published by Mosher" (October 28, 1901; *Letters* 264).

25 "The Winged Destiny." Included in the November 12, 1904 issue of *The Academy and Literature* (see Synge 388-9).

26 G.R.S. Mead joined the Theosophical Society in 1884. He met Madame Blavatsky in 1887, and was her London secretary from 1889-1891. He was also sub-editor of the theosophical journal *Lucifer*, and later became editor of the *Theosophical Review* (see Surette 17).

27 In both instances, Sharp/MacLeod relies on key images, including a haunted land, a stone of significance, and the speaker's realization of death. In the second piece, for instance, the speaker finds himself "on a vast, illimitable plain" and thought he was "in the last empty glens of Death." He is soon aware of a figure beside him, who lifts a small smooth stone, which terrifies the speaker because "it was the last vestige of the life of the world." Finally, both the stone and the speaker undergo several changes until the speaker finds himself face to face with Christ, who "stooped and kissed me on the brow," thus indicating the speaker's final change from the world of the living to that of the dead.

28 As Miller (1985) points out: "In February 1890, an almost unprecedented thing for an unknown writer was to happen to him. An unsolicited offer to publish a book of his poems came to him—ostensibly through Sharp—from the London publisher, David Nutt" (64).

29 See Tracy Ware, "Letters to Carman, 1890-92, from Campbell, Lampman, and Scott," *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 27 (1990): 46-66.

30 For a full description of *The Chap-Book's* origins and contributors, see Wendy Clauson Schlereth's *The Chap-Book: A Journal of American Intellectual Life in the 1890s* (1980).

31 Carman wrote in a letter to Gertrude Burton that "since July I have only contributed to the *Chap Book*, not edited it" (November 6, 1894; Carman, *Letters* 80).

32 Sharp noted in his diary on October 1, 1890: "Reading these things of his [Maurice Maeterlinck] excited me to a high degree. It was the electric touch I needed to produce my *Dramatic Interludes* over which I have been brooding. I believe that much of the imaginative writing of the future will be in dramatic prose of a special kind" (*Memoir* 190). The "dramatic interludes" were published in Sharp's *Vistas* (1894).

33 Carman would travel to London later that summer and be introduced to W.B. Yeats by Arthur Symons.

34 Russell visited Kingscroft in the summer of 1893 with Hovey, giving lecture demonstrations on Delsarte as well as dressing up some of the Roberts family in Delsartean costume (Boone 1990, 167).

35 Several of the letters demonstrate Carman's familiarity with a range of esoteric topics and figures, including tenets of Theosophy, Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness*, and Toronto mystic Albert Durrant Watson. As Bentley points out, Watson collaborated with Lawrence on *Mediums and Mystics: a Study of Spiritual and Psychic Forces* (1923). See *Bliss Carman's Letters to Margaret Lawrence, 1927-1929* (1995).

36 Although *Sunset of Bon Echo* had a short life, its pages are filled with references to theosophy, including writings by such prominent Canadian theosophists as Dr. Albert Durrant Watson and Albert E. Smythe.

37 Roberts did not necessarily hold MacDonald's work in high esteem. In a letter to William Arthur Deacon, he notes: "Always in the final analysis, he is purely subjective. This is not a defect; but it is a limitation" (October 23, 1926; *Letters* 343).

38 Lawrence also took notes for an interview with Roberts that Lorne Pierce conducted in 1927. See Whalen (1987).

39 Roberts sent a draft of the article to A.M.Pound, who, according to Muriel Miller, formed part of the "Mystic Way" group that included Carman, Fewster, and others. See Miller (1985), 270.

40 Of equal significance is the fact that Roberts quotes Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality" to help demonstrate his point that humans have "forgotten existences...[and that] we sometimes have inklings of such previous existences" (27). Roberts may not have read the Romantics *qua* Romantics, but instead for their poetic exemplum of pagan religious principles.

41 Although the by-line for *The Canadian Bookman* article refers to "Albert A.E. Smythe," it is likely a typo, especially since a second contribution by Smythe appears later in the issue: on page 31 is a review of Archibald MacMechan's *Old Province Tales* by "A.E.S.S."

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Roberts, Charles G.D. *Orion, and Other Poems*. 1880. Ed. Ross S. Kilpatrick. London, Ontario: Canadian Poetry Press, 1999.

---. "Notes on Some of the Younger American Poets," *The Week* (24 April 1884): 328-9.

"Literature," in *The Dominion Annual Register and Review for the Seventeenth Year of the Canadian Union, 1883*, 1884. *Charles G.D. Roberts: Non-Fictional Prose*. Eds. D.M.R. Bentley and Laurel Boone. Canadian Poetry. 4 April 2006. http://www.uwo.ca/english/canadianpoetry.htm

---. *In Divers Tones*. Boston: D. Lothrop and Company, 1886.

---. "The Outlook for Literature: Acadia Field for Poetry, History and Romance," *Halifax Morning Herald* 12:1 (1 January 1886): 7.

---. "Echoes from Old Acadia." *Canadian Leaves: History, Art, Science, Literature, Commerce: A Series of new Papers Read before the Canadian Club of New York*. Ed. G.M. Fairchild, Jr. New York: Napoléon Thompson, 1887. 145-73.

---(ed.). *Poems of Wild Life*. London: Walter Scott, 1888.

---. "The Teaching of English." *King's College Record*, Nov. 1888.

---. "The World of Books: A Note on Miss Amelie Rives." *Progress* 1.4 (26 May 1888): 6.

---. "The World of Books: Some American Criticism." *Progress* 1.5 (2 June 1888): 6.

---. "The World of Books: Mr. Lowell's New Poems." *Progress* 1.17 (25 August 1888): 6.

---. "The World of Books: Miss Thomas's Second Volume of Verse." *Progress* 1.18 (1 September 1888): 2.

---. "The World of Books: A New Life of Shelley." *Progress* 1.29 (17 November 1888): 6.

---. *Autochthon*. Windsor, Nova Scotia: privately printed, 1889.

---. "The World of Books: William Sharp." *Progress* 1.37 (12 January 1889): 6.

---. "The World of Books: The Poems of Graham R. Tomson." *Progress* 2.88 (4 January 1890): 6.

