

THE CHRONICLE NOVEL OF
COMPTON MACKENZIE 1937-1945
A STUDY OF THE FOUR WINDS OF LOVE

by John A. MacPherson

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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

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INTRODUCTION

In his celebrated two-part article on "The Younger Generation", which appeared in The Times Literary Supplement (London) in 1914,¹ Henry James selected nine writers as representative of certain new tendencies in the novel. He carefully distinguished the younger men - Hugh Walpole, Gilbert Cannan, Compton Mackenzie, and D.H. Lawrence from their older contemporaries, Joseph Conrad, Maurice Hewlett, John Galsworthy, H.G. Wells, and Arnold Bennett. James was of the opinion that "two or three" of the latter group were "sufficiently related to the still newer generation in a quasi-parental way."² Of especial interest is the inclusion of Compton Mackenzie in this selection of representative modern authors, because at the time of writing Mackenzie had published only two and a half novels: The Passionate Elopement (1911), Carnival (1912), and the first volume of Sinister Street (1913). James cited only the latter two in his review,³ but owing to their promise, he tentatively exempted Mackenzie from some of the strictures he had passed on the other writers.⁴ Giving over the final portion of his essay to an analysis of Mackenzie's two books, he accounted him perhaps the most complex and promising of the younger men; he was attracted by the brilliance of the "rounded episodes" in Sinister Street, but he also believed the best augury for

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the future of Mackenzie's developing sense of style was his care for expression.⁵

Time has not proven James's estimation of the significance of these novelists. Today only Conrad, Lawrence and Wells appear of major importance, and yet James was not alone in estimating the potential achievement of Compton Mackenzie so highly. Frank Swinnerton says of the period immediately before and after World War I:

It became a favourite pastime for critics to compile lists of young novelists destined for greatness. Gradually it was established that Mackenzie, Cannan, Walpole, Forster, Lawrence and Beresford were the coming boys.⁶

Richard Church, too, has observed that it was Mackenzie in particular who came to be regarded as the spokesman of his generation - that generation of Oxford and Cambridge youth who went to war in 1914.⁷

Following the war, during the 1920's, although Mackenzie continued to write popular novels, his critical reputation plummeted, and he was generally dismissed as a writer of entertaining light novels or tiresome serious ones who had signally failed to live up to his early promise. Despite this evaluation, however, he still commands a significant reading public, both for his fiction and non-fiction. Almost every year from 1911 to 1960 has seen the publication of one or more new books by him.⁸ It is true, on the other hand, that he has never enjoyed in North America the popular

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success he has had in the British Isles, although his second novel, Carnival, was well received and made his name known to the American reading public. All twenty-six of his novels published down through 1934 were issued in American editions, but since then, only selected books have appeared. Dodd, Mead, and Company brought out his long novel The Four Winds of Love in eight volumes between 1937 and 1946; however, only three of the twelve other novels he wrote from 1936 to 1960 have been published on this side of the ocean.⁹

Because of the general absence of critical interest in much of his work since the 1920's, most serious discussion of him has centered upon his early novels. Sinister Street (1913-14) remains his most memorable and influential work. Mackenzie has described its theme as "the youth of a man who presumably will be a priest."¹⁰ More importantly, it is the detailed yet poetic evocation of the childhood, school and college life, and final preparations for maturity of an upper-class Englishman of the pre-World War I generation. Mortimer R. Proctor in The English University Novel says:

It was . . . the first penetrating and comprehensive attempt in literature to evaluate the profoundly significant effects of university life upon the undergraduate. And more than that, it is in Sinister Street that the university novel at last emerged with its answer as to what a university should be.¹¹

Sinister Street has remained in print from its publication to the present time,¹² and has been read, at times

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surreptitiously, by several generations of English students. It has spawned countless imitations, of which perhaps the best-known American example is F. Scott Fitzgerald's This Side of Paradise.¹³ Indeed, so well known has it been that it is used for casual illustration in such specialist studies as Gilbert Norwood's Greek Comedy¹⁴ and C.S. Lewis's The Allegory of Love.¹⁵

But if *Sinister Street* is his best-known work, it is just as true that Mackenzie has had almost fifty years of varied writing experience since he wrote that book. By the end of 1961 he had published eighty-three volumes, not including his stories for children. He has written poetry, drama, novels, essays, literary and musical criticism, biographies, histories, memoirs, children's stories, short stories, and travel accounts. There is a similar variety among his forty-three novels: he has written historical romance, comedy of manners, the realistic novel, the sentimental romance, the life novel, the picaresque, the farce comedy, the religious novel, the humorous satire, the novel of adventure, the discussion novel and the Balzacian sequence novel.

Because of the great amount and variety of his work, Mackenzie does not readily fit into any convenient pigeon-hole for critical labeling. Eric Moon once observed: "The critics have never known quite how to classify Compton

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Mackenzie as a novelist."¹⁶ Sheila Kaye-Smith further sums up the critics' dilemma saying:

The modern critical tendency is all for comparison and classification, but what are you to do with a man who one year writes a trilogy founded entirely on religious experience, and¹⁷ the next produces a serial for a penny daily.

W.L. George, writing as long ago as 1918, complained of Mackenzie that "he is a man difficult of assessment because of his diversity."¹⁸ George knew only his first three books, and the problem has been compounded significantly during the past forty-odd years.

Mackenzie has always regarded himself as a man of letters, earning his livelihood by the pen. His versatility is that of the professional, but he is not above such ad hoc writing as The Vital Flame (1945) which is a detailed account of the history of the gas industry, or I Took a Journey (1951), which describes the work of the National Trust. In an article on Francis Brett Young, Mackenzie once wrote:

I confess that I like a book to be readable; it seems to me that a capacity for entertaining a certain number of people is the chief justification for writing novels. It is a low-browed¹⁹ ambition, but I shall persevere in it myself.

From Fielding to Dickens and Stevenson few novelists would take issue with such a statement, yet times do change, and Edmund Wilson recently commented that he believes Mackenzie does himself a disservice by always describing himself as an

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entertainer. Wilson is of the opinion that, at their best, even the later books express a coherent attitude which is noteworthy for the times:

A good many of his books, actually, since his early period, are meant to convey a "message". But I never remember to have seen a review of one of these later novels that gave any indication of what Mackenzie was driving at.²⁰

But on the other hand, Mackenzie has shown a propensity for the potboiler; he has always needed a considerable income to maintain the style of living he wants, and he has been successful in the financial aspect of his authorship. With his fertility of invention and his essentially non-idealistic view of his art, he can produce a newspaper serial like Coral (1925), which is almost completely void of any artistic interest.²¹

With the publication of his first completely comic novel, Poor Relations, in 1919, Mackenzie again posed a problem for the critics, for despite the comic elements in his first six volumes, they were accepted as "serious" novels. On the other hand, the farce of Poor Relations was too much altogether. How is one to regard such a writer? For some critics the problem now seemed to be solved. Douglas Goldring in Reputations pronounced judgment: "Mr. Mackenzie has found himself, not as a serious novelist, but as that very valuable thing, an entertainer."²² Katherine Mansfield welcomed Poor Relations for its genuine comic

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spirit, even though she shrewdly described its probable effect upon Mackenzie's reputation:

To be taken seriously in England, a novelist must be serious. Poets may be as gay as they please, storytellers . . . as light-hearted as they wish, but if a young man desires to be told that he is in front rank, the head of, leading, far outstepping, immeasurably in advance of, all other novelists of the day, he must be prepared to father fiends hid in clouds.²³

More recently, L.A.G. Strong has said, apropos of the later comic novels, that one thing particularly must be kept in mind "if any attempt is made to measure Compton Mackenzie's work and the ways in which it has developed." He says:

There . . . is the belief that being funny in print is on a lower level than being serious, and therefore that a writer who began seriously has in a sense gone off, become less worthy of critical attention, when he writes to amuse. This belief . . . has worked badly for Compton Mackenzie and prevented many readers from seeing how his technique has become surer as the years went by.²⁴

When reviewers had finally decided that Mackenzie was merely an entertainer, a farcical humorist and sentimental romantic, he began in 1937 a major work which was to be an assessment of the intellectual and cultural development of the early twentieth century. The Four Winds of Love was published in eight volumes over the period 1937-1945, and in roughly a million words it followed its hero, John Ogilvie, from 1900 to 1937, chronicling through his experience the changing patterns of life during those years. It was a fresh experiment in form for Mackenzie: a discussion or

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"intellective" novel, as it has been called.²⁵ Probably because of its great length and its piecemeal method of publication during the war years, it has never received the attention which it possibly deserves. Leo Robertson, among others, has called it "by far his greatest work," and has declared that "the full measure of his achievement as the author of it has yet to be taken."²⁶

With similar justification it could be said of Compton Mackenzie himself that the full measure of his versatile achievement in the world of letters has yet to be figured. To be sure he is still, happily, adding to the canon of his work, but for aesthetic as well as historical reasons his published work deserves more detailed critical examination than it has yet received. In 1922, when his reputation was already falling from its pre-war high, T.S. Eliot could write with gentle condescension that "Mr. Mackenzie is better worth reading than many more pretentious and sophisticated writers." He added that although Mackenzie is not admired by the intellectuals, he would, on the other hand, never have a popularity which would be based on a meretricious success like that of A.S.M. Hutchinson's If Winter Comes.²⁷ Recently Edmund Wilson similarly wrote of Mackenzie's reputation in the following terms:

The trouble is that he is both a professed Scot and something of a crypto-American, so he is always at an angle to English society. They

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don't understand him or don't want to understand him, and I suppose they resent such a comic portrait as that of Captain Waggett in the Scottish series - which is so lightly done but so deadly in intention - more than anything in Bernard Shaw. And nobody is able to bring himself to give Mackenzie credit for being the fine artist that at his best he is. Most of his recent novels have not been published in America, and I can't imagine why. In my youth he was extremely popular. But now people . . . laugh their heads off over P.G. Wodehouse and pretend to take him seriously as a writer and speak with respect of Somerset Maugham, a bad writer with none of Mackenzie's distinction, when they have often never heard of Mackenzie.²⁸

The only volume devoted exclusively to his work has been by Leo Robertson, Compton Mackenzie: An Appraisal of His Literary Work (London, 1954); and although a useful summary of the man and his work, it is superficial and uncritical in its approach. One critic has written of it:

There is little in this book which rises above the level of hero-worship, still less that might be termed constructive criticism. Yet the fact that such a book has been written at all shows that the world of letters cannot go on ignoring the existence of Sir Compton. The time is long overdue for an attempt at an evaluation of his true worth.²⁹

In the present study, I have limited myself to four novels of Compton Mackenzie, which comprise a more or less homogeneous group, using reappearing characters and depicting various levels of English life in the period immediately preceding and following World War I. They are the works written after Mackenzie had, more or less, acquired his reputation and which have attracted no informed critical

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comment. But then it is possible to see his qualities as a novelist - both his strengths and his weaknesses. It is possible, too, to evaluate his achievement, which should guarantee him a permanent place in English literary history. The four novels treated are: The East Wind of Love (1937), The South Wind of Love (1937), The West Wind of Love (1940), and The North Wind of Love (1944-45).

It shall be the purpose of this dissertation to discuss these novels, by examining the thought and narrative technique. Finally the findings will be used to evaluate the achievement of Sir Compton Mackenzie in the so-called "serious" novel.

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¹March 19, pp.133-34 and April 2, pp.157-58. The article was expanded and re-titled "The New Novel" for inclusion in James's Notes on Novelists (New York, 1914).

²James, Notes on Novelists, p.318.

³The Passionate Elopement would not have been relevant to the argument James was developing in his essay. However, James undoubtedly knew of the book although he may never have read it. Mackenzie tells us that his mother asked James to bring the manuscript of the novel to the attention of William Heinemann, the publisher, and James promised to do so. (Compton Mackenzie, Echoes, London, 1954, p.95).

⁴"If we do not include Mr. Compton Mackenzie to the same extent in our generalization [that Gilbert Cannan and Arnold Bennett have written works which belong to 'the order of constatations pure and simple'] it is really because we note a difference in him in favour of his care for application. Preoccupations seem at work in Sinister Street, and withal in Carnival, the brush of which we in other quarters scarce even suspect . . ." (James, p.337).

⁵James, p.361.

⁶The Georgian Literary Scene, rev. ed. (London, 1951), p.223. See also W.L. George, A Novelist on Novels, (London, 1918), p.65.

⁷British Authors, (London, 1948), p.91.

⁸During the period 1951-60 inclusive, for example, he published nineteen new volumes, as well as re-issues of earlier works.

⁹Largely because of the success in 1949 of the English film Whisky Galore, which was made from Mackenzie's novel of the same name (1947), Houghton Mifflin published an American edition in 1950. (In America both the film and the book were titled Tight Little Island.) In 1951 Houghton Mifflin brought out another of the Scottish novels, The

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Monarch of the Glen, originally published in 1941. In 1957 Putnam issued Thin Ice (1956).

¹⁰"The Epilogical Letter to John Nicolas Mavrogordato" appended to the second volume of Sinister Street, (New York, 1914), p.656.

¹¹(Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, 1957), pp.197-98.

¹²Mackenzie remarks in the Foreword of the 1949 edition published by Macdonald that "until Sinister Street . . . was allowed to go out of print just before the Second World War, it was still selling at its original price at least 1,000 copies a year." (pp.x-xi). Since the war, it has been published by Macdonald in 1949 and by Penguin Books in 1960.

¹³See Arthur Mizener, The Far Side of Paradise, (Boston, 1951), pp. 59, 97-98, 167. Also Edmund Wilson, The Shores of Light, New York, 1952), p.28.

¹⁴Norwood says of The Clouds of Aristophanes: "Much of that intoxicatingly beautiful novel, Mr. Compton Mackenzie's Sinister Street, might be called a vast commentary on the whole speech of the $\Delta\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \Lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$." (Boston, 1932), p.220.

¹⁵Lewis speaks of a change he finds taking place in the form of the novel, ". . . which he saw becoming so biographical in works like Sinister Street . . . into the imaginative biography." (London, 1946), p.233.