--- (trans.). *The Canadians Of Old*, by Phillipe Aubert de Gaspé. New York: Appelton, 1890.

---. *The Canadian Guide-Book*. New York: Appleton, 1891.

---. "Wordsworth's Poetry." 1892. in *Charles G.D. Roberts: Selected Poetry and Critical Prose*. Ed. W.J. Keith. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974. 271-75.

---. *Songs of the Common Day and Ave!: An Ode for the Shelley Centenary*. Toronto: W.Briggs, 1893.

---. *The Raid from Beauséjour, and How the Carter Boys Lifted the Mortgage: Two Stories of Acadie*. New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1894.

---. *Reube Dare's Shad Boat: A Tale of the Tide Country*. New York: Hunter and Eaton, 1895.

---. *The Land of Evangeline and the Gateways Thither*. Kentville, NS: Dominion Atlantic Railway, 1895.

---. *The Book of the Native*. Boston: Lamson, Wolffe, 1896.

---. *The Forge in the Forest*. Toronto: William Briggs, 1896.

---. *Earth's Enigmas*. New York: Lamson, Wolffe, 1896.

---. *Around the Camp Fire*. New York: Crowell, 1896.

---. *A History of Canada*. Boston: Lamson, Wolffe, 1897.

---. "The Poetry of Nature." in *Charles G.D. Roberts: Selected Poetry and Critical Prose*. Ed. W.J. Keith. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974. 276-81.

---. *New York Nocturnes and Other Poems*. Boston: Lamson, Wolffe, 1898.

---. *A Sister to Evangeline*. Boston: Lamson, Wolffe, 1898.

---. "Introduction." *Walden: or Life in the Woods* by Henry David Thoreau. New York: Crowell, 1899.

---. "Foreword." *Northland Lyrics* by William Carmen Roberts, Theodore Roberts, and Elizabeth Roberts MacDonald. Boston: Small, Maynard, 1899.

---. *By the Marshes of Minas*. 1900. New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971.

---. *The Heart of the Ancient Wood*. New York: Silver, Burdett, 1900.

---. *Poems*. New York: Silver, Burdett, 1901.

---. "Introduction." *Alastor and Adonais*. Boston: Silver, Burdett, 1902.

---. *The Kindred of the Wild*. Toronto: Copp Clarke, 1902.

---. "The Animal Story." *The Kindred of the Wild*. Toronto: Copp Clarke, 1902. 15-29.

---. *Barbara Ladd*. Toronto: Copp Clark, 1902.

---. *Discoveries and Explorations in the Century*. London: Chambers, 1903.

---. *The Book of the Rose*. Boston: Page, 1903.

---. *Earth's Enigmas*. Boston: Page, 1903.

---. "New France and New England." *The Reader* 1.3 (January 1903): 286.

---. "Introduction." *Sappho: One Hundred Lyrics by Bliss Carman*. Boston: Page, 1904.

---. *The Prisoner of Mademoiselle*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1904.

---. *The Watchers of the Trails*. Boston: Page, 1904.

---. *Red Fox*. Boston: Page, 1905. New York: A.Wessels, 1907.

---. *The Heart that Knows*. Boston: Page, 1906.

---. *The Haunters of the Silences*. Boston: Page, 1907.

---. *The House in the Water*. Boston: Page, 1907.

---. *Red Oxen of Bonval*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1908.

---. *The Backwoodsmen*. London: Ward, Lock, 1909.

---. *Kings in Exile*. London: Ward, Lock, 1909.

---. *Neighbours Unknown*. London: Ward, Lock, 1910.

---. *More Kindred of the Wild*. London: Ward, Lock, 1911.

---. *Babes of the Wild*. London: Cassell, 1912.

---. *The Feet of the Furtive*. London: Ward, Lock, 1912.

---. *A Balkan Prince*. London: Everett, 1913.

---. *Hoof and Claw*. London: Ward, Lock, 1913.

---. *The Secret Trails*. London: Ward, Lock, 1916.

---. *The Ledge on Bald Face*. London: Ward, Lock, 1918.

---. *Canada in Flanders: The Story of the Canadian Expeditionary Force*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1918.

---. *New Poems*. London: Constable, 1919.

---. *In the Morning of Time*. London: Hutchinson, 1919.

---. *Some Animal Stories*. London: Dent, 1922.

---. *Wisdom of the Wilderness*. London: Dent, 1922.

---. *More Animal Stories*. London: Dent, 1922.

---. *They That Walk in the Wild*. London: Dent, 1924.

---. *The Sweet o' the Year and Other Poems*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1925.

---. "My Religion." 30 May 1926. *Manitoba Free Press*. Saturday (5 June 1926): 27.

---. *The Vagrant of Time*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1927.

---. *Be Quiet. Unsaid*. Two Unpublished Poems. Privately Printed, 1929.

---. "Introduction." *Verses of the Sea* by E.J. Pratt. Toronto: Macmillan, 1930.

---. "A Note on Modernism." *Open House*. ed. William Arthur Deacon and Wilfred Reeves. Ottawa: Graphic, 1931. 19-25.

---. *Eyes of the Wilderness*. London: Dent, 1933.

---. *The Iceberg and Other Poems*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1934.

---. "Introduction." *Complete Poems* by Francis Sherman. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1935.

---. *Further Animal Stories*. London: Dent, 1936.

---. *The Selected Poems of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1936.

---. *Twilight Over Shaugamauk and Three Other Poems*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1937.

---. *Canada Speaks of Britain*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1941.

---. "Introduction." *Flying Colours*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1942.

---. *Thirteen Bears*. Ed. Ethel H. Bennett. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1947.

---. *Forest Folk*. Ed. Ethel H. Bennett. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1949.

---. *Selected Poems of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts*. Ed. Desmond Pacey. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1955.

---. *The Last Barrier and Other Stories*. Ed. Alec Lucas. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1958.

---. *King of Beasts and Other Stories*. Ed. Joseph Gold. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1967.

---. *Selected Poetry and Critical Prose*. Ed. W.J. Keith. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974.

---. "Canadian Poetry in its Relation to The Poetry of England and America." Introduced by D.M.R. Bentley. *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 3 (1978): 76-86.

---. *The Collected Letters of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts*. Ed. Laurel Boone. Fredericton: Goose Lane, 1989.

---. *The Kindred of the Wild*. Ed. Sean Virgo. Toronto: Exile Editions, 2001.

Secondary Sources

Abrams, M.H. *Natural Supernaturalism*. New York: Norton, 1971.

Adams, Graham. "Some Insights from *The Collected Poems of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts*." *The Proceedings of the Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Sackville, N.B. and Halifax: Centre for Canadian Studies, Mount Allison University and Nimbus Publishing, 1984. 67-76.

Adams, John Coldwell. "Sir Charles G.D. Roberts' Later Poetry, 1926-1942." *Journal of Canadian Poetry* 1 (Autumn 1978): 43-58.

---. "Roberts, Lampman, and Edmund Collins." In *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Ed. Glenn Clever. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984. 5-14.

---. "A Preliminary Bibliography." In *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Ed. Glenn Clever. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984. 221-49.

---. *Sir Charles God Damn: The Life of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986.

---. "Sir Charles G.D. Roberts: Post Biography." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 21 (Fall/Winter 1987): 177-80.

---. "More Letters for the Roberts Collection." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 16.1 (1991): 54-62.

---. "Elsie Pomeroy and Sir Charles G.D. Roberts." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 31 (1992): 93-103.

Alaya, Flavia. *William Sharp--"Fiona MacLeod," 1855-1905*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970.

"The Animal Story." *Edinburgh Review* 114 (1911): 94-118.

Archer, William. "Charles G.D. Roberts." *Poets of the Younger Generation.* London: Lane, 1902.

Armour, Leslie, and Elizabeth Scott. *The Faces of Reason: An Essay on Philosophy and Culture in English Canada, 1850–1950.* Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1981.

At the Mermaid Inn: Wilfred Campbell, Archibald Lampman, Duncan Campbell Scott in The Globe, 1892-93. Introduction by Barrie Davies. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979.

Bailey, A.G. "Creative Moments in the Culture of the Maritime Provinces." *Culture and Nationality.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972. 44-57.

Ballstadt, Carl, Michael Peterman, and Elizabeth Hopkins. " 'A Glorious Madness': Susanna Moodie and the Spiritualist Movement." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 17 (1982-83): 88-101.

Barker, Elsa. *Letters from a Living Dead Man.* New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1914.

---. *War Letters from the Living Dead Man.* London: W. Rider & Son, 1915.

---. *Last Letters from the Living Dead Man.* New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1919.

Bellamy, Edward. *Looking Backwards.* Boston: Ticknor & Co., 1888.

Bennett, Bridget. "Crossing Over: Spiritualism and the Atlantic Divide." *Special Relationships: Anglo-American Affinities and Antagonisms, 1854-1936.* Eds. Janet Beer and Bridget Bennett. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002. 89-109.

Bentley, D.M.R. "Pan and the Confederation Poets." *Canadian Literature* 81 (Summer 1979): 59-71.

---. "Roberts' 'Tantramar Revisted' and Lanier's 'The Marshes of Glynn'." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 5 (Fall 1980): 138-51.

---. "Watchful Dreams and Sweet Unrest: An Essay on the Vision of Archibald Lampman." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 6 (1981): 188-210; 7 (1982): 5-26.

---. "Half Passion and Half Prayer: the New York Nocturnes." In *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Ed. Glenn Clever. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984. 55-75.

---. "The Poetics of Roberts' Tantramar Space." in *The Proceedings of the Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Sackville, N.B. and Halifax: Centre for Canadian Studies, Mount Allison University and Nimbus Publishing, 1984. 17-41.

---. "Alchemical Transmutation in Duncan Campbell Scott's 'At Gull Lake: August, 1810," and Some Contingent Speculations." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 10 (1985): 1-23.

---. "Roberts' Series of Sonnets in Songs of the Common Day." *Dalhousie Review* 69.3 (1989): 393-412.

---. "Carman and Mind Cure: Theory and Technique." *Bliss Carman: A Reappraisal*. Ed. Gerald Lynch. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1990. 85-110.

---. *The Gay]Grey Moose: Essays on the Ecologies and Mythologies of Canadian Poetry 1690-1990.* Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1992.

---. "Duncan Campbell Scott and Maurice Maeterlinck." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 21 (1996): 104-19.

---. "William Morris and the Poets of the Confederation." *Scarlet Hunters: Pre-Raphaelitism in Canada*. Ed. David Latham. Toronto: Archives of Canadian Art and Design, 1998. 31-44.

---. " 'The Thing is Found to Be Symbolic': Symboliste Elements in the Early Short Stories of Gilbert Parker, Charles G.D. Roberts, and Duncan Campbell Scott." *Dominant Impressions: Essays on the Canadian Short Story*. Eds. Gerald Lynch and Angela Arnold Robbeson. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1999. 27-51.

---. "Charles G. D. Roberts's Use of 'Indian Legend' in Four Poems of the Eighteen Eighties and 'Nineties." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 51 (Fall/Winter 2002): 18-38.

---. *The Confederation Group of Poets, 1880-1897*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.

Bhojwani, Maia. Pan's Green Flower, the Earth: Vegetative Myths in 19th Century Canadian Poetry. Ph.D. Dissertation (University of Toronto), 1979.

---. "A Northern Pantheism: Notes on the Confederation Poets and Contemporary Mythographers." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 9 (Fall/Winter 1981): 34-49.

---. " 'The Tides': Roberts' Sonnet About the Sonnet." *Journal of Canadian Poetry* 3 (Winter 1981): 14-21.

Bissell, Claude T. "Literary Taste in Central Canada During the Late Nineteenth Century." *Canadian Historical Review* 33.3 (September 1950): 237-251.

Boone, Laurel. "Evolution and Idealism: Wilfred Campbell's 'The Tragedy of Man' and Its Place in Canadian Intellectual History." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 8.1 (1983): 93-116.

---(ed.). *The Collected Letters of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts*. Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions, 1989.

--. "Bliss Carman's Pageants, Masques and Essays and the Genesis of Modern Dance." *Bliss Carman: A Reappraisal*. Ed. Gerald Lynch. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1990. 165-80.

Brown, E.K. *On Canadian Poetry*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1943.