¹⁶"Success from the Very Start," Books and Bookmen, II, (London, September 1957), p.5.

¹⁷"Compton Mackenzie and His Work", The Bookman, LXII (New York, December 1925), p.391.

¹⁸A Novelist on Novels, p.79.

¹⁹"Francis Brett Young," The Bookman, LI, (London, August 1920), p.638.

²⁰"An Interview with Edmund Wilson," The New Yorker, XXXVIII, (New York, June 2, 1962), p.121.

²¹It began as a serial in The Daily Mirror (London), in November, 1924, and was published in book form in 1925.

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²²(New York, 1920), p.51.

²³Novels and Novelists, (New York, 1930), p.92. The review appeared originally in The Athenaeum, (London), on October 17, 1919, p.1035.

²⁴"Books and Writers", The Spectator, CLXXXVI, (London, September 14, 1951), p.336.

²⁵Leo Robertson, Compton Mackenzie: An Appraisal of His Literary Work, (London, 1954), p.223.

²⁶Robertson, p.223.

²⁷"London Letter," The Dial, LXXIII, (New York, September 1922), p.330.

²⁸"An Interview with Edmund Wilson," pp.121-22.

²⁹Francis Fytton, "Compton Mackenzie: Romance versus Realism," The Catholic World, CLXXXII, (New York, February 1956), p.358.

CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

Although this dissertation is a literary appreciation of The Four Winds of Love of Edward Montague Compton Mackenzie, a short biographical introduction should not be out of place, for persons interested in an author's writings are seldom incurious about the author himself. Inasmuch as he is the author of eighty-eight published volumes, he has attracted little notice since 1920 and almost none whatever in North America. The scope of this study, however, does not permit of recording any more than the main external facts relating to Compton Mackenzie's career. Indeed, to attempt much more could be highly dangerous and inaccurate. Mackenzie, himself, has undertaken to write his autobiography in ten volumes, five of which are already in print.

Compton Mackenzie was born in West Hartlepool at 23 Adelaide Street, on Wednesday the 17th January 1883.

His father was Edward Compton, the actor-manager and founder of the Compton Comedy Company, and his mother, no less distinguished in theatrical circles, was Virginia Bateman, of one of the pioneer families of Maryland. It may be noted that the blood of the Old and of the New World flowed in his veins from the start, and one is tempted to think that this in some measure, as in the case of Winston

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Churchill, accounts for the amazing vitality which is one of his most remarkable characteristics.

The most outstanding thing about his childhood, spent in Kensington, was his precocity. He began Latin at four, and Greek when he was nine, but before toddling from the nursery into the classic field, he was already so much at home in his own language that, incredible as it may seem, he could read at the age of one year and ten months. He evidently set his parents a high standard for their future progeny, for when his brother was still unable to read on his fourth birthday, his mother consulted a physician to find if he was "retarded". Compton Mackenzie was certainly a child prodigy, but fortunately, unlike the many unusually gifted children whose brilliance is only a passing phase not extending even to their adolescent years, for him it was but the prelude to the full release of his latent powers.

From Colet Court, which was his preparatory school, he passed on to St. Paul's shortly after his eleventh year, and later he entered Magdalen College, Oxford. Of the sort of time he had at each of these places one may read in Sinister Street, though perhaps it may be as well to caution here that Michael Fane should not be identified with the author, even if, as is quite likely, he is to some extent a limited projection of the author's own self. He joined the Inner Temple on leaving Oxford, but was not sufficiently

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interested in the Law to get called to the Bar. There is little doubt he would have distinguished himself, not only as a persuasive advocate but as a specialist in Ecclesiastical and Canon Law. Of his powers of advocacy had he chosen the Bar for a career no one who has heard him speak could be doubtful; and more than sufficient evidence of his aptitude for the special branch of law already mentioned is provided by his religious trilogy, The Altar Steps, The Parson's Progress, and The Heavenly Ladder, and by certain chapters in The Windsor Tapestry, to which reference will be made later.

Confident of himself and endowed with sufficient tenacity of purpose, he did not swerve from his determination to become a writer though he once had tempting enough offers to go on the stage. Knowing his own mind, too, he married in 1905 at the age of twenty-two. His first wife, Faith Stone, daughter of a master at Eton College, and sister of Christopher Stone, was herself a writer of some notable books. An interesting source of information about Mackenzie can be found in her books of biographical memoirs - As Much As I Dare, More Than I Should, and Always Afternoon.¹

Though some time was spent finding a publisher for his first book, The Passionate Elopement, success came to Compton Mackenzie immediately on its publication. With his second novel, Carnival, his reputation was firmly established.

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in Britain and in the United States of America, and Sinister Street, his third book, plainly set him in the forefront as the writer of a classic of its time. It was also his last work to attract serious critical interest.

In the First World War he went to Gallipoli as a lieutenant in the Royal Marines, serving afterwards with the Royal Naval Division in the Dardanelles Expedition. Being invalided out of the fighting forces at the end of 1915, he became Military Control Officer at Athens, and later, Director of the Aegean Intelligence Service at Syra. The literary man is often classed with those devoted to purely academic pursuits as being unsuited for work in any practical sphere, yet in Compton Mackenzie we have a professional man of letters who did work of lasting merit as an administrator, so much so indeed that he is still remembered with gratitude and affection in Greece. On the authority of Sir Ian Hamilton and of Admiral Sells, who appeared as witnesses at his trial under the Official Secrets Act in 1932, one observes that he was a highly efficient officer with a gift for inspiring his subordinates to work, and whose own work was of significance. He reverted to civilian life with a brilliant record, his war services having been recognized with the award of the O.B.E., the 1915 Star, the Orders of the Legion of Honour of which he became a Chevalier, of the Redeemer of Greece, and of the White Eagle of Serbia. This

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must have been gratifying to a young man who, marking time for a year before entering Oxford, as he was too young to proceed there straight from school, was keen enough on soldiering to become a subaltern in a Volunteer Regiment (1st V.B. Bedfordshire Regiment), the youngest in the Army List.

Though he had finished with the war, the war had not finished with him, for as mentioned above, he was prosecuted in 1932 under the Official Secrets Act for disclosures which were considered to be too frank in his Greek Memories. The trial took place at the Old Bailey with all the outward trappings and solemnity appertaining to a trial in a High Court of Judicature, and though the accused was found guilty and fined one hundred pounds, the conviction was obviously only for a technical offence, and with the weighty evidence given in his favour he emerged from the case with an enhanced reputation for his war services. Compton Mackenzie, as may have been expected, enjoyed this experience; but it was a dearly bought pleasure, for it cost him something in the neighbourhood of five thousand pounds in legal fees and other charges, entailing no small sacrifice on his part, for he was compelled to dispose of a part of his library of books and manuscripts at Sotheby's to meet the expenses.² What this means, only those who have had to sell slowly accumulated and cherished can appreciate. It is difficult to

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understand why Compton Mackenzie was not advised to stand his trial without Counsel. After all, it was clear from the outset that it was only a technical offence, for his loyalty was never in question and his integrity of character was well known. In fact when the question of bail arose in the Committal Court, he was granted it immediately, on his own recognisances, Sir George Truscott, who presided on the Bench, remarking: "I have complete confidence in Mr. Mackenzie." In any event the conviction could hardly have resulted in a heavier penalty than that which was actually imposed.

Not long after the trial was over Compton Mackenzie published Water On The Brain, a satire in which we are given an amusing account of the muddle-headedness of the Military Intelligence Service. The success of the book, whatever the extent to which it enabled him to recoup the expenses of his trial, must have relieved him of any hurt to his feeling that remained from his encounter with the Law, though even more satisfactory it must be for him to know that in Greece his memory remains green and that, like Byron, he has grown into something of a legendary figure there.

Prior to the trial an important event took place in his life - it may be the most important, which even the briefest biographical notice could not afford to omit - and that is his conversion to Roman Catholicism, which took place

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in Sorrento in 1914, while he was engaged in writing Sinister Street. There was apparently no shock of experience resulting in sudden conversion. The change is understandable, for Compton Mackenzie, if not brought up in, seems at least to have been thoroughly familiar with, the traditions of High Church Anglicanism, from which it needs but a step to cross over to Rome. Though the transition in his case was a natural and logical one, it was not taken without a great deal of thought, ably tutored by the noted Jesuit C.C. Martindale. In her book More Than I Should, Lady Mackenzie states that religion has always been a keystone of his life.³ Even those who have no intimate acquaintance with him must realize that no one could have written the three books forming his religious trilogy without deep and sustained preoccupation at some period of his life with questions of religious import, not merely intellectually considered, but felt in the very soul of his being as a vital part of his personal experience.

It is common knowledge that Compton Mackenzie has a predilection for islands. He has been overlord of, and made his home in, islands in the Channel group and in the Hebrides.⁴

Paradox surely is the most appropriate middle name for this romantic who is a realist, this extravert to whom the introvert's point of view is equally clear, this young old man or old young man, whichever you prefer, this man who understands

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women perhaps better than they do themselves, this Scotsman and a leader of Scottish nationalism to boot, who is also a complete Englishman and yet has so much of the mercurial Gallic temperament that he is as much at home on the Continent as in Britain, this island-addict who is the least insular of persons, this irrepressible humorist for whom the deepest pathos is never far from the springs of laughter, and who though facing life with a brave affirmative attitude is ever conscious of the fact that this world is a place where sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt. Above all he is a paradox because with his completely integrated character it is paradoxical that he should be a paradox at all.⁵

To return to the island bias: if Compton Mackenzie were of a metaphysical cast of mind, obsessed with a passion to fit the ultimate reality into a neatly rounded pattern or system, it could be said that islands were symbolical of a self-contained whole, of a cosmos with no loose ends and no antinomies to tease the mind. But metaphysical leanings in him are not that easily discernable. One must come nearer to earth to find an explanation. The appeal of the islands is to the poet in him; in particular it is the isles off the western coast that have captivated him:

"I have spent many hours for many years," he once wrote, "trying to discover a formula to express the magic of the west, which casts a spell upon so many different people. In the end I have decided that it is incommunicable. . . . Great Blasket or Arran, Barra or Lewis, or any of the Western Isles of Scotland and Ireland, those who have lived in them or visited them, under their spell look with the same vision out to where the illimitable Atlantic shines and rolls: but nobody yet who wrote or painted ever succeeded in communicating that vision except to those who had already beheld it."⁶

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The fascination which islands hold for him, like his well-known fondness for cats, is a predilection which calls for mention merely by the way as a point of interest. He could survive the lack of feline company, and he can, and does, live contentedly enough in a habitation not within a short radius of a circumscribing fringe of ocean beach. But the briefest personal sketch of him cannot, without missing the whole man, ignore two of his passions which spring from so deep a source in him as to form part of his very composition - his love of gardens and his love of music. Deprived of either of these his spirit would probably suffer in the same way as his body would if deprived of the air it breathed. Precocious in everything, he started gardening before he was three, with a window-box and half a dozen penny packets of seeds. By twelve he had evidently become rather more than adept for at this age he was allowed to indulge in his hobby over a whole acre in Hampshire, and, anticipating some of the discoveries of Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose, had found that flowers had definite sympathies and antipathies. Leonardo da Vinci equates love with knowledge. It is now perhaps a commonplace of psychology that knowledge of a thing engenders love of it, and love of a thing gives insight into it, knowledge of it. Compton Mackenzie's knowledge of flowers is as great as his love of them, and Frank Swinnerton did not exaggerate when he wrote:

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"He knows the whole world of the flower garden, botanically and horticulturally."⁷ But as to this, those familiar with his works need no other evidence.

Regarding his love of music, he was one of the first to realise that the gramophone was no toy. He was quick to grasp its importance, both as the best and widest medium for the dissemination of musical experience and as a means of preserving the composers' own readings and tempos and the interpretations of the best musicians. In 1923 he founded The Gramophone, a magazine devoted to serious recorded music, which he still edits. His library of gramophone records is probably one of the most comprehensive in the world; and as, apart from listening to phonograph music for the purpose of his reviews in the magazine, he has from the beginning of his literary career made it a habit to have a selection on the record player while engaged in writing, one can imagine what a major part music has played in his life.

Something of the man himself may be seen too in the causes he has championed at various times, and championed always with a passion which, proceeding from his deepest convictions, did not burn itself out for lack of fuel or die down when damped by opposition. The cause of Greek freedom had always been near his heart, but naturally enough it was the cause of Scottish nationalism that touched him most deeply. It was as much his leadership of the Scottish

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Nationalist movement as his distinction as a man of letters which resulted in his election to the Lord Rectorship of Glasgow University in 1921. The LL.D. conferred on him by St. Francis Xavier University in 1961 during the 175th anniversary of the arrival of the first Scottish settlers in Canada, of course, accorded well with this distinguished academic position, but it is difficult to think or speak of this least academic and pedantic of men as Dr. Mackenzie. To return to his Scottish Nationalism, for all that he has lived away from Scotland for long stretches of his life, not altogether an un-Scottish trait, it remains his own country for which he has always had a homing instinct, and to which now he has finally returned. He regards it as the most democratic country in Europe, and for him it has something of the quality of ancient Greece - a quality which he senses the moment he crosses the border into Scotland, and one which is possibly accounted for by the fact that the English have a feudal tradition, whereas Scotland has the traditions of the clans, and is as it were a family, though at times a quarrelsome one. Eric Linklater's picturesque reference to Compton Mackenzie in relation to Scotland is a fine tribute coming from a fellow Scot. "Few authors," he writes in his The Man on My Back,

can spare for their own lives much of the colour,
the adventuring, and vivacity of their work.
There are exceptions, however: Byron the most

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redoubtable, Blunt in his Arab saddle, d'Annunzio well known, Graham the hidalgo, and like a plume in Scotland's dusty bonnet, Compton Mackenzie.⁸

As in the case of what are known as gifted families, if we follow Compton Mackenzie's family tree we shall find that a surprisingly large number of his ancestors and collateral connections had attained distinction in a variety of fields. If one were to consider heredity as a factor accounting in some measure for his talents it is not necessary to go much beyond his immediate relatives, but it is of interest to note that actually his ancestry can be traced back through as many generations on both the paternal and maternal sides as that of most of the old Scottish families. His grandfather, Charles Mackenzie, the uncle of Sir Morell Mackenzie, was descended from the Reverend Bernard Mackenzie, the last Episcopalian minister of Cromarty and last Bishop of Ross. Royal blood flowed in the veins of this ecclesiastic, for his grandfather, Daniel Mackenzie, who became a Colonel in the Dutch Army, settled in Holland and married a kinswoman of William of Orange. It is on record that the Reverend Bernard, after losing his living, wrote to William as a relative and received a pension from him.