Bruce, Charles. "Sir Charles Roberts, Man of Action." *Canadian Author and Bookman* 20.2 (June 1944): 7.

Bucke, Richard M. *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind.* 1901. Secaucus, New Jersey: Citadel Press, 1973.

Bucke, Richard M. and William D. Lighthall. "The Self-Transcendence of Reason, and Evolutionary Mysticism." *The Faces of Reason: An Essay on Philosophy and Culture in English Canada 1850-1950*. Eds. Leslie Armour and Elizabeth Trott. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1981. 361-87.

Burns, Robert Alan. "Wide-Eyed in the Void: the Failure of Vision in the Poetry of Charles G.D. Roberts." In *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Ed. Glenn Clever. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984. 97-106.

Burroughs, John. "Real and Sham Natural History." *Atlantic Monthly* 91 (1903): 298-309.

Campbell, Bruce F. *Ancient Wisdom Revived: A History of the Theosophical Movement.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.

Cappon, James. *Charles G.D. Roberts and the Influences of His Time*. 1905. Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1975.

---. *Charles G.D. Roberts*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1925.

---. *Bliss Carman and the Literary Currents and Influences of His Time*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1930.

Carlyle, Thomas. *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*. 1841. Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1993.

Carman, Bliss. "Mr. William Sharp's Poems." *The Chap-Book* 1 (September 15, 1894): 214-23.

---. "Mr. Charles G.D. Roberts," *The Chap-Book* 2 (1 January 1895): 163-71.

---. *Letters of Bliss Carman*. Ed. H. Pearson Gundy. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981.

---. *Bliss Carman's Letters to Margaret Lawrence*. Ed. D.M.R. Bentley; assisted by Margaret Maciejewski. Post-Confederation Poetry: Texts and Contexts. London, ON: Canadian Poetry Press, 1995.

Clarke, F. R. C. and Kilpatrick, R. S. "Charles G. D. Roberts and Healey Willan: A Collaboration." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 43 (Fall/Winter 1998): 126-31.

Clever, Glenn (ed.). *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984.

Cogswell, Fred. "Charles G.D. Roberts (1860-1943)." *Canadian Writers and Their Works*. 6 Vols. Volume 2: Poetry Series. Eds. Robert Lecker, Jack David, and Ellen Quigley. Toronto: ECW Press, 1983. 187-232.

---. *Charles G.D. Roberts and His Works*. Toronto: ECW Press, 1983.

---. "The Classical Poetry of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts." In *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Ed. Glenn Clever. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984. 27-37.

---. "Charles G.D. Roberts: The Critical Years." *The Proceedings of the Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Sackville, N.B. and Halifax: Centre for Canadian Studies, Mount Allison University and Nimbus Publishing, 1984. 117-129.

---. "Introduction." *The Collected Poems of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts*. Ed. Desmond Pacey. Wolfville, NS: The Wombat Press, 1985. xix-xxxii.

---. "Introduction." *The Collected Letters of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts*. Ed. Laurel Boone. Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions, 1989. 11-22.

Conway, Donald. "Sufficient Vision: A Reading of the Poetry and Prose Fiction of Charles G.D. Roberts." Ph.D. Dissertation (University of New Brunswick), 1982.

---. "Roberts and Modernism: the Achievement of 'The Squatter.'" In *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Ed. Glenn Clever. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984. 77-88.

---. "Actaeon or Odysseus: The Bibliographer's Roberts." *The Proceedings of the Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Sackville, N.B. and Halifax: Centre for Canadian Studies, Mount Allison University and Nimbus Publishing, 1984. 5-13.

Cook, Ramsay. *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985.

Daniells, Roy. "Lampman and Roberts." *Literary History of Canada*. Ed. Carl F. Klinck. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965. 389-405.

Davis, Ann. *The Logic of Ecstasy: Canadian Mystical Painting, 1920-1940*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1992.

Davis, Robert Bernard. *George William Russell*. London: Macmillan, 1937.

Deacon, William Arthur. *Dear Bill: The Correspondence of William Arthur Deacon*. Ed. John Lennox and Michele Lacombe. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.

Dean, Misao. "Political Science: Realism in Roberts's Animal Stories." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 21.1 (1996): 1-16.

DeKay, Charles A. "ManMat'ha." *Atlantic Monthly*. Vol.37, no.220 (February 1876): 143-51.

---. *The Vision of Nimrod*. New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1881.

---. *The Vision of Esther*. New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1882.

Doyle, James. "The American Critical Reaction to Roberts." *The Proceedings of the Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Sackville, N.B. and Halifax: Centre for Canadian Studies, Mount Allison University and Nimbus Publishing, 1984. 99-115.

---. "The Confederation Poets and American Publishers." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 17 (Fall/Winter 1985): 59-67.

---. *The Fin de Siècle Spirit: Walter Blackburn Harte and the American/Canadian Literary Milieu of the 1890s*. Toronto: ECW Press, 1995.

Duffee, Nicole (comp.). "Canadian Theosophist, The 1920-1998 (Outline Index)." *Union Index of Theosophical Periodicals*. Last Modified on November 27, 2000. The Campbell Theosophical Research Library. 15 April, 2003. <http://www.austheos.org.au/campbell.htm>

Dunlap, Thomas R. " 'The Old Kinship of Earth': Science, Man and Nature in the Animal Stories of Charles G.D. Roberts." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 22 (1987): 104-20.

DuVernet, Sylvia. *The Muskoka Assembly of the Canadian Chautauqua Institution: Points of View and Personalities*. Bracebridge: Muskoka Graphics, 1985.

Early, L.R. " 'An Old World Radiance': Roberts' Orion and Other Poems." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 8 (Spring/Summer 1981): 8-32.

---. "Roberts as Critic." In *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Ed. Glenn Clever. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984. 173-189.

Edgar, Pelham. "Sir Charles G.D. Roberts and His Times." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 13.1 (October 1943): 117-26.

---. "Sir Charles G.D. Roberts, 1860-1943." *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada* 38 (1944): 111-14.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "The Transcendentalist." 1842. *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Selected Essays*. Ed. Larzer Ziff. Toronto: Penguin, 1985. 239-58.

Erpen, Walter J. Meyer Zu, and Joy Lowe. "The Canadian Spiritualist Movement and Sources for its Study." *Archivaria* 30 (Summer 1990): 71-84.

Fewster, Ernest and Alice M. Winlow. *Poems of Armageddon*. Vancouver: Sun Job Print, 1914.

---. *My Garden Dreams*. Ottawa: Graphic Publishers, 1926.

Fiske, John. *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy*. London: Macmillan, 1874.

---. *Myths and Myth-Makers*. 1872. Boston: Houghton, 1881.

Frye, Northrop. "Conclusion." *Literary History of Canada*. Ed. Carl F.Klinck. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965. 821-49.

Gauld, Alan. *The Founders of Psychical Research*. New York: Schocken Books, 1968.

Gibbs, Robert. "Voice and Persona in Carman and Roberts." *The Marco Polo Papers: One*. Halifax: Atlantic Canada Institute, 1977. 56-67.

Glickman, Susan. "Roberts as Editor: Shelley's Adonais and Alastor." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 25 (Fall/Winter 1989): 56-65.

---. *The Picturesque and the Sublime: A Poetics of the Canadian Landscape*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998.

Gold, Joseph. "The Precious Speck of Life." *Canadian Literature* 26 (1965): 22-32.

---. "Introduction." *The Heart of the Ancient Wood* by Charles G.D. Roberts. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974. ix-xiv.

---. "The Ambivalent Beast." in *The Proceedings of the Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Sackville, N.B. and Halifax: Centre for Canadian Studies, Mount Allison University and Nimbus Publishing, 1984. 77-86.

Halls, W.D. *Maurice Maeterlinck: A Study of his Life and Thought*. London: Oxford University Press, 1960.

Hardinge, Emma. *Modern American Spiritualism: A Twenty Years' Record of the Communion between Earth and the World of Spirits*. 1870. New York: University Books, 1970.

Harper, George Mills (ed). *Yeats and the Occult*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1975.

Hodd, Thomas. "The Celtic Twilight in Canada: William Sharp's Early Occult Influence on Charles G.D. Roberts and Bliss Carman." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 54 (Spring/Summer 2004): 37-55.

Hornyansky, Michael. "Roberts for Children." In *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Ed. Glenn Clever. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984. 163-171.

Hough, Graham. *The Mystery Religion of W.B. Yeats*. Totowa: Barnes & Noble, 1984.

Hovey, Richard (trans.). "Modern Symbolism and Maurice Maeterlinck." *The Plays of Maurice Maeterlinck*. 1894. New York: Herbert S. Stone & Company, 1972. 3-11.

---. *To the End of the Trail*. Edited with Notes by Mrs. Richard Hovey. New York: Duffield & Co., 1908.

Hurst, Alexanda (ed.). *The war among the poets: issues of plagiarism and patronage among the Confederation poets*. London, Ontario: Canadian Poetry Press, 1994.

Jackel, David. "Roberts' 'Tantramar Revisited': Another View." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 5 (Fall/Winter 1979): 41-56.

---. "The National Voice in Roberts' Poetry." *The Proceedings of the Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Sackville, N.B. and Halifax: Centre for Canadian Studies, Mount Allison University and Nimbus Publishing, 1984. 43-51.

Jewinski, Ed. "Michel Foucault, the AuthorS Charles G.D. Roberts, and Some Post-Structuralist Implications for Canadian Criticism." In *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Ed. Glenn Clever. Ottawa: U of Ottawa Press, 1984. 191-206.

Jones, D.G. *Butterfly on Rock: A Study of the Themes and Images in Canadian Literature*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970.

Keefer, Janice Kulyk. *Under Eastern Eyes: A Critical Reading of Maritime Fiction.* Toronto: U of T Press, 1987.

---. "Fortunate Falls and Propitious Expulsions: Anglophone Fictions and the 'Acadian Question'." *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 10 (Fall 1994): 29-45.

Keith, W.J. *Charles G.D. Roberts*. Toronto: Copp Clark, 1969.

---. "A Choice of Worlds: God, Man and Nature in Charles G.D. Roberts." *Colony and Confederation: Early Canadian Poets and Their Background*. Ed. George Woodcock. Introduction by Roy Daniells. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1974. 87-102.

---(ed.). *Charles G.D. Roberts: Selected Poetry and Critical Prose*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974.

---. "Charles G.D. Roberts and the Poetic Tradition." *The Proceedings of the Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Sackville, N.B. and Halifax: Centre for Canadian Studies, Mount Allison University and Nimbus Publishing, 1984. 53-65.

Kilpatrick, Ross S. "A Missed Literary Source for Charles G. D. Roberts' 'Out of Pompeii' (1881)." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 40 (Spring/Summer 1997): 88-96.

---(ed.). *Orion, and Other Poems* by Charles G.D. Roberts. London: Canadian Poetry Press, 1999.

---. "Tribute to a Father, Priest, and Scholar: Charles G. D. Roberts' *The Heart that Knows*." *Classical and Modern Literature: A Quarterly* 22 (Spring 2002): 61-78.

King, Basil. *The Abolishing of Death*. Toronto: Goodchild, 1919.

---. *The Spreading Dawn: Stories of the Great Transition*. New York: Harper and brothers, 1927.

Kizuk, A.R. Rev. of David Pitt's *E.J. Pratt: The Master Years 1927-1964*. *University of Toronto Quarterly* 58.1 (Fall 1988): 163-5.

Klinck, Carl F. (ed). *Literary History of Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965.

Lacombe, Michèle. "Theosophy and the Canadian Idealist Tradition: A Preliminary Investigation." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 17.2 (1982): 100-18.

---. "Songs of the Open Road: Bon Echo, Urban Utopias, and the Cult of Nature." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 33.2 (1998): 152-67.

"Lamp, The 1894-1900 Toronto, Canada, Albert ES Smythe, DN Dunlop." *Union Index of Theosophical Periodicals*. Last Modified on December 13, 2000. The Campbell Theosophical Research Library. 1 May 2003. <http://www.austheos.org.au/campbell.htm>

Lampman, Archibald. "Two Canadian Poets: A Lecture." 1891. *Essays and Reviews*. Ed. D.M.R. Bentley. Post-Confederation Poetry: Texts and Contexts. London: Canadian Poetry Press, 1996. 91-114.