On the paternal side Compton Mackenzie is as Scottish as a long line of Scottish forebears can make him, the Mackenzies being descended from John Mackenzie of Kintail, an authority on Calvinism, who married into the talented Symonds

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family, of which the most prominent member in the literary world in recent times was John Addington Symonds, the critic and historian. One of John Mackenzie's grandsons, and therefore an uncle of Compton Mackenzie, was Sir Morell Mackenzie, a distinguished throat specialist, himself gifted with some talent for writing.

Compton Mackenzie's father, Edward Compton, has already been mentioned. He was the son of Charles Mackenzie, also a stage celebrity, who for the purpose of his theatrical career, of which his Puritan relatives disapproved, his father being a Calvinistic schoolmaster, assumed the name of Henry Compton. Compton Mackenzie's father retained the adopted surname, but his son, Compton Mackenzie, reverted to the original family name. This should dispose of the suggestion which has cropped up periodically in literary gossip that Compton Mackenzie is really an Englishman of the name of Compton who assumed the Scottish name of Mackenzie.

On his mother's side Compton Mackenzie is no less remarkable, and equally steeped in theatrical traditions, for his maternal grandparents, Hezekiah and Sidney Frances Bateman, were themselves closely connected with the stage, and on coming from the United States to London in 1870, took over the Lyceum Theatre, Henry Irving being one of the eminent actors who appeared before audiences there when it was under their management. By marriage the Batemans were

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connected with some distinguished names in the annals of the theatre, the very aristocracy of the stage - the Siddons, the Fairbrothers, the Kembles and the Murrays. Their three daughters, whose brilliance displayed itself early, were known as the Bateman children - Ellen, Kate and Virginia, all of them attaining distinction on the stage, the last-named being the mother of two sons and three daughters, all connected with the stage, the best known besides Compton Mackenzie being his sister, Fay Compton. Compton Mackenzie declined to adopt the stage as a career, but nevertheless he associated himself with the theatrical traditions of his family, and contributed his share by giving to the world some of the best novels of theatrical life in English literature.

Often the picture projected out of an author's work bears no resemblance to the actual man, hence the disappointment so frequently experienced by an author's admirers on encountering him in the flesh. In such cases it would seem that the author has succeeded in presenting himself to the public as he would like to be rather than as he is, but more often it is the reader's interpretation that is at fault.

In the case of Compton Mackenzie, between the imaginative evocation and the actual man there is no difference, and the reason for this lies in an outstanding characteristic - his complete integrity. There are many

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facets to his character, but to speak of facets in reference to Compton Mackenzie or any really versatile man is misleading. Versatility implies a blend of many elements, not a mere juxtaposition of them like pills in a box or pebbles in a heap.

Coldly and severely logical as he can be when the occasion calls for it, as in his spirited defence of the Duke of Windsor in The Windsor Tapestry, or in many of his judgments and appraisals in his historical and biographical writings, there is an exuberance about him, a certain romantic "dash" which makes him appear as an Elizabethan born out of his time. This is not to suggest that he is in any sense a "throw-back", partly living a life of fantasy in a previous epoch, for actually he is a modern. To the question what century or period he considers his spiritual home, and why, he gave a complete and characteristic reply: "The present, because I can add to the present so much of the past." It seems to me that in these words he touched on the secret of the richness and fullness of his life.

"Whom the gods love die early" is a popular saying with some foundation in fact, like all popular sayings; it is perhaps equally true that whom the gods love best remain always young. One of the many things about Compton Mackenzie, something which impresses you on first meeting him and which unlike many first impressions does not give place to a more

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modified view, is his youthfulness - which in some indefinable way seems to shine through an exterior not altogether unconformable with his real age, as though Time were loth to overlay the image of and leave behind the brilliant Edwardian youth who was representative of its best. One can make guesses at his age now, but more through what is known of his career than through his actual appearance. He has remained youthful because of his understanding of the young and because he shares with them that forward-looking attitude towards life, the loss of which marks the turn of the tide to its ebb. Similarly, Leo Robertson interestingly notes:

Not long ago he was approached by an old friend who asked him whether he could understand the young people of today and who complained that he simply didn't begin to grasp what they were talking about. Referring to this in a broadcast talk, Compton Mackenzie said: "I told him I had no difficulty at all, because I found that the opinions of my youth, which once upon a time were regarded by contemporaries and seniors alike as extravagant, affected and perverse, were the commonsense of modern youth. 'In fact,' I said, 'from having been a minority man all my life, I am fast becoming a majority man.' He snorted with contempt, and then added quite illogically in view of what I had just told him, 'You always had to be different from everybody else.'"9

Compton Mackenzie still retains this optimistic attitude towards life. He looks into the future with the eyes of the post-visionaries of the Renaissance who see a brave new world ready with its welcome to adventurous man. It is not his way to encourage the prejudice of the present

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in favour of the past. He moves with the times because he realises he is part of the movement itself and because he believes in the march of Time, believes in it all the more because of his sound historical sense and his regard for the past. Looking thus ahead, he expressed the view that even if the arts as we understand them may not survive the further revolutionary mechanical developments to be expected, it did not mean that the creative impulse of humanity would necessarily expire.

Art as we understand it may seem a waste of energy in that world ahead whose tempo will be ten times that of today, but imagine what compensations posterity may enjoy. I am not trying to vie with Jules Verne when I suggest that some generation in the future will be setting out to reach other planets as only four and a half centuries ago Columbus set out to reach an unknown America.¹⁰

Should by an Einsteinian process of temporal acceleration, the time for interplanetary travel come in this generation, I have no doubt that he will be one of the first to board a space ship, for whatever distant world it may be, as casually as if it were but a week-end trip on which he was bound. All Over the Place is the title of his recent travel diary: the words "And All in the Day's Work" could well have been added, so little does he make of Odysseys which men of half his age would find arduous.

Unlike Oliver Goldsmith who, as we all know, could write like an angel and according to Dr. Johnson talked like

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poor Poll, Compton Mackenzie belongs to that very small company of writers whose talk is no less brilliant than their writing. But in his talk there is no suggestion of "laying down the law", there is no "pontificating". Conversation for him does not, as it did for Coleridge and for Samuel Johnson, mean monologue. He enjoys the give and take which is of the essence of good conversation and is like a tennis player who could outclass his opponent at any time, but prefers to let him have a good game, and to enjoy the game for its own sake.

Compton Mackenzie figured once as the subject in the well-known feature of "Profiles" in The Observer.¹¹ It was a well-drawn pen-portrait, accompanied by an admirable photograph. The writer summarised his life and touched on many aspects of his personality, but one short sentence struck a note which lingered in my mind. It was simply this: "He is, above all else, a kind man." Here, we get near the essential man. He is, furthermore, a man of faith: if he is liked by men it is because he has faith in man. "I believe that the spirit of man," he once said, "is in the likeness of God; nothing in my experience has shaken that belief."¹² He once summed up his political faith in memorable words, which may be quoted in this context, for apart from their appropriateness here, they deserve recall:

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Democracy puts a strain upon the faith of humanity which can become unendurable in hours of disillusionment. Yet democracy, which provides the only rational view of a Divine political purpose, has survived so many assaults from without, so much undermining from within, that to deny the possibility of ever attaining the goal towards which it moves so slowly, so painfully, and sometimes so disgracefully, is to declare all the years of recorded history more useless than a heap of dead leaves and to offer them as a bonfire to the destructive and evil spirit of misguided evolution.¹³

Compton Mackenzie's understanding of the most complex characters is profound, but in his own approach to life's problems and perplexities there is the simplicity which one so often finds in conjunction with largeness of mind. Once when in the course of conversation with Leo Robertson talk turned on Eastern affairs, he asked to what one would attribute our failure to retain India and Burma. Robertson says:

I launched into an explanation: it seemed to me that there were so many factors involved, and I fumbled for words. "Don't you think," he broke in, "it was because we did not learn to love the people? Was it not a failure in love on our part?" Cutting through my verbiage, with that single word love he placed his finger on the true cause, and there was nothing more to be said. It was an unelaborated statement, all the more effective for being couched in the modest form of a question, but it belongs to the category of those large utterances which spring from what is basic and best in humanity, so simple, yet profoundly true, lighting up in a flash the situation we were discussing; in the same flash revealing the heart of the speaker himself.¹⁴

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¹Published in 1938, 1940, and 1943 respectively in London by Collins.

²The vast bulk of Mackenzie's library and personal scrapbooks was purchased by the library of the University of Texas.

³(London, 1940), p.79.

⁴D.H. Lawrence was apparently fascinated by Mackenzie's interest in islands because his short story "The Man who Loved Islands" (London, Thomas Seltzer, 1922) was about Mackenzie. For reasons still unknown, Mackenzie initiated legal action against Lawrence and a relationship which had begun when Mackenzie loaned him a typewriter with which he wrote his first novel, The White Peacock, was abruptly ended.

⁵Leo Robertson, Compton Mackenzie: A Literary Appreciation, (London, 1954), p.17.

⁶Repeated in My Life and Times: Octave Five, (London, 1966), p.223.

⁷The Georgian Literary Scene, rev. ed., (London, 1951), p.61.

⁸(New York, 1941), p.49.

⁹Robertson, p.26.

¹⁰Literature in My Time, (London, 1933), p.107.

¹¹July 31, 1949.

¹²On Moral Courage, (London, 1962), Introduction.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Robertson, p.29.

CHAPTER II

THE THEATRE OF YOUTH

The publication of *The East Wind of Love* in January of 1937 marked the beginning of the most ambitious undertaking of Compton Mackenzie's career. While it evidenced his characteristic willingness to attempt something new, it did not represent a complete break with his earlier literary career. "One can notice a process of organic development taking place in his first three novels,"¹ notes Theodore Erlandson. Sinister Street is similar to Carnival in that it shows Mackenzie's interest in the formative experiences of a central character who, however individualized, is representative of a class or social group. The novel, therefore, becomes a portrait of a group in its place, setting and time. Similar to Sinister Street, The Four Winds of Love circumscribes the world of the leisured upper class.

The Four Winds of Love exhibits several significant innovations both in form and content, not merely with reference to Mackenzie's earlier novels but to the standard English novel of the day. Immediately before the First World War, a number of changes were seen to be taking place in the novel, of which Mackenzie has remarked:

It may have been the influence of the Russians, it may have been the reaction against the deliberately continued tale, it may have been a sudden

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awareness that the development of external circumstances was forcing the novelist to extend his scope, or it may have been simply Plato's something in the air which produced almost simultaneously right across Europe a kind of novel which was beginning to be absolutely different from any kind of novel that had preceded it.²

Perhaps Mackenzie exaggerates somewhat the novelty of these developments but the changes were apparent and novels did become longer. Extensive use of autobiographical detail was made, and subjective experiences were described with unusual candour. The multi-volumed chronicle novel or roman fleuve became popular as a medium for displaying the complexities of modern life.

Early in the twentieth century, important novels began to appear in western Europe which were distinguished by their extraordinary length. In 1913, the year in which the first volume of Sinister Street was published, Romain Rolland had just published in book form the tenth and last volume of Jean Cristophe and Marcel Proust published Du Côté de chez Swann, the first of the seven volumes of A la Recherche du Temps Perdu.³

Writing substantially longer novels than the reading public had seen in England since the death of Dickens and Wilkie Collins were Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy and J.D. Beresford. In the original edition the two volumes of Sinister Street contained about 350,000 words in better than eleven hundred pages, and yet the story described only

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twenty-four years of Michael Fane's life. The novel was essentially an account of the childhood and youth of an upper-class Englishman elaborated with greater detail and frankness than previously had been done.

Similarly, but with even greater detail, The Four Winds of Love comprises eight volumes, forty-five hundred pages, and nearly one million words treating but thirty-seven years of the life of its hero, John Ogilvie.

Like Sinister Street, too, it is in large part autobiographical and draws heavily upon the formative experiences of school, university, the theatre, the army, the intelligence corps which Mackenzie himself knew so well. The Four Winds of Love is a notable contribution to the vogue of the semi-autobiographical Bildungsroman, or what William Frierson has called "the life novel",⁴ and which he describes as it initially appeared between 1910 and 1917 in England:

The life-novel is virtually a new form or mode of writing in England since it is a semi-autobiographic account dealing with a person's life from birth to his discovery of the world. Early influences and the pain of youth are stressed. Generally the central character achieves, in some measure, an understanding of life.⁵

Furthermore, he observes that the individual influences of Samuel Butler, H.G. Wells, and Romain Rolland especially, contributed to its creation. J.D. Beresford's The Early History of Jacob Stahl, published in 1911, was the first volume of the earliest of these life novels.

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A Candidate for Truth (1912) and The Invisible Event (1915) complete Beresford's trilogy. In 1913 there came the first volume of Sinister Street, Sons and Lovers by D.H. Lawrence and Fortitude by Hugh Walpole.