Lecker, Robert. "Watson and Pierce's *Our Canadian Literature* Anthology and the Representation of Nation." *Canadian Poetry* 38 (Spring/Summer 1996): 49-87.

Le Gallienne, Richard. *Book-Bills of Narcissus*. Derby: F. Murray, 1891.

---. *Prose-Fancies: Second Series*. Chicago: H.S. Stone, 1896.

---(trans.). *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. New York: Lane, 1897.

---. "Women and War." *Sunset of Bon Echo* 1.3 (Summer 1916): 30-31.

Leisner, August. "Charles G.D. Roberts: Mystical Poet." Ed. Laurel Boone. *Studies in Canadian Literature* 9.2 (1984): 267-93.

Lennox, John. "Roberts, Realism, and the Animal Story." *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 2 (1973): 121-23.

Link, Viktor. "On the Development of the Modern Animal Story." *Dalhousie Review* 56 (1976): 519-25.

Logan, J.D. and Donald G. French. *Highways of Canadian Literature*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1924.

Lowell, James Russell. *Among my Books*. 1870. New York: AMS Press, 1970.

Lucas, Alec. "Nature Writers and the Animal Story." *Canadian Literary History*. 2nd Ed. Vol.1. Ed. Carl F. Klinck. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977. 380-404.

Lynch, Gerald. "Animal Stories." *The Encyclopedia of Literature in Canada*. Ed. William H. New. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. 29-30.

MacDonald, Robert H. "The Revolt Against Instinct: The Animal Stories of Seton and Roberts." *Canadian Literature* 84 (Spring 1980): 18-29.

MacDonald, Wilson. *Song of the Prairie Land and Other Poems*. Intro. Albert E.S. Smythe. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1918.

MacLulich, T.D. "The Animal Story and the 'Nature Faker' Controversy." *Essays on Canadian Writing* 33 (Fall 1986): 112-24.

MacMechan, Archibald. *Headwaters of Canadian Literature*. 1924. 2nd Edition. Toronto: Canadiana House, 1968.

MacMillan, Carrie (ed.). *The Proceedings of the Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium.* Sackville, N.B. and Halifax: Centre for Canadian Studies, Mount Allison University and Nimbus Publishing, 1984.

McCann, Gillian Louise. *A new dharma for the nation: The Toronto Theosophical Society and Albert Smythe, 1891—1945.* Ph.D. Dissertation (University of Toronto), 2003.

McKillop, A.B. *A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era.* Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979.

McLeod, Les. "Canadian Post-Romanticism: the Context of Late Nineteenth-Century Canadian Poetry." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 14 (1984): 1-37.

---. "Matter into Matter: Evolutionary Idealism in Roberts' 'The Iceberg.'" In *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium.* Ed. Glenn Clever. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984. 89-95.

McMullen, Lorraine (ed.). *Twentieth Century Essays on Confederation Literature.* Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1976.

---. " 'The Poetry of Earth': A Note on Roberts' Sonnets." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 1 (Summer 1976): 247-51.

McMullin, Stan. "Walt Whitman's Influence in Canada." *Dalhousie Review* 49.3 (Autumn 1969): 361-68.

---. *Anatomy of a Séance: A History of Spirit Communication in Central Canada.* Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004.

Magee, William H. "The Animal Story: A Challenge in Technique." *Dalhousie Review* 44 (1964): 156-64.

Mallinson, Jean. "The Maiden Archetype in *The Heart of the Ancient Wood.*" *Essays on Canadian Writing* 3 (Fall 1975): 47-51.

---. "Kingdom of Absence." *Canadian Literature* 67 (1976): 31-38.

Marquis, T.G. "Prominent Canadians, 21: Professor Charles G.D. Roberts, M.A." *The Week* 5 (26 July 1888): 558-59.

---. "Roberts." *Canadian Magazine* 1 (September 1893): 572-75.

Martell, Carol E. "Sir Charles G.D. Roberts: The King's College Years." Thesis (Mount Allison University), 1978.

Mathews, Robin. "Charles G.D. Roberts and the Destruction of Canadian Imagination." *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 1 (1972): 47-56.

---. "The Roman de la terre and the Novel of the Land: Charles G.D. Roberts at Work in a Major Canadian Literary Genre." In *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Ed. Glenn Clever. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984. 143-161.

Mattison, Hiram. *Spirit rapping unveiled! An exposé of the origin, history, theology and philosphy of certain alleged communications from the spirit world, by means of "spirit rapping," "medium writing," "physical demonstrations," etc.* New York: Mason Brothers, 1853.

Miller, Muriel. *Bliss Carman: Quest & Revolt*. St. John's: Jesperson Press, 1985.

Moore, William D. 'To Hold Communion with Nature and the Spirit-World': New England's Spiritualist Camp Meetings, 1865-1910." *Exploring Everyday Landscapes*. Eds. Annmarie Adams and Sally McMurry. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1997. 230-48.

Morley, Patricia. "We and the Beasts are Kin." *World Literature Written in English* 16.2 (November 1977): 345-58.

Morrell, A.C. "Symbolism and Spatial Patterning in Four Short Stories by Charles G.D. Roberts." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 5.1 (Spring 1980): 138-51.

Moss, John. "Writing to the Reader: the Novels of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts." *The Proceedings of the Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Sackville, N.B. and Halifax: Centre for Canadian Studies, Mount Allison University and Nimbus Publishing, 1984. 87-98.

Mount, Nick. *When Canadian Literature Moved to New York*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005.

Murray, Tim. "Charles Roberts' Animal Stories." *Canadian Children's Literature* 1.2 (Summer 1975): 23-37.

---. "In the Ancient Wood." Rev. of *The Heart of the Ancient Wood*. *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 4.3 (1975): 158-60.

"A New Chapter in Literary History Especially Dedicated to the Curious." *The Chap-Book* 5 (June 1, 1896): 86-96.

Nicholson, D.H.S. and A.H.E. Lee (eds.). *The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse*. 1917. Oxford: Claredon Press, 1962.

Noonan, Gerald. "Phrases of Evolution in the Sonnets of Charles G. D. Roberts." *English Studies in Canada* 8.4 (December 1982): 452-464.

Owen, William. "Vision and Revision in Roberts' Acadian Romances." In *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Ed. Glenn Clever. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984. 117-125.