Frierson considers the life-novel as essentially a demonstration of subjectivism. The author describes his own youth and maturation and deals at length with the ideas he has been taught by his experience. It is a form of writing opposed to the impersonality and objectivity of the naturalistic and realistic traditions. Frierson comments:

Obviously the life-novel is the vehicle for thought and philosophy. If a writer has not found some meaning or significance in life, or if he has not completely satisfied himself that life has no meaning or significance, we would assume that he would choose another mode of narration.⁶

Probably as a result of this too arbitrary restriction on the possible artistic uses of subjective experience, he disparages the accomplishment of Mackenzie in the genre, saying:

He is one of the most engaging writers of fiction that England has produced and one of the most inconsequential. The surface brilliance of his volumes is everywhere evident; but he rarely gives us anything more than a surface brilliance.⁷

Mackenzie, it should be remembered, did not use the life-novel chiefly as a means of expressing thought and philosophy although it has to be admitted that there is more of both in The Four Winds of Love and Sinister Street than Frierson and others have been able to perceive. Moreover, Mackenzie has

disclaimed any purely autobiographical impulse in the use of autobiographical material. With respect to Sinister Street, but not without relevance to The Four Winds of Love, Mackenzie has recently written: "I have used the memory of childhood in my novel Sinister Street, but every incident in that novel was re-shaped to suit the narrative."⁸

In The Four Winds of Love, as in Sinister Street, Guy and Pauline (1915) and The Adventures of Sylvia Scarlett (1918-19), autobiographical material provides Mackenzie with a framework and a factual basis for a narrative or the re-creation of a particular environment and social atmosphere. His artistic purpose is to create a character or characters who will embody what is interesting, universal or representative in his personal experience, but without presenting an idealized or even realistic portrait of himself.

In England the popularity of the chronicle novel, or what Elizabeth Kerr defines as a "sequence novel",⁹ dates from Mackenzie's publication of Sinister Street. The form, however, proved more important in France and on the continent than in England.¹⁰ Thackeray approached it and Trollope was its most popular exponent in the nineteenth century while in the early twentieth century it is best represented in the work of Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy and Compton Mackenzie.

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Bennett's plan for The Clayhanger Family, the first such novel in England, required his telling the stories of two people who eventually marry each other. In Clayhanger (1910) Bennett details the youth of Edwin Clayhanger and his love for Hilda Lessways until she terminates their engagement. He recounts the early life of his heroine along with an account of her affair with Edwin, this time from her point of view, in Hilda Lessways (1911). The concluding volume of the trilogy is These Twain (1915), in which the story is resumed after the couple have been married for ten years.

John Galsworthy's Forsyte Saga was not in its inception a chronicle or sequence novel. The Man of Property appeared in 1906, but it was not until 1917, when the short story, An Indian Summer of a Forsyte, was published that Galsworthy saw the possibilities of continuing the history of this family.¹¹ In Chancery came out in 1920 and To Let, the concluding volume, in 1921.

Compton Mackenzie envisioned a work notably larger than anything written by Bennett or Galsworthy when he began a series of related novels under the general title of "The Theatre of Youth" with Sinister Street. In scope and intent as well as in format these novels in which The Four Winds of Love may also be included are related more directly to the work of Balzac, Zola or Trollope than to Mackenzie's English contemporaries.

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Unlike the novels of Balzac, and those novels already mentioned which more properly comprise "The Theatre of Youth" the individual volumes of the series were not to be independent, nor was each to tell a complete story with a different set of principals. The novels were to be taken together as forming a detailed picture of a generation.

Although The East Wind of Love was designed as the first novel of the intended series, it is to be noted that it is related to Mackenzie's preceding novels, and a number of the characters in The Four Winds of Love also appear in Sinister Street, Guy and Pauline, and The Adventures of Sylvia Scarlett as somewhat younger.

Mackenzie has described the scheme underlying his series of related novels: "My original plan was to take the subsidiary characters of Sinister Street, one after another, and make them principals in other books."¹³ Guy Hazlewood, therefore, is the central figure in Guy and Pauline (1916). Sylvia Scarlett, whom we also meet in Sinister Street as Lily Haden's friend, is the heroine of The Adventures of Sylvia Scarlett (1918-19). Mark Lidderdale, an Oxford classmate of Michael Fane, is the main figure in the religious trilogy, Parson's Progress, and John Ogilvie, the principal of the Four Winds of Love, was another classmate from Oxford and St. Paul's as well.

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There are three major ways by which the individual novels are connected: the setting in time, the use of re-appearing characters, and the use of recurring incidents. The setting in time is that of Mackenzie's own generation, shown in their youth and young maturity. The novels are likewise related by means of re-appearing characters. As different characters in Sinister Street are each given their own stories, there is "an ever widening development of groups and persons always related to one another."¹⁴ The main effect is to suggest the inter-relationships and the homogeneity of the social group as well as the forces and influences which not only produce it but also characterize it. Moreover, just as characters re-appear in these novels, so do incidents. The technique is rather similar to that of Arnold Bennett in the first two volumes of the Clayhanger trilogy, but whereas Bennett recounts much of the same story from a different perspective in Clayhanger and Hilda Lessways, Mackenzie merely repeats isolated incidents.

In Literature in My Time Mackenzie has described his original purpose in the "Theatre of Youth" novels: "I . . . had designed Sinister Street to be one of two preludes to a complete survey of contemporary society in which the personages of a large and complicated series of books were to be shown."¹⁵ Prematurely Mackenzie added:

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The war came, and if I had continued with my scheme the war would have had to appear in every successive volume. The edifice would have crashed with the foundations I had prepared to sustain it.¹⁶

But Mackenzie, once the war was over, was able to resume his plan and, perhaps because of the war, give it a new dimension. Whereas Sinister Street can be called a life-history, Guy and Pauline a romance, and The Adventures of Sylvia Scarlett a picaresque novel, Parson's Progress is the story of a man in search of God and The Four Winds of Love, through John Ogilvie, is about modern Everyman looking for the meaning of life in a changing world of shifting values. The experiences of youth alone could not provide a sound basis for so grandiose a plan, but combined with the young maturity and idealism of Mark Lidderdale and John Ogilvie, Mackenzie does succeed with his ambitious project of providing a complete survey of contemporary society.

Mackenzie's first two novels, disparate as they are, offer further and earlier evidence of his artistic interest in social history. In The Passionate Elopement (1911) he attempted to convey a picture of an age and a social group, and in Carnival (1912) he offered a detailed account of a particular segment or stratum of modern society. With the publication of Sinister Street, Mackenzie's work was increasingly described by the critics as a "study" in which much attention was given to creating the setting and

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atmosphere of the period treated, by means of the use of abundant detail.

The Passionate Elopement is Mackenzie's only attempt at a conventional historical novel; therefore, in estimating his work one may not realize how much the interests and the perspectives of the historian have contributed to their creation. His academic training, however, was that of an historian. At Oxford he read modern history and graduated with second-class honours in it. In 1924 he stated: "My chief ambition at present is to be able to give up writing novels and write history instead."¹⁷ During the 1930's he increasingly devoted himself to the writing of biography and history, and his specifically historical writing ranged from Marathon and Salamis (1934) through Prince Charlie and His Ladies (1952) to Eastern Epic, whose two volumes (1951 and 1954) dealt with the campaigns of the British in the East during the Second World War. In Antigonish in 1961 he disclosed plans to write a lengthy and detailed history of Scotland. And not without value to the social literary historian is his multi-volumed autobiography, My Life and Times.

In his use of factual detail and in his concern for accuracy with regard to time, place, and social group, Mackenzie manifests the concern of the historian for his material. Of this, and preparatory to his writing Vestal Fire (1927), Faith Compton Mackenzie writes:

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He spent the evening looking up notes on various personalities, and I wrote to J.E. Brooks with a long list of requests for dates, epitaphs, and details which he could give better than any-one.¹⁷

It is on such grounds of truthfulness and accuracy that John Betjeman wrote in 1952:

He is so faithful an illustrator of his times that to reread his earlier work is like looking through back volumes of Punch or the Illustrated London News. It has the true period flavour. It is so much of the time that like Trollope and Sherlock Holmes, it will continue to be appreciated when more pretentious writers are forgotten.¹⁸

Perhaps old-fashioned and Edwardian in some of their sentiment, and uneven in quality, the novels of "The Theatre of Youth" have a vitality and relevance indicative of how congenial their plan was to Mackenzie's talents and interests. Effectively, too, they demonstrate the universal dimension of his interests and outlook. They remain one of the most ambitious of English sequence novels, remarkable as a portrait of an era and of the moods and ideals of youth and young maturity, and yet the work received little serious critical attention.

The diversity of critical reaction is indicated by two articles, both published in 1922, long before Mackenzie's design was resolved. May Bateman asks:

How is it that a writer who has travelled so widely and has, withal, such sensitive perceptions, can become thrall to an obsession, and write and rewrite part of the same story so continually? Over and over again in his different

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books, we find allusions to the same thing which happened to the same people . . . until he ends by provincializing the half-world itself.¹⁹

George N. Shuster speaks of "the beauty of these books" and finds a significant theme running through them:

No other English novelist . . . paints from so rich and varied a palette the complex dreams and realities of clear and clouded youth. He feels instinctively without saying it, of course, that the concern of modern civilization is city life and the industrialism underlying it.²⁰

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CHAPTER II

¹ A Critic's Study of Some Early Novels (1911-1920) of Sir Compton Mackenzie, (A doctoral dissertation presented to the faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Southern California, 1965), p.131.

² Literature in my Time (New York, 1933), p.187.

³ In the Foreword to the new edition of Sinister Street (London, 1949), Mackenzie remarks that Edmund Gosse gave him a copy of Proust's Du Côté de chez Swann in October, 1914. Mackenzie quotes Gosse as having said: "I seem to discern an expression of the same spirit in your Sinister Street, though I am not suggesting any positive resemblance between the two books." p.ix.

⁴ The English Novel in Transition, 1885-1940, (Norman, Oklahoma, 1942), ch.XIII, "The Life-Novel in England".

⁵ Ibid., pp.133-34.

⁶ Ibid., p.207.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ My Life and Times: Octave One, (London, 1963), p.13.

⁹ The Sequence Novel: Fictional Method of a Scientific Age, unpublished thesis, (University of Minnesota, 1927), p.1.

¹⁰ Joseph Warren Beach, The Twentieth Century Novel, (New York, 1932), p.246.

¹¹ Ibid., p.249.

¹² Balzac's Comédie Humaine was, apparently, the most important single source in shaping the objectives and techniques of Mackenzie's series. In an interview in The Nottingham Journal and Express for October 20, 1922 entitled "The Future Novel", he is reported speaking of his series as "The Comedy of Youth" (noted in Erlandson, p.141). Mackenzie was an early acquaintance and fervent admirer of the work of Balzac. In Literature in My Time he describes the

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effect of reading Eugenie Grandel, and concludes, "But the adventures of a boy of seventeen with Balzac's novels would make a book in itself." p.119.

¹³Foreword to 1949 edition of Sinister Street, p.xi.

¹⁴Scofield Thayer, "Compton Mackenzie," The Dial, LXV (New York, November 1918), p.474.

¹⁵Literature in My Time, p.186.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷More Than I Should, (London, 1940), p.197.

¹⁸A review of The Rival Monster. The Daily Telegraph, (London, January 18, 1952).

¹⁹"Compton Mackenzie," The Catholic World, CXV, (New York, September 1922), pp.741-42.

²⁰"Compton Mackenzie's Novels," America, XXVII, (New York, April 15, 1922), p.617.

CHAPTER III

THE PLAN OF THE FOUR WINDS OF LOVE

The plan of The Four Winds of Love, although not constructed on the scale of the Comédie Humaine, can be compared to it in the wide breadth of its vision. It has, however, a symmetry and compactness that will not be found in Balzac's work. In the Comédie Humaine Balzac realized an evocation of multitudinous life on a vast scale and he did so in the grand manner of the great epics. He did so through a long series of novels purporting to be a single work, which are bound together in a loose, straggling whole by the general concept underlying them, and not by the continuity of the narrative. In The Four Winds of Love Mackenzie assesses virtually the entire intellectual life of the present century. Unlike Balzac's composite standpoint, Mackenzie's assessment is presented through separate novels, written not from a fixed and objective standpoint as in the case of an historian chronicling events and commenting on them from some remote distance in time, but rather as reflected in the mind of its central character through the course of his development from childhood to early manhood and thence to the maturity of middle age. Objective writing, that is, writing from an impersonal standpoint, can be regarded sometimes as that which takes us nearest to the truth, but there remains the question whether

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the method of exposition adopted in this work, which is approached from a subjective viewpoint because, in a sense, the author identifies himself with the central figure, might achieve even a greater fidelity to fact. Facts are always facts for some observer, but one might well ask if there is such a thing as a "bare" fact outside the realm of mathematics or that of the bloodless, logical categories of abstract thought. It would seem that facts presented from a personal point of view with all the colour and emotional tone generally connoted by the word "personal", suffer the least distortion. The real world for us is the world as experienced by us with the receptive organs with which we are equipped. It is the world of Tom, Dick, or Harry, as well as that of the hypothetical observer of science whose universe is mainly one of abstractions to be comprehended often only in terms of mathematical symbols. It is not the world of the historian. Aldous Huxley suitably observes in his Themes and Variations that:

History as something experienced can never be fully recorded. For, obviously, there are as many such histories as there have been experiencing human beings. The nearest approach to a general history-as-something-experienced would be an anthology of a great variety of personal documents.¹

Throughout The Four Winds of Love there is considerable talk and discussion on every topic under the sun, giving at first a desultory effect. Actually, however, it is

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principally through the conversation in this mature work that Compton Mackenzie unfolds his characters. To what extent the fact that the talk is always such as to hold the attention and provoke thought affects the naturalness of the characters is for the reader to judge, for in actual life conversation is usually more fragmentary and elliptical, and far less logical. Similarly it is well to remember that the persons who do the sustained talking, and whose points of view are presented more or less fully, are frequently intellectuals, and intellectuals preoccupied with the questions which they discuss. The main justification, however, for the admission of discussions and disquisitions to the extent they occur in this work is that the structure as a whole demands it. The scale on which the work is planned calls for the reader's adjustment to it, before he begins reading it. Once such adjustment is made, it can be found that there is as little cause for complaint in regard to this as there would be for the criticism of an Elizabethan play on the ground that in real life people do not talk in blank verse. It is well to remember that a novel of a million words is not the same thing as a series of connected novels running to a million words: several small wholes cannot be converted into one large one by the simple expedient of drawing a circle round them. It is the principle of interlinkage between them that is of importance from the point of view of both art

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and philosophy, and it is this that determines the unity of any whole other than a mere accumulation or arithmetical aggregate. The "size-factor" in Art is no arbitrary matter, for in Art as in nature, living or inanimate, size is proportional to function, and everything has its own intrinsic size. So far as the writer's art is concerned, a short story expanded to the length of a novel ceases to be a short story without becoming a novel, and conversely, a novel cannot be compressed into a short story. It is the amplitude of the artist's conception that determines this "size-factor".