Ower, John. "Portraits of the Landscape as Poet: Canadian Nature as Aesthetic Symbol in Three Confederation Writers." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 6 (February 1971): 27-32.

Pacey, Desmond. "Sir Charles G.D. Roberts." *Ten Canadian Poets*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1958. 34-58.

---. "Sir Charles G.D. Roberts." 1961. *Essays in Canadian Criticism, 1938-1968*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1969. 172-98.

Pennie, Patricia A. *Phantom Gigantic Superb: Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke in the Tradition of Canadian Literature*. M.A. Thesis (Carleton University), 1998.

Pierce, Lorne. *Albert Durrant Watson*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1924.

---. *An Outline of Canadian Literature*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1927.

Poirier, Michael. "The Animal Story in Canadian Literature." *Queen's Quarterly* 34 (1927): 298-312, 398-419.

Polk, James. *Wilderness Writers*. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1972.

---. "Lives of the Hunted." *Canadian Literature* 53 (1972): 51-59.

Pomeroy, E.M. "The Philosophic Mystical Poetry of Charles G.D. Roberts." *The Educational Courier* 3.1 (October 1932): 5-7.

---. *Sir Charles G.D. Roberts: A Biography*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1943.

---. "Sir Charles G.D. Roberts: Final Chapter." *Canadian Author and Bookman* 20 (June 1944): 5-6.

---. *The Novels of Charles G.D. Roberts*. Privately printed pamphlet reprinted from the Maritime Advocate (April 1950).

---. "The Poetry of Robert Norwood." *The Canadian Theosophist* 39.1 (March-April 1958): 4-9.

---. "A Poet's Dream World." *The Canadian Theosophist* 40.4 (September-October 1959): 89-93.

Precosky, Don. "'The Need That Irks': Roberts' Sonnets in *Songs of the Common Day*." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 22 (Spring/Summer 1988): 22-31.

Prothero, Stephen. "From Spiritualism to Theosophy: 'Uplifting' a Democratic Tradition." *Religion and American Culture.* 3.2 (Summer 1993): 197-216.

Raubicheck, Walter. "Theosophical Whitman." *The Quest* (July-August 1999): 134-7.

Review of Charles G.D. Roberts's *Earth's Enigmas* and Duncan Campbell Scott's *In the Village of Viger*. *The Bookman* 3.4 (June 1896): 366.

Ricketts, Alan Stuart. *Idealism, theosophy and social passion in Canadian poetry, 1920-1940*. Ph.D. Dissertation (University of Alberta), 1979.

Roberts, C.E. Bechofer. *The Truth About Spiritualism*. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1932.

Roberts, Lloyd. *The Book of Roberts*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1923.

Rogers, A. Robert. "American Recognition of Bliss Carman and Sir Charles G.D. Roberts." *Humanities Association Bulletin* 22 (September 1971): 19-25.

Roper, Gordon. "New Forces: New Fiction, 1880-1920." *Literary History of Canada*. Ed. Carl F. Klinck. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965. 260-283.

Roper, Gordon, Rupert Schieder and S. Ross Beharriell. "The Kinds of Fiction, 1880-1920." *Literary History of Canada*. Ed. Carl F. Klinck. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965. 284-312.

Roper, Henry. "A 'High Anglican Pagan' and His Pupil: Charles G.D. Roberts, Robert Norwood and the Development of a Nova Scotian Literary Tradition, 1885-1932." *Dalhousie Review* 75.1 (1995): 51-73.

Ross, Malcolm (ed.). "Introduction." *Poets of the Confederation*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1960. ix-xiv.

---. "A Strange Aesthetic Ferment." *The Impossible Sum of Our Traditions: Reflections on Canadian Literature*. Introduced by David Staines. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986. 27-42.

Schlereth, Wendy Clauson. *The Chap-Book: A Journal of American Intellectual Life in the 1890s*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1980.

Seton, Ernest Thompson. *Wild Animals I Have Known*. 1898. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977.

Sharp, Elizabeth A. (ed). *Sea Music*. London: Walter Scott, 1887.

--- (ed). *William Sharp: A Memoir*. London: William Heinemann, 1910.

Sharp, William (ed). *Sonnets of This Century*. London: Walter Scott, 1887.

---. *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy*. London: Walter Scott, 1888.

--- (ed). *American Sonnets*. London: Walter Scott, 1889.

---. "A Northern Night." *The Chap-Book* 1 (June 15, 1894): 60-71.

---. "The Birth of a Soul." *The Chap-Book* 1 (September 15, 1894): 224-28.

---. "A Note on the Belgian Renascence." *The Chap-Book* 4 (December 15, 1895): 149-57.

---. *Vistas*. 2nd Ed. Chicago: Stone & Kimball, 1895.

---[Fiona MacLeod]. *The Winged Destiny: Studies in the Spiritual History of the Gaels*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1904.

---[Fiona MacLeod]. "A Dream." *The Theosophical Review* 35 (September 1904): 69.

Sherman, Francis. "Roberts' New Volume." *The Canadian Magazine* 7.2 (June 1896): 179-80.

Skala, Diana. "A Letter from Sir Charles G. D. Roberts (A Personal Memoir)." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 11.2 (Fall 1986): 270-82.

Sladen, Douglas B.W. "Spiritualism." *Melbourne Review* 8.32 (October 1883): 454-56.

--- (ed). *Australian Ballads and Rhymes*. London: Walter Scott, 1888.

---. *On the Cars and Off: Being the Journal of a Pilgrimage along the Queen's Highway to the East, From Halifax in Nova Scotia to Victoria in Vancouver's Island*. London: Ward, Lock and Bowden, 1895.

---. *The Shadow of a Great Light: the Romance of Tancred Guiscard*. London: Hutchinson & Co., 1917.

---. *My Long Life: Anecdotes and Adventures*. London: Hutchinson & Co., 1939.

Smythe, Albert Ernest Stafford. *Poems Grave and Gray*. Toronto: Imrie and Graham, 1891.

---. "Introduction." In Wilson MacDonald's *Song of the Prairie Land and Other Poems*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1918.

---. *The Garden of the Sun*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1923.