By reason of its length and the texture of its content, The Four Winds of Love calls for sustained attention from the reader. Desultory browsing is insufficient; it must be taken as a whole. The effect, however, will be richly rewarding because it will enable the reader to glean from the work a familiarity not only with an outstanding technical achievement but with a brave, affirmative philosophy of life.

Any chronicle of this length in which the history of the times is woven into the personal history of its characters would tend to sprawl and cease to retain its perspective if its course were not carefully mapped out. This Compton Mackenzie does successfully by interpolating at suitable distances from each other short summaries of public events which serve to fill in the background as well as to carry the tale forward, while being remarkably effective in creating a sense

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of the rapid passage of time. One moves with John Ogilvie, and with him can feel the pulsating present. In the commonly accepted sense there is no plot in The Four Winds of Love but there is a strong story interest, and it is a swift-moving story, as indeed it has to be, to represent nearly forty years of life in England and Europe, with frequent excursions to the United States, during a period of kaleidoscopic changes in the world. It begins with the sense of security enjoyed by a people moulded in Victorian traditions, and passes through the upheaval of the First World War to the malaise of the years between the two wars, to end in the gloom of the shadows cast by the approach of the Second World War. "It is far swifter in its narrative pace than Sinister Street and in parts approaches the tempo of Sylvia Scarlett, particularly in The South Wind of Love in which John Ogilvie's hectic war experiences are recorded,"² observes Leo Robertson.

The chief means by which the story is carried forward is the use of interspersed historical summaries. The effect of speed is further enhanced by the fact that the work is not divided into chapters but allowed to flow like life itself with its abrupt transitions which, however, do not interrupt the continuity of the stream.

Compton Mackenzie explained in his dedicatory letter to Eric Linklater in The East Wind of Love, the first volume of the series, that his original intention was to write a

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large-scale book built on the foundations of Sinister Street, but a design intended for a world passing tranquilly through peaceful times proved quite inadequate with the outbreak of the First World War. A more ambitious plan was necessary as it now had to include not only the war but the changes brought about by it.

Once the idea of such a work was conceived, Mackenzie's artistic conscientiousness would not allow him to begin the task hastily with what he considered to be inadequate preparation. He stated that he needed more time, many years, in fact, "to achieve the emotional detachment and experienced craftsmanship required to build my ambitious edifice to a new design."³ As to experienced craftsmanship, he needed to have no misgivings, for in this respect the author of Sinister Street, Carnival, and other novels, certainly had no further lessons to learn; but with regard to emotional detachment, it was some deep instinct that prompted his waiting. Wordsworth's phrase about emotion remembered in tranquility surely has a wider application than merely to poetry. Arnold had defined poetry as criticism of life and in a way this also aptly describes the function of the serious novel. Sensitivity of feeling and the power of close observation are essential to the creative prose artist whose concern is life; for he, too, like the poet, must brood and search his own heart if the world is to profit by his

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experience. This is not to suggest that writing under the full sway of emotion cannot attain heights of its own - such a contention would be sufficiently rebutted by turning to The Windsor Tapestry, which Compton Mackenzie wrote at an incredible speed and in a sustained mood of anger. Indeed, this book came as an interruption to The Four Winds of Love, having been written between The South Wind of Love and its successor, The West Wind of Love. The Windsor Tapestry, in spite of its amazing objectivity, is definitely a polemical work, having as its topic the injustice and treachery inherent in the abdication crisis of 1936, and it would have lost much of its force and fire if it had been produced in a state of emotional detachment.

The East Wind of Love begins with the opening year of the century, when John Ogilvie, the central figure, is a seventeen year old student in the Classical Lower Sixth at St. James's School. It is the St. James's of Sinister Street, but without repetitions or even echoes of anything in that work, of which nearly a half dealt with Michael Fane's school life. Even though Michael Fane and John Ogilvie are contemporaries, or very nearly so, The East Wind of Love is concerned with a group of boys completely different in outlook and mental and moral stature. John Ogilvie is to become a famous dramatist; the two Jewish boys, Emil and Julius Stern, are both geniuses; Edward Fitzgerald is an

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Irish revolutionary consumed with political fervour while yet a schoolboy. They are all poles apart from Michael Fane and his circle of friends. Though John Ogilvie has yet to go through the pains of young love, he and the others, even while at school, are intellectually more mature than Michael Fane and his group at Oxford.

In Sinister Street one moves at a perceptual and emotional level, whereas by contrast the journey in The East Wind of Love is through a conceptual stratosphere. The climate is the more rarefied one of the intellect. Nevertheless John Ogilvie and his friends, for all their precocity, are healthy, normally constituted youths, and John himself has yet to suffer the emotions of youth and to form attachments of the sort commonly experienced in adolescence.

"If the wind of love blow too soon from the south it might enervate a young man" - so wrote Miriam Stern by way of friendly advice to John, the close friend of her two sons.⁴ Long before the veering wind came to blow steadily from the south, however, a warm prelusive gust of it was felt by John, involving him in an affair with Miriam herself, a delicately-told episode with effects that were to last through the years.

It is no overstatement to say that although there were to be other loves and liaisons in John's life and he was to marry twice and be happy in both his marriages, his deepest love was that for Miriam. Though the first physical

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intimacy between them was the last, wise woman that she was, Miriam saw too that it was a love that grew deeper and mellowed with the years, for the south wind could no longer affect it. So far as these two were concerned, the sublimation of physical desire was complete. For John Ogilvie Miriam became something of an alter ego, in a sense nearer to him than the women he married later and nearer even than his only child, Corinna. Their intimacy, subsisting then almost exclusively on a spiritual plane, approximated to the type, marked on occasions by moments of exaltation in which the very frontiers between self and self vanish.

The portrait of Miriam Stern, for which Compton Mackenzie employs the whole canvas of The Four Winds of Love, is surely one of the most delicate and subtly drawn in modern fiction. A point worth observing is that she stands in a peculiar relation to the reader, for though he sees her objectively it is to a considerable extent through her eyes that he sees John Ogilvie. One effect of this is that in the process Miriam Stern's own portrait seems to gain in depth and luminosity.

In The East Wind of Love John Ogilvie finishes with and prepares for his first term at Oxford, but Oxford is by-passed in this work. It would have been difficult for Mackenzie to re-create the perfect evocation of Oxford achieved in the chapter of Sinister Street entitled "Dreaming

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"Spires", and any attempt to do so would have been superfluous. Newman and Arnold both record a certain idyllic quality in university life akin to the rapture of first love, and as impossible to savour again in later years. Sinister Street, after all, is a young man's book, and as observed before, could only have been written by Compton Mackenzie at an early stage in his life. However, Oxford is but a detail in the vast design of a work like The Four Winds of Love. He is concerned here with the wider world and its activities, for whereas in Sinister Street we part company with Michael Fane when he is twenty-two, in this work we are with John Ogilvie till he is well into the sixth decade of his life.

The South Wind takes up the tale eleven years from the point at which it broke off in The East Wind, and covers a crowded and exciting five years from 1912 to 1917. John is now a successful dramatist, mature in mind and the poise which reflects clear seeing, clear thinking, clean living and a sense of security in the possession of comfortable means.

There can be no question of following all the movements of John Ogilvie and the other principal figures, and commenting on their various activities. In the vast panorama spread out before us in a work of this sort the profusion of details is such that one cannot do more than point out a few prominent features here and there as they catch the eye.

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The underlying significance of the work emerges only when it is apprehended as a whole.

Compton Mackenzie is perhaps at his best in his portrayal of women. In Carnival, we had a vivid and finished picture of theatrical life in the humbler ranks, the life of chorus girls and dancers in the corps de ballet of a music hall. In the Gabrielle Parozier of The Four Winds of Love we have a sympathetic portrait in warm, glowing tints of an unusually attractive and famous French actress who is too sensible to allow her great success to go to her head, though she is conscious nevertheless of her genius. We do not see her on the stage, just as we are never present at the plays of John Ogilvie which earned him his reputation as one of the leading English dramatists of his time; but the atmosphere which surrounds an eminent actress is captured to perfection.

As Compton Mackenzie says in his Prefatory Letter to Newman Flower, one or two of the subsidiary characters in The South Wind of Love have been drawn from life, though the originals are no longer alive. One of these is Daniel Rayner, whose acquaintance and that of his wife, Hildegard, John made while on a visit to a friend in Essex. Rayner is unmistakably D.H. Lawrence, and it is interesting to see him through Compton Mackenzie's eyes and as a character in fiction. When any contemporary figure is introduced into a

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fictional work by an author well acquainted with him in real life one can obtain, paradoxical though it might seem, a much truer view of the actual man than even in a strict biography, because the very liberties the author takes with facts represent his own authentic reactions to the character portrayed and are therefore true of him. Truth, it is constantly averred, is stranger than fiction; but the strangest thing about fiction is that it is often truer than fact.

Compton Mackenzie has written at some length of D.H. Lawrence in Literature in My Time, but he stands out more vividly in the account of him in The Four Winds of Love, particularly in The West Wind, when the Rayners visit John Ogilvie in Citrano. Despite the author's assertion that this is a land of his own invention, like Mileto, he cannot blame his readers for identifying it with Capri. Certainly the incident in 1919 in which, when talking with Compton Mackenzie about the possibility of another war, Lawrence's megalomania burst out and he stopped and proclaimed twice: "There's not going to be another war," then, striking the wall by the edge of the road with his stick, shouted at the top of his voice "I won't have another war," occurred in Capri, as we know from Literature in My Time. It appears without modification also in the fictional account.⁵

Rayner is only a minor figure in The Four Winds of Love and his appearance merely incidental; therefore the

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temptation to digress further about him here must be resisted. The portrayal of him in this novel, however, has a special appeal when regarded from the vantage point of contemporary literary history.

Time glides swiftly on; breaking into the gaiety of that summer of 1914 in Citrano comes news of the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Sarajevo, and before the summer's end, as foreseen by John, the First World War begins.

In The Four Winds of Love we do not find ourselves in the middle of the maelstrom; we are not in the battlefields of France or Flanders - Marne, Loos and Arras, Verdun, Somme and Ypres - they are not the names that pass before our eyes in these war pages. The light is focused on the Eastern Mediterranean operations, for John, after several unsuccessful efforts to get into the thick of the war, managed eventually to obtain a commission in the R.N.V.R. and to see service in the Mediterranean theatre on the staff of the Intelligence Department. Thus the names that recur in this section of the work and which become familiar are Gallipoli, Salonica, the Dardanelles, Suvla Bay, Anzac, Athens. While this account of the war purports to be purely fictional, and some of the places and nearly all the characters are fictitious, it is quite apparent that Compton Mackenzie has kept well within his range here. In other words, the raw

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material upon which his imagination has worked for the purpose of fiction is drawn from experience, a fact which becomes all the more apparent on reading Mackenzie's four books of War Memoirs. No real difference in texture is discernible between the earlier historical and the later fictional account.

With the East Wind and the South Wind, the seasons have run their course through spring and summer. Autumnal tints come now with the West Wind of Love, which, opening with the last year of the war, carries the story forward to 1922.

In Athene Langridge, who marries John, we have still another fascinating portrait of womanhood to place beside those of Gabrielle and of Miriam, two women so different in every way from her and from each other. Her acquaintance is first made when a certain mental aloofness about her attracts John to her, though she causes him to wonder sometimes whether her amazing beauty of colour and form was merely an empty shell. In The West Wind of Love she awakes, and admirable indeed is this characterisation revealing the treasures of her personality that had been locked within her.

With The North Wind of Love Compton Mackenzie has encircled the compass, and he closes the cyclic pattern made of the lives of his characters. Those whose acquaintance was made at the beginning of this long saga are old now, or on

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the threshold of old age. A young generation has appeared whose future will extend beyond the panoramic view given in this work. It is an ill wind, says an old proverb, that blows no good, but this North Wind, felt now as it sweeps over a whole continent, is a cold harsh blast with a threat of rising to heights of frenzy, and foreboding cataclysmic changes in an uneasy world. The personal histories of John Ogilvie, his family, and his friends, continue in an atmosphere of graciousness and well-being, but the sense of a world crisis, and of a future big with events and fraught with danger is never absent. Indeed, they are largely the subject of the conversations among the members of John Ogilvie's set. Their own lives run smoothly enough and are suavely controlled, but they know they are living in a world that is crumbling and doomed to disappear even as that of Rome and Greece. There may be utter chaos ahead, or a new order of existence may come into being, but facing this future into which they can see only vaguely, they become increasingly conscious of the inadequacy of the standards upon which their own world has rested thus far.

The play of mind which lights up the screen upon which the social changes of a generation are projected acquires at times a peculiar intensity attributable in some measure to the intellectual groping by John and the more thoughtful of his companions for some durable foundation upon

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which the new order might rest. Their minds cast about in all directions for old or new philosophies and for the examples of history, art and religion which might give life some meaning. This search is doubly significant, for in seeking for a new set of standards they are really seeking for themselves as well and the disintegration of one's world involves at least partly a disintegration of oneself. John's quest thus becomes in essence a religious quest.

The North Wind of Love opens in the early 'thirties with John Ogilvie on the verge of fifty. There is a thinning in the ranks of the characters known so well from the earlier volumes. Athene dies, and so does John's father, and with the loss of these two, John's feelings centre more deeply on his little daughter Corinna. The profound understanding of the mind of the child and of the adolescent, which was displayed in Sinister Street, Carnival, The Darkening Green and earlier works is brought to bear here in the unfolding of the budding personality of Corinna. Few works in which the relations between a widowed father and a daughter whose upbringing is entirely in his hands are elaborated with such delicacy and charm.

In The West Wind of Love the Irish question was threshed out. In The North Wind, which covers the years from 1931 to 1937, Scotland comes into the picture more

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fully than in the earlier books and now occupies a large area of the attention.

John is a widower now and has on his hands not only the education of his daughter, Corinna, but also the responsibility of caring for Padraig Fitzpatrick, the son of his life-long friend, Edward, the Irish revolutionary killed in 1922 by the Free State troops. He acquires the ownership of the Shiel Islands in the Minch and building his house, Tigh-nan-Ron, or the House of the Seals, there makes a home for himself in Scotland. He is passionately concerned with the problems of an ailing and depressed Scotland, and Scottish Nationalism is discussed both as a matter of practical politics and from a Utopian standpoint. By way of relief to the seriousness of all this we have the episode of the abortive attempt to remove the Stone Destiny from under the Throne in Westminster Abbey - a curious anticipation of what actually happened eight years after the publication of this book. One is, perhaps, tempted to wonder whether the youths responsible for escapade conceived the idea from reading about the incident in The North Wind of Love.

Interest now begins to centre on the younger people who will be taking over - Corinna, with her insatiable thirst for information and adventure, Padraig, with much of his father's spirit in him, and Sebastian, Miriam's grandson, with his musical potentialities.

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As in all periods of transition when events grow heavy and uneasy with the stirrings of the new order implicit in time, there is a temporary blurring of direction. The chronicle of The Four Winds of Love as it draws to an end in The North Wind nevertheless leaves one with a strong sense of the continuity of things; the narrative may end where the author wills, but the events march on. This peculiar consciousness of the momentum which propels events into the future gives a special significance to the youngest generation now fast approaching maturity - to Corinna, to Padraig, and to Sebastian, for they, the citizens of the future, are the vehicles for the extension of the chronicle's movement. The torch is already in their hands.

It does not seem possible to fit The Four Winds of Love into any known category of fiction, although unlike Joyce's Ulysses it does have some affinity with most of the recognized types. Compton Mackenzie is generally regarded as a purely romantic novelist, but while a strong element of romance runs through this work it cannot be accurately placed in the category of romantic novels. Neither can it be regarded as a realistic novel in the accepted sense, despite the fact that its author draws his material entirely from empirical sources and deals with it as closely and with no less a sense of detachment than the most uncompromising of realists. It cannot be called a tale of adventure, and it

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does not belong to the sentimental school of writing. It goes without saying that a ripe understanding of human nature displays itself in the characterisation of the great variety of figures which appear in it, and yet it cannot be said to be a plain novel of character. It is all of many things, and something more, which gives it a unique status in the world of fiction. There are bound to be confusing cross-divisions in any attempted classification of fictional writing into various schools; but without pressing the analysis of the novel to the extent of trying to accommodate its varying forms into mutually exclusive compartments, we can distinguish between novels according to their prevailing tone. In The Four Winds of Love it is obvious that this tone is ideational. It is a novel of ideas and the light that plays about it is that of the intellect. If it be necessary to affix some label to it one might describe it as an "intellective" novel. There are many works of fiction in which ideas predominate over action or emotion, but not quite in the way they do here. In these others there are characters who are intelligent, but in The Four Winds of Love the central figure, John Ogilvie, and the intelligent set revolving around him, provide a commentary on the whole life of their time which is simultaneously an unfolding of their own characters. In this respect it differs from the psychological type of novel in which the author, mysteriously

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endowed with omniscience, opens a door and lets light into the recesses of the heart or mind. In The Four Winds of Love it is the characters who open the door of their minds from which issues the light that illumines two worlds at the same time, the internal and the external.

Perhaps the most superficial criticism which could be made of The Four Winds of Love would be to charge that its author has seized the opportunity and made it his chief concern to air his own views upon a great diversity of topics by voicing them through shrewdly-drawn characters staged in appropriate settings. This would be to suggest that in fact the characters are mere mouthpieces for personal predilection. It is true that the author's sympathies are obviously with John Ogilvie as the central observer, and that for all practical purposes he can be identified with Compton Mackenzie himself. He is no less dramatically conceived than the other characters in the work, and although he is endowed with a soul by none other than the author himself he cannot be regarded as a mere puppet of the author's ideas. Neither can it be said of any of the other characters that they are automata, for they are all dominant and vital enough to sustain and justify the full weight of the lengthy conversations in which they indulge. They open their minds and reveal themselves, each in a way appropriate to his personal make-up, age, and status in life. It is true but irrelevant that many

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of Compton Mackenzie's own views are ventilated in the discussions in the book, and several subjects in which he is known personally to be, or to have been, interested are touched on. It is irrelevant because all of it undergoes a transforming process in passing through the minds of his characters, and assumes the colour and tone and textural quality of their personalities. It is not the variety of views expressed in the book that is remarkable. Rather, what is remarkable is that such a variety of personalities should spring from one individual's teeming brain. The children of his imagination they are, but once born they become independent of him. In this would seem to lie the miracle of all true creative art.

It is the interchange of ideas between the characters, their opinions, their controversies and arguments which form the greater part of the material out of which this huge work is fabricated. To enter into the merits of the opinions expressed would result in a distortion of the view of this novel as an artistic whole. It would be tantamount to intruding oneself into the field of discussion from outside the picture, and conferring an independent status upon the conversational matter, as if it comprised a number of separate essays and discourses wholly unrelated to the individuals it is designed to develop and display, without seeing that it is through these long talks and conversations that the

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characters take visible shape. This would be to seriously misread the book. The flow of the narrative is predominantly a mental progression in which the chief characters reveal their own minds and through comment and controversy provide a picture of the objective world in which they live.

Leo Robertson goes so far as to say:

This feature of the work cannot be emphasised too much, for it is just in this that its originality lies, and it is this which justifies crediting Compton Mackenzie with the creation of a new genre, which I have called the "intellective" novel.⁶

The discussions, of course, have an intrinsic interest of their own - an anthology of excerpts could be culled from The Four Winds of Love which would be a veritable intellectual feast - but to treat them in this manner in any appraisal of it as a novel would be to lose sight of the fact that this is a work of art and not merely a vehicle for the author's personal reflections and comments on the passing scene.

Although this carefully planned work is entitled The Four Winds of Love, and John Ogilvie's relations with the women he loved and by whom he was beloved at different stages of his life are described with deeper insight than is to be found in any other of Mackenzie's books, it is not primarily nor even in the main a love story. Elements of romance do enter into John Ogilvie's life as they do into most normal

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lives, but to no greater extent than other interests. It becomes apparent, therefore, that when he employs this symbolism of the Four Winds Compton Mackenzie understands by love something far deeper and wider than what is meant by romantic love. He seems to mean by it nothing more nor less than that most fundamental urge in individuals to reach out from their ego-centres in order to find fulfilment of themselves. This is their vital integrating tendency, even if they are not aware of it, and it is subconsciously active in all human beings above the purely brutish levels of existence. Indeed, it is the natural outward movement of the whole spirit of man in its quest for self-realisation which is ultimately found only in other selves and through them in God. Richard Church, in his review of this work, states that in its essence it is a religious essay, and holds that the criticism of human nature embodied in it is based upon "a considered humility that has been worked out upon the author's experience and his submission to the authority of the Catholic Church."⁷ It seems, however, that the underlying philosophy is much wider and deeper than can be accommodated within so doctrinaire a framework of belief as Mr. Church believes possible. It is a philosophy that refuses to treat the transient as the only reality, for it is rooted in the faith that, behind the veil of history and nature, there is a meaning which is the expression of a Divine Life

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through all, and a spiritual significance safe from the menace of the disenchantments of materialistic science. It is, it can be submitted, essentially a philosophy of faith.

Perhaps it appears paradoxical that a work so completely on the intellectual plane should be seen finally to be based not on reason, but on faith; it is a paradox which resolves itself, however, when one recognizes that when confronted with the ultimate mysteries of life and with the sort of problems that have vexed philosophers and theologians since man first thought, the last and most reasonable act Reason can perform is to abdicate in favour of Faith. The trilogy in which the career of Mark Lidderdale is unfolded, while not strictly a religious novel, is unquestionably a novel about religious life. On the other hand one can seriously suggest that The Four Winds of Love is indeed, not only a serious novel, but a religious one deserving higher critical estimation than it has already seen. Without breaking from the mainstream of English fiction it surely does represent a new genre of novel. Its massive structure and the architectonic skill that has gone into its creation make it a great novel, however vulnerable to criticism in many of its details. In the face of an achievement of this scope, one can surely echo the poet who said:

Four winds - solidity's antithesis;
And too from these a solid edifice.

NOTES

CHAPTER III

¹Aldous Huxley, Themes and Variations, (London, 1950), p.46.

²Leo Robertson, p.152.

³"Sir Compton Mackenzie 'Face to Face'," The Listener (January 25, 1962), p.166.

⁴The East Wind of Love, II, p.174.

⁵The South Wind of Love, I, p.274.

⁶Robertson, p.167.

⁷Richard Church, The Growth of the English Novel, (London, 1954), p.146.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST PART OF THE EAST WIND OF LOVE

The first part of The East Wind of Love could be said to be the story of the different ways four youths react to Victorianism and become caught up in the revolutionary movements which so characterized the first quarter of this century. In another way it is the story of any young boy, at any time, and of how during his maturation he is affected by people and in turn influences them. In short, then, it reveals the making of a man. As John Ogilvie progresses through the drudgery of schoolwork, the pains of obedience, and the confusion wrought by youth, he could be anyone's son, and in this he is reminiscent of Michael Fane in Sinister Street.

Four young men pass from adolescence into youthful maturity during the early years of this century. Born into the upper middle-class in London, John Ogilvie is the son of a famous criminal lawyer. Fitzgerald becomes a doctor and an Irish patriot, and the two Jewish boys, Emil and Julius, are brilliant and intellectual. Emil becomes a revolutionary and his brother already is a musical prodigy.

To make any story true to life, the author must make good use of imagination. Compton Mackenzie, through the use of locale, characters and action, creates a world which

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mirrors the first twelve years of the twentieth century. His characters are colourful and true images of mankind. The plot is sometimes static, but it is always interesting and appealing. The locale of middle-class London is dull and colourless, uncertain of itself and trying to ignore the progress and decay taking place around it. It contrasts and makes clearer the characters and their lives and ideals.

John Ogilvie's emotional makeup is impressive for its variety and Emil's for its intensity. At first sight John appears to be a very changeable person; on closer examination, however, one can see that his emotions, although spontaneous, are intense and sincere. Emil, on the other hand, only seems to be the more stable of the two boys. The emotional differences between these two persons are distinct and impressive, but it would not be correct to consider them complete opposites. The friendship they enjoy would be impossible if they were so. Both of them are easily influenced by others at certain times; and both are lost in the integrity of their causes and forget prudence and tact. Here ends the parallel between the two boys, except to say that throughout the book both of them were searching for the same thing - truth. However, truth was a different concept for each, and each used his own individual means of arriving at this goal.

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It is easy to identify with John as he wonders about the birth of his stepbrother, David, and as he sympathizes over Cissie Oliver. The feeling of peace that overwhelmed him while in a Catholic Church; the emotions resultant from his belief in love at first sight; his immediate acceptance of Rose's marrying Henry, his fascination for Miriam Stern and his calm view of the rift between his father and himself are all feelings as universal as they are individual.

Emil gives one the impression of being thoroughly self-centred, a consequence, no doubt, of the unfair attitude society had towards him because he was a Jew. His sharp tongue attacked others for being that which he was not - Gentile. He offers an interesting insight into the consequences of prejudice on its victim - the dejection and loneliness he felt when, because of his religion, he was not made head-boy of the school and when his friendship was forsaken by John for that of his younger brother Julius.

Mackenzie has presented his youthful characters in such a strong and forceful way that the adult reader can readily visualize the reactions of each character. For this reason, it is not easy to identify with the emotions of any one character. In this way he recounts a story of the art of growing up, and he does so in a particular yet universal manner.

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One very important value of the story is Mackenzie's analysis of character. He introduces John, Emil, Fitzgerald and Julius, the four main characters, at the beginning of the story, and as the story progresses we are subtly given a clearer understanding of the mental processes of each. One immediately recognizes the rough and ready character of Fitzgerald when for his first words in the book he says: "You bet hell I am . . ." John's conservative attitude, on the other hand, and Emil's erraticism, are shown in the following passage, where they are speaking of an essay assignment to be given to a Mr. Askew:

"But, I say, Emil, you can't hand this in, . . . you simply can't, my dear chap. You'll shock Askew into fits."

"He asked for a comparison. I've given him one." (p.88).

Julius reveals his character in an indirect way through his mannerisms and reactions rather than through his speech. His state of mind and motivation are also important as they are directly related to the personalities of the other characters. Even though the author gives a clear analysis, he leaves much to the reader's own judgment.

Throughout the first part of The East Wind of Love, Compton Mackenzie demonstrates an universal objectivity in portraying humanity. Yet the author's personality was assimilated in his four main characters. He tells the story in the third person from the point of view of a bystander.

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He also introduces and makes use of letter writing and dialogue, keeping the reader constantly in contact with each of the characters and the overall chain of events, thereby adding a further note of realism.

The author's point of view influences the reader to such an extent that he cannot help but view the flaws and virtues of humanity with equal understanding. Such a point of view necessitates constant contact with all the characters in the first pages of the novel, and affords an early yet profound glimpse into their personalities.

Compton Mackenzie's character descriptions are clear and detailed. John is a normal, rather conservative English youth. He is aware of the problems of the age and he has an innate ambition to seek after the truth. Emil is an extremist, with radical ideas and a cynical attitude. Julius is an introvert, a dedicated and honest person. Fitzgerald is a passionate Irishman almost totally absorbed in the politics of his fatherland and its struggle for self-government.