---. "Charles G.D. Roberts." *The Canadian Bookman* 7.2 (February 1925): 25.

---. Rev. of *Old Province Tales* by Archibald MacMechan. *The Canadian Bookman* 7.2 (February 1925): 31.

Sorfleet, John Robert. "Transcendentalist, Mystic, Evolutionary Idealist: Bliss Carman, 1886-1894." *Colony and Confederation: Early Canadian Poets and Their Background*. Ed. George Woodcock. Introduction by Roy Daniells. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1974. 189-210.

Spencer, Herbert. *First Principles*. 1864. New York: Appleton, 1896.

---. *The Data of Ethics*. New York: A.L.Burt, 1879.

Staines, David, David Bentley, Elizabeth Brewster, Glenn Clever, Fred Cogswell, Elizabeth Waterson. "The Achievement of Charles G.D. Roberts." In *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Ed. Glenn Clever. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984. 207-218.

Stephen, A.M. "The Poetry of Charles G.D. Roberts." *Queen's Quarterly* 36.1 (Winter 1929): 48-64.

Stephenson, Glennis. "The Bitter Sweet Rose: The Conception of Woman in Roberts' *The Book of the Rose*." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 14 (Spring/Summer 1984): 53-63.

Stevenson, Lionel. *Appraisals of Canadian Literature*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1926.

Stringer, Arthur. "Eminent Canadians in New York, 2: The Father of Canadian Poetry." *National Monthly of Canada* 4 (February 1904): 61-64.

Strong, William. "Charles G.D. Roberts' 'The Tantramar Revisited'." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 3 (Fall/Winter 1978): 26-37.

Summerfield, Henry. *That Myriad Minded Man: A Biography of George William Russell 'AE', 1867-1935*. Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1975.

Surette, Leon. *The Birth of Modernism: Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, and the Occult*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993.

Synge, J.M. "The Winged Destiny." *Collected Works*. 12 Vols. Vol II: Prose. Ed. Alan Price. London: Oxford University Press, 1966. 388-89.

Tebble, John. *A History of Book Publishing in the United States*. 3 Vols. Vol.2: The Expansion of an Industry 1865-1919. New York: R.R. Bowker, 1975.

Thomas, Clara. *Our Nature – Our Voices: A Guidebook to English-Canadian Literature*. Toronto: New Press, 1972.

Thomas, Clara and John Lennox. *William Arthur Deacon: A Canadian Literary Life*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982.

Thurston, John. "'The Casket of Truth': the Social Significance of Susanna Moodie's Spiritual Dilemmas." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 35 (Fall/Winter 1994): 31-62.

Tryphonopoulos, Demetres. *The Celestial Tradition: A Study of Ezra Pound's Cantos*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University, 1992.

University of Toronto Quarterly 70.4 (Fall 2001). Special Issue on the Visionary Tradition in Canadian Literature.

The Vancouver Poetry Society, 1916-1946. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1946.

"Vancouver Poetry Society." *The Canadian Bookman* 7.5 (May, 1925): 89.

The Victorian Supernatural. Edited by Nicola Bown, Carolyn Burdett, and Pamela Thurschwell. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Ware, Tracy. "Remembering It All Well: 'The Tantramar Revisited'." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 8.2 (1983): 221-37.

---. *A Generic Approach to Confederation Romanticism*. Ph.D. Dissertation (University of Western Ontario), 1984.

---. "Charles G.D. Roberts and the Elegiac Tradition." In *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Ed. Glenn Clever. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984. 39-53.

---. "Letters to Carman, 1890-92 from Campbell, Lampman, and Scott." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 27 (1990): 46-66.

--- (ed.). *A Northern Romanticism: Poets of the Confederation*. Ottawa: Tecumseh, 2000.

Waterston, Elizabeth. *Survey: A Short History of Canadian Literature*. Agincourt, Ontario: Methuen, 1973.

---. "Roberts, Parker, and the Uses of History." In *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Ed. Glenn Clever. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984. 107-116.

Watson, Albert Durrant. *The Twentieth Plane: A Psychic Revelation*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1918.

Watson, Albert Durrant, and Margaret Lawrence. *Mediums and Mystics: A Study in Spiritual Laws and Psychic Forces*. Toronto: Ryerson, 1923.

Watson, Albert Durrant, and Lorne Pierce (eds.). *Our Canadian Literature: Representative Prose and Verse*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1922.

Watson, Rosamund Marriott [Graham R Tomson]. *The Bird-Bride: A Volume of Ballads and Sonnets*. London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1889.

Whalen, Terry. "Wilfred Campbell: The Poetry of Mysticism." *Journal of Canadian Poetry* 3 (1980): 39-61.

---. "Charles G.D. Roberts." *ECW's Biographical Guide to Canadian Novelists*. Toronto: ECW Press, 1980.

---. "Roberts and the Tradition of American Naturalism." In *The Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Symposium*. Ed. Glenn Clever. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984. 127-142.

--- (ed.). "Lorne Pierce's 1927 Interview with Charles G. D. Roberts (as Reported by Margaret Lawrence)." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 21 (Fall/Winter 1987): 59-67.

---. *Charles G.D. Roberts and His Works*. Toronto: ECW Press, 1989.

--- (ed.). *Charles G.D. Roberts: Selected Animal Stories*. Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 2005.

Whitaker, Muriel. "Tales of the Wilderness: The Canadian Animal Story." *Canadian Children's Literature* 1.2 (Summer 1975): 38-46.

Whittington-Egan and Geoffrey Smerdon. *The Quest of the Golden Boy: The Life and Letters of Richard Le Gallienne*. London: Unicorn Press, 1960.

Woodcock, George (ed.). *Colony and Confederation: Early Canadian Poets and Their Background*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1974.

---. "Possessing the Land." *The Canadian Imagination*. Ed. David Staines. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977.

Woods Lehmann, Jutta Karin. *The influence of the Theosophical Movement on the revival of astrology in Great Britain and North America in the 20th century*. Ph.D. Dissertation (Concordia University), 1998.

Yeats, W.B. "St. Patrick and the Pedants." *The Chap-Book* 5 (June 1, 1896): 50-55.

---. *Letters to W.B. Yeats*. Volume 1. Eds. Richard J. Finneran, George Mills Harper, and William M. Murphy. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977.