Ogilvie is the main figure; he is in evidence at all times. Mackenzie does not describe his physical appearance even abstractly as he does when he draws a parallel between Emil and a "Greek God." John's versatility is shown through his speech and he is able to communicate and converse with many different types of people. His actions, especially his deep, though brief, love for Rose, reveal his basically

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emotional reaction to things. The relationship between what John does and what he says is most pertinent to his character and although he admits he is unable to become passionately involved in anything he proceeds to discuss things with much feeling yet never seems to do anything. He speaks of writing poetry as a life's work, but what little he does write he destroys.

Compton Mackenzie uses the relationships between John and contemporary society to reveal John's inhibitions. For example, there is the remorse John felt when, while dining with Sir William, he oversteps the line of recognized Victorian propriety when he expounds passionately for three hours, trying to impress his dinner companion with his ideals and ideas. This situation illustrates, too, the intensity of John's emotions. There is also his overwhelming desire to take Rose on an all-night date beneath the lights of London even though he knows this is socially unacceptable.

The author develops Emil's character from his relationship with society in which he is a Jewish seapigout. The unfulfilment of Miriam Stern's love for John is still another example of the influence of society on the characters.

Mackenzie uses the relationship between character and physical values in various circumstances: John's desire to help Cissie Oliver to escape the life of a prostitute and

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again Miriam Stern's love for John, or Fitzgerald's belief in the freedom of Ireland. Society, however, does not affect John's estimation of his friends Miriam, Julius and Emil Stern. Society was also unable to give John a high opinion of his father, regardless of his father's public success. John is a well-liked boy and usually impresses favourably everyone he meets. Strangers meeting him for the first time invite him to their homes. His popularity at school is a true revelation of the high esteem in which he was held by his contemporaries. He was considered a member of the Stern family - their estimation of him.

John considers himself a normal youth, with a revolutionary spirit. He also believes that he has been given a talent for writing. Towards other people John's attitude can be seen as he says "Theoretically I hate people, but in reality I love them." On life, John's ideas are not clear. He knows there is more to life than materialism, but he does not know what it is. John is optimistic about life, and at the same time realistic. He thinks the world is "a real mess" and he looks to a new age while he tries to break away from the charms of Victorianism. He thinks Ireland and Scotland should unite if they hope to free themselves from the domination of England.

John is a most unusual combination of a type and an individual. Through him the author reveals the growth of

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mankind in the twentieth century and the growth of a revolution. His life, with a few minor alterations, could be that of any young man. Yet John emerges as a real person with a pronounced individuality.

In The East Wind of Love Compton Mackenzie resembles many of the Victorian novelists in the use of extended detail, in sentence structure, description and digression. Unlike the Victorians, however, he omits chapters and makes the novel one continuous story just as life is continuous. The only natural breaks which occur are those at the end of each volume. He reflects the Victorian attitude which regarded women simply as beautiful objects in depicting John's love for Rose, yet deviates from it in his portrayals of Elise and of Miriam Stern as women of independent thought.

Mackenzie makes use of both learned and colloquial diction, and the book itself is written in a learned diction. In their dialogue, the four boys, Elise, John's father, Miriam Stern and the minor characters are well-spoken and articulate. When John is visiting Ardvore, in Scotland, he learns from the people there a few foreign expressions: "Well, and how are you enjoying yourself . . ." (p.278) and "Suas leis a'Ghaidlig!" (p.279). In John's journey to Switzerland he meets Odette, a French girl whose English is "just a little beet of strring." (p.180).

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Cissie Oliver also uses colloquialisms in her speech: "I'd have called you a juggins . . ." a "fancy." (p.172).

The style is appropriate to the author's purpose in this story, for by the use of different styles of diction he makes clearer the distinction between characters. In using learned diction Mackenzie succeeds in symbolizing John as typical of young manhood. Learned diction is appropriate to the main characters, the dialectal appropriate to the persons of different nationality, and the colloquial to lower-class people such as Cissie Oliver.

The major symbols in the volume are John, Emil, Queen Victoria's death and Fitzgerald's passion for Ireland. John seems to be the symbol of mankind and its natural process of maturation. Emil could symbolize Victorian society, with its inequalities and intolerance. Queen Victoria's death is the symbol of revolution, and the hopes for a new age. Fitzgerald's political passion might symbolize the spirit of revolution - its beginning and rapid growth. He represents the intense desire of a new age for freedom for the oppressed. The symbols reinforce the theme of the story and serve as a reminder that it is not just the story of one young man. Rather they point out that this is the story of all young manhood. Without the symbols and their connotations The East Wind of Love would have been a trivial story of no consequence but with them it becomes historical and meaningful.

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Rose might symbolize the Victorian ideal of women. Switzerland could symbolize freedom for John just as music would seem to be a symbol of fulfilment to Julius. Elise is the symbol of future and of harmony in the Ogilvie family.

The pattern of symbols points toward the growth of mankind, the growth of a revolution and the growth of a new age. The author does not state the theme of this book explicitly, but it can easily be discerned from the personalities of the characters, their actions and reactions to the chain of events.

The entire story does not seem relevant to the theme in a strict sense. One may wonder why Mackenzie brings in John's excursion to Switzerland inasmuch as it has nothing to do with his maturation or with the growth of a revolution. Its meaning is more subtle and it offers an interlude out of the mainstream of events in order to reveal John's character and his state of mind when free from stress.

Mackenzie only just suggests a view of human nature in offering us a picture of many different classes and of the individuals who make them up, leaving the reader free to choose the one closest to his own notions of human nature and values. Not only does he do this, but he sometimes gives us a glimpse of the environment of these people to show what has helped to make them what they are - whether it be virtuous or otherwise.

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Indirectly, therefore, we are given something of Mackenzie's opinion of the world. He is critical of the English at a time when nationalism was rampant and prosperity had left many of them indifferent to the plight of other nations or classes of people. Mackenzie conveys the attitude that convention and conformity often impede social as well as individual progress. All his characters, whether by contrast or parallel, seem to point to the fact that Mackenzie believes no obstacle is insurmountable.

In this portion of The Four Winds of Love Compton Mackenzie offers a general idea of a philosophy of life which is elaborated and refined as the novel develops and its hero matures. At this point it is still an implied philosophy, providing the author with a basis on which he can construct his characters.

CHAPTER V

THE SECOND PART OF THE EAST WIND OF LOVE

If the first book of The East Wind of Love can be in any way described as an introduction to the entire sequence because it provides a setting in time and place, with ideologies in conflict, then the second book can be regarded as a study of its principal figure, John Ogilvie. He is a youth of seventeen having a year's freedom from school as a subaltern in the Loamshire Volunteers. He travels about Britain and falls in love, first with Rose Medlicott, the daughter of a member of the landed gentry, and later with the mother of his friends Emil and Julius Stern, "the first woman older than myself whom I had a chance to confide in." (p.88). He is influenced by his friends and tries to make up his mind about many things, being "a schoolboy still in his knowledge of live humanity." (p.66).

The East Wind of Love as a novel offers considerable contrast to Guy and Pauline.¹ It is, for example, simpler in theme and more concentrated in setting and plot. Essentially it is the account of the waxing and the waning of a love affair. Mackenzie depicts with an accurate psychological realism - and, at times, in a heightened, consciously poetic style - the charmed, magic quality of a first romantic love and its predestined destruction by other demands and realities

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of existence. This volume focuses more steadily on the beauty and the brevity of young love than any other of Mackenzie's previous books except Guy and Pauline, though this theme is found in each. As John Raymond has observed:

" . . . no one can describe first love like Mackenzie. He is a connoisseur of white nights, a master of romantic inarticulate."² Yet Mackenzie, in these novels, never lets us forget that this love is not the stuff that lasts. In The East Wind of Love as in Guy and Pauline, the failure of love seems due essentially to an incompatibility of background and aspiration between the lovers. Thus Rose cannot be translated out of the narrow if enchanting world of Loamshire into the wider world of action and achievement which is John's destiny. From the man's point of view, as Mackenzie presents it in this novel and in Sinister Street, romantic first love is not just an idyll salvaged out of time. It is a test on the threshold of maturity, a danger to be run, a spell to be broken. The underlying assumption is the familiar one that love is everything to a woman, though it is only one aspect of a man's life. Aspiration is thus brought into conflict with love.³ Man needs an arena in which to act and a varied experience by which to grow, yet woman would confine him to the fireside. It is the ambivalence of a first passionate love - both as incomparable enchantment and subtle menace - which Mackenzie depicts in The East Wind of Love.

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It is perhaps understandable that critics and reviewers have generally been more impressed by the idyllic or sentimental qualities of Mackenzie's novels than by his almost cynical recognition that for man love can be a danger. The attempt to capture the mood of youthful love and the beauty of Loamshire scenery obscures the actual implications of the story. Some have been impressed by the sentimental and conventional qualities of the love interest.⁴ Others are disturbed by the usually unhappy ending.⁵ Some few have more nearly perceived Mackenzie's intent. The Birmingham Gazette said:

The charm and selfishness of romantic love, its radiant rapture while it lasts and its poor wearing stuff for the practical stress of life, is the theme of Mr. Compton Mackenzie's new novel. . . .⁶

The Westminster Gazette (London) observed: "His [Mackenzie's] theme is erotic biliousness; the temptation, the delight and the reaction, and it is admirably handled."⁷

Still other reviewers were quick to point out the salutary moral lesson implied by the action of his novels. Gerald Gould said that:

. . . one might suppose they were intended to teach the dangers of a long engagement between two high-strung young people with nothing in the world to do but make love to each other.⁸

One can agree in large measure with what has been said of Guy and Pauline as having relevancy to the Second

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Part of The East Wind of Love. Everyman (London) counseled: "It is a book that might be read with advantage by those reckless young people who little understand the weary futility of long, vague engagements."⁹ The Huddersfield Examiner and West Riding Reporter, however, protested against such moral seeking:

The book may be taken by those who seek a moral in their fiction as a warning against long engagements; it may equally well be taken as a warning against falling in love at all.¹⁰

In contrast to Sinister Street or Carnival, there is not much emphasis upon plot incident in The East Wind of Love. Very little happens, as far as external action is concerned, during the five months which the second volume of the story encompasses. The Bystander (London) complained that no one in Guy and Pauline ever did "anything more exciting than going out on the river when the others were in their bysies,"¹¹ and the same is true of The East Wind of Love. The story, moreover, is about a single situation: the growth and decline of a love affair.

The Saturday Review Literary Supplement (London) thought the book was "thin, woefully thin."¹² Some reviewers, indeed, denied that it had a definite plot.¹³ What R. Ellis Roberts accurately said of Guy and Pauline may be applied to The East Wind of Love:

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. . . is not a novel of action. Its real plot is, indeed, the quarrel between meditation and action, between Guy - all impulse, only occasionally choked by sentiment - and Pauline who wishes to be rather than to do.¹⁴

The criticism made of the lack of action in The East Wind of Love fails to take into consideration the artistic objective and technique of the book. Essentially the novel is a "study" of the relationship of two people in love. The interest resides primarily not in what is done but in the modifications produced subjectively in each by their emotions and the drama of their interrelationship. The drama or the "action" is thus largely internal and subjective. It is the depiction of a love affair through the consciousness of the persons involved. But love, as all lovers know, is invariably inarticulate. It is, at times, an aura of happiness which transfigures commonplace realities. And it is, also, a matter of tremors, of discords and tensions. To communicate successfully this private world of feeling, an "objective correlative" is desirable. Mackenzie finds such a correlative in the use of external nature - its seasons and its variable weathers - to reflect the varying moods and stages of a love affair.

Thus, on the one hand, the pageant of the year's seasons becomes the external index of the progress of the affair, which likewise proves cyclic. Love develops amid hesitations during that first winter, but with the coming of

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of spring the lovers finally confess their love. Their new-found happiness and delight are perfectly expressed by the burgeoning spring and dream-like summer which ensue. Autumn, however, contains premonitions of their love's decline as well as that of the year's:

The sad stillness of the year's surrender to decline admonished them to garner these hours, making a ghost even of the sun as if to warn them of the fleeting world, the covetous and furtive world. (Guy and Pauline, p.203).

That autumn sees the inauspicious visit to the Stern household in London. Also, when there is mild censure of John and Miriam after the visit to the theatre to see A Doll's House John's alienation from his own and Miriam's family begins. As a further harbinger of change, a few weeks later John and Rose meet secretly at night for the first time. The following days with their cold and melancholy rains, usher in the tensions and conflicts which further threaten their love. Rose grows increasingly jealous of John's associations with the world outside Milbourne; John is in financial straits. Then John's confused religious beliefs become an uneasy shadow between them. "Rose was aware of a wild effort to prepare for sorrow, whether near at hand or still far off she did not know, but she seemed to hear it like a wind rising at sunset." (p.260). It is known, however, from the outset that this is a love which cannot endure. The spring is a stormy one, and there

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is a "month of maddening East Wind," (p.265). And Miriam reflects early that "these young loves of Spring were brief as the blossoms of the orchards, as the blossoms cut by the East Wind of Spring." (p.96). Rose droops in it, and John in despair and frustration seems intent on destroying their love. Summer brings back moments of happiness, but now too few and not unalloyed. By the beginning of autumn, all is at an end and the lovers have gone their separate ways, Rose to Switzerland where she marries Henry Falconer and John up to Oxford.

The invitation to accompany the Stern family to Poland comes just as John learns that Rose has gone and that he cannot see her again. In Cracow John spends the night with Miriam, but as a love affair it is unimpressive and unconvincing. Mrs. Stern is twenty years John's senior and the mother of his closest friends; her motherly instincts preclude her becoming a believable mistress and they remain close friends. Referring to him repeatedly as "dear boy" and "beloved boy", hers is the language and tone of a mother and older friend although what she feels is quite another matter. Mackenzie emphasizes Miriam's conflict in giving words to her feelings, indicated by italics. While waiting to talk with John after dinner one March evening she passes the time playing the piano for Julius and thinking:

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. . . age and youth . . . if Clara Schumann had loved the youthful Brahms? . . . sweet creation of some heart which found no resting place . . . the music Clara inspired was the music of a passion overcome, and anyway he was in his mid-twenties when poor Robert Schumann was in the asylum . . . and Robert's wife was not yet forty . . . fifteen years between them, not twenty, and those twenty the long rich years of youth . . . (p.97).

Impatient that John and Emil are still conversing downstairs she continues her reverie at the piano: "John, I would dance a German waltz with you if you asked me . . . and forty is so young when one is nearly thirty-nine . . . (p.97).

Realizing that John's stepmother might now be aware of her love, she wonders "if she should tell John to-night as frankly as she had been telling herself that she loved him." (p.97).

I am still beautiful and I desire the perfection of human desire while it could still be beautiful . . . the seduction of youth, that was a game which goddesses alone could play with dignity . . . and what did dignity matter in bed? (p.97).

At this point Julius finds it necessary to interrupt his mother's playing, which has been characterized now by "some disgracefully wrong notes."

Later on, after John has sought Miriam's advice about the authenticity of his love for Rose, she muses:

Foolish boy, blind to what I could give you now . . . With me you could be at peace, and I would not cling to you . . . There would be no secrets between us since we would already have yielded each to the other the secrets of love. (p.125).

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Miriam comes to the realization that her feelings for John are tinged with jealousy of Rose, and she pleads with herself: "Oh, why, why must I continue to torment myself with these two young lovers? I am giving them the importance of Adam and Eve. (p.125).

But this is what she feels; what she says to John is rather different. In speaking of his feelings for Rose, Miriam assures him that he is "talking to a woman old enough to be your mother." (p.124). Hiding her own feelings, she tells him that "I'm merely trying to make you realize that the immediate future before you is not quite so easy as you thought it would be." (p.124). The irony of this comment speaks adequately for itself. Her maternal interest in John makes itself further felt in her letters to him even "at the risk of losing your friendship." (p.57). The following passage quoted at length from one of her letters is typical:

I shall beseech you to guard against disaster by assuming for a while that you are just like any other young man who falls in love with a beautiful girl. Discipline cannot destroy what is really vital. If you are a creative artist, and you may be, you will one day experience inspiration. In one flashing moment you will conceive the whole of a work of art, but if you suppose that you can give enduring form to that conception except by the most arduous discipline you will not be a true creative artist, but an artistic dreamer. I'm sure I don't have to argue that with you.

Now, love as love has come to you is very like inspiration, and if you intend to make anything of it you must not expect outsiders to surrender to what they are bound to consider your self-indulgence.

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When somebody like myself who has lived almost entirely with artists all her life hears any demand for recognition before accomplishment she is apt to be sceptical. I have heard about so many masterpieces which never got beyond a blank sheet of foolscap, and the creators of those masterpieces never failed to find me prosaic and material because I would not accept the intention as the equivalent of the achievement. So please, John, do not throw this letter down in a rage because you think you misjudged my imagination. I do accept with absolute faith that you have had a transcendent experience which is granted to very few, but my scepticism fostered by the life I have led and the company I have kept compels me to add "Yes, and what are you going to make of it?" And I must be honest with myself and you, and add still a second question which touches me more nearly and that is "What is she going to make of you?"

There is a danger, you know, in doing as you are doing and concentrating at your age all the aspirations of youth on an ideal embodied in a single woman. And remember, it's you yourself who supplied me with that criticism when you told me that falling in love with your Rose had put out of your head your "mission to ruffle the Celtic fringe." Not that I want you to involve yourself in political adventures. I have seen too much misery from that in Poland. But I'm not sure that you will be content presently at having sacrificed your beliefs so readily. The completeness with which you have thrown them over for this English idyll is a little disquieting to me. Have you really considered the future? I do not suppose for an instant that her father or your father will agree to your getting married at once. Obviously they will not. Very well, then, you are faced with an interminable engagement, and you must remember that this will place a steadily increasing physical strain on both of you. You, next October, will be going to Oxford, and whatever you may think now you must change very rapidly during the next three or four years. I am not going to prophesy that this change will involve a change in your feelings for Rose; but though you may love her, as you think, just as devotedly, you will not love her in the same way. The ecstasy cannot endure. It's not conceivable that it should. Therefore I entreat you not at any rate yet awhile to consider marriage or an engagement. Love

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your Rose, but in loving her be content to be grateful to fortune for giving you at your age a grande passion. Our modern education does not tend to encourage these great passions of youth, but once upon a time we thought they were the very breath of poetry. (pp.59-60).

But lest one be left only with the impression of a maiden aunt reading a lecture, she applies this advice to her two sons:

Yet if Emil could fall in love with an English Rose like yours and be loved by her as I'm sure sure sure that she loves you, I should be happy beyond words. And if Julius could fall in love with an English Rose four years hence I would be even happier. So isn't it perverse of me to be demurring over your doing it? I think that nobody less than the Queen of Elfland would please me for you. . . . Women are odious as a sex. Yes, John, I'm afraid they are. They love to be maternal, and when one of them finds a young man to respond to her maternal cravings that's the last aspect of herself she wishes him to accept. (p.60).

John's reaction to Miriam's advice is the usual reaction of youth to their elders: "How little Mrs. Stern, with all her imagination, would understand," (p.62), although he does not tell her so. There can be little doubt that John's friendship with Miriam was little else. Even after spending the night with her in Cracow he leaves her, without speaking, to watch the sun rise. Of his thoughts or feelings about their romance he says nothing at all. Neither is it even alluded to by Emil and Julius. Miriam herself regards it simply as having "consecrated a friendship." (p.234). John still thinks of her as "Mrs. Stern", (p.254), and he concludes

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that "it did look as if life had been too easy for him to feel the profounder emotions." (p.254).

Thinking of himself, John reflects:

He was glad in one way that he was not jealous or envious or resentful of superiority or even personally ambitious for power, but there was no doubt that if he were he would find it much easier to translate dreams into action. Still perhaps he had not yet been tested sufficiently by circumstance. After all he would not be nineteen for another month. . . . (p.255).

Yet for a youth of nineteen his experience was scarcely what one would term limited; he had, as he puts it, "great tracts of unexplained life before him." (p.255). And he could be emotional in the way an adolescent can be. Comparing himself with his schoolmates and the trials of a schoolboy's existence, "he had hated the abstract idea of school from the first moment to the last of that penal servitude." (p.255). What really was it which had made him hate school so much?

Perhaps it was the deliberate process of standardization for which it stood. It set out either directly by the precepts of authority or indirectly by the example of those under that authority to discourage the slightest sign of the individual's attempting to differentiate himself. . . . The brains of the English public schools were being developed to create a parasitic class, the utility and efficiency of which could not hide the fact that they were parasites, skilfully though that condition might be disguised. (p.256).

John had little sympathy or regard for the standardized society and he hated still more the Victorian era which

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had produced it. His own youth lying in the gap between two periods, "he was able to criticize the Victorian discipline of respectability." (p.129). At the same time, he realizes that "the influence of a childhood spent under the sway of that respectability would not allow him to break completely clear of it." (p.129).

Everywhere he turned, John found London a grim reminder of the Victorian era and what it represented:

John by himself became indignant with the length and ugliness of Victoria Street. As the hansom jogged on between the tall houses, it seemed as long and ugly as the Victorian era. . . . Fancy turned to fact as in a dream. Victoria Street became the Victorian era from which he must escape. (p.7).

The house in Portman Square occupied by Lady Roker, Rose's aunt, is the epitome of everything Victorian:

The windows of the house in Portman Square were so rarely opened that the accumulated genteel odours of the Victorian age clung to it - the faint smell of gas, the mustiness of old embroidery, stale lavender-water and eau-de-Cologne, hot roast beef, potpourri, Shetland shawls, seed-cake, sherry, soda-mint tablets, and damp ferns. The rumble of the traffic was so little audible behind the thick plate glass of the windows as not to interfere in the least with the ticking of the numerous clocks even when they were covered with glass shades. There was one big clock in the hall which chimed every quarter and sounded a carillon at the hour as if time itself slept in this house and had to be roused in such a fashion to remember it was passing. The servants were fat, old, and waxen-faced. No doubt Simkins the butler and Mrs. Burge the housekeeper did occasionally take an afternoon or an evening out, emerging with a kind of dignified surreptitiousness from the area door and vanishing in the dusk upon their unimaginable excursions; but they seemed as

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integral a part of the house's construction as the mud-coloured pillars in the arched entrance-hall. Even Alice the kitchenmaid was over forty, preferring to wait until old Lady Roker passed on before she sought an engagement as a cook in what Mrs. Burge promised should be the right sort of establishment, which meant just such another Victorian cavern as the house in Portman Square. (pp.132-33)

As for Lady Roker herself:

For a long time she had recognized in Queen Victoria an egoism equal to her own and accorded to her as much respect as vanity accords to its own reflections in a mirror; but now that the Queen was dead she believed herself to be the only human being left with wisdom or even with common sense. (p.136).

John's reaction to the late nineteenth century probably was no different than that of many persons his age.

"Young men were depressed by the overwhelming achievements of the past, and although mentally disturbed by the feeling of change in the air they were unable to perceive any new road." (p.169). John was not an imperialist and he hated the theory of Empire:

There was a good case to be made even against the Roman Empire, but the case against the British Empire was overwhelming. The Boers were an unpleasant people in the way that the Roundheads had been an unpleasant people. Nevertheless, the almost unanimous opinion of the civilized world which was against Great Britain in this business could not be wrong. The only nation which had defended the action of Great Britain was Italy. Was it a memory of Imperial Rome which had made the Italians sympathetic? (p.191).

The reaction against the events in South Africa had already begun, but it was a negative reaction which inspired

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no substitutes. Kipling and his generation of poets had been discredited, and the exploitation of the war by the Unionist party was still five years away from being punished. "The country seemed a rubbish heap of the Victorian era which would never be cleaned up." (p.168). But John is more than just a fault-finder and malcontent. He proves himself to be quite articulate and to have a passionate faith in the future.

Now my theory is that by failing to assimilate the spiritual and social ideals of the other nations which helped them to create the British Empire and by imposing upon them instead purely English ideals and standards the English have failed to produce an indestructible political entity. That being so there must be thousands of British subjects who feel a doubt about the future and who are torn between their loyalty to a traditional patriotism and their belief in new social ideals. You asked me, sir, what the young men of the moment were feeling about the Empire. If I may judge by my friends, I would say that the people of my age are beginning to realize that the British Empire is merely a commercial concern which under the appearance of an altruistic morality exploits weaker nations. We feel that the other so-called empires are no better, and for that reason we do not consider ourselves unpatriotic by criticizing; but I think most of us do not feel perfectly sure that if some other nation produced a social ideal which would benefit the whole of the human race we should greatly regret the discrediting of the British imperial idea. We have been sickened by the mush of a Rudyard Kipling. We can not see in what is proclaimed to be the spiritual voice of the British Empire at the peak of its renown and power anything better than a catchpenny jingle of words. We feel that the white man's burden is a bundle of humbug when we remember the poor of this rich land. We hate the despicable party politicians who play an elaborate game for their own careers. We resent the signs we see of enslaving still further the individual for the sake of the smoothness of the commercial machine. We believe

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that the Victorian age from start to finish was a betrayal of the century which passed the Reform Act, and we denounce this cynical South African war as the ultimate outrage of Victorianism. (pp.304-05).

Not long before, on September 5th, he had written to Miriam Stern in Cracow and the sentiments and convictions of the post-Victorian reformer make themselves heard again. Prophetically he wrote:

There surely never was a century like the one from which we have just mercifully escaped for fostering the rapid growth of an intellectual forest of soft-wooded ideas in which humanity could lose itself. We must cut and cut away and if necessary burn on a grand scale. I suppose the first clearance will be made by a great war. War is in the air. (p.283).

In The East Wind of Love, Part II, the directly expressed symbols are the persons themselves. They are presented mainly through the actions, thoughts and conversation of John Ogilvie.

At the very beginning of this book we are given an insight into John's feelings for the Victorian era and Saxon England. He thought that "the length and ugliness of Victoria Street . . . seemed as long and as ugly as the Victorian era. (p.7). During a train ride "through the slums of the East End John thought how appropriate it was that such a hideous squalor should infect the approach to London from this direction. Here was the symbol of a purely Saxon England." (p.19).

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The remembrance of his illicit love affair in Cracow with Miriam Stern, "that broken trumpet call [as he terms it] . . . was the symbol of his emotional life up to the present." (p.359).

The young characters in this book, then, represent different facets of the revolutionary spirit which is common to all youth, and all of the characters symbolize different stages of development in the average human being.

John Ogilvie symbolizes the quiet revolutionary spirit of the younger generation towards the political, economic, legal, educational and religious systems of their age. Although John is dissatisfied with the overall condition of England, he does nothing to change what he considers a deplorable situation. This action typifies that of the majority of the dissatisfied people of the world. Broadly speaking, John represents the typical youth of all times, and he reacts to situations in much the same manner as any normal boy would.

Edward Fitzgerald, a friend of John Ogilvie, symbolizes the idealistic youth of the world, especially those of Ireland who were dissatisfied with England's treatment of their homeland. He represents the idealistic young men who are not afraid to shed their blood or even die for a cause in which they believe. His type can be seen today in the soldiers of the world who have volunteered to defend democracy

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against communist aggression in all corners of the earth.

Emil Stern symbolizes the malcontents and frustrated idealists who suffer from not being understood as they wished they were. He tries to hicethis feeling by assuming an air of intellectual superiority.

Miriam Stern symbolizes the longing for past youth which many middle-aged women exhibit. Because her own family is unresponsive to her love she turns her attempts for youthful association towards John Ogilvie. Miriam feels that she has relived her youth and attained complete fulfilment in her search for youth when she experiences sexual relations with John.

Elise Ogilvie symbolizes the good mother. She is interested in John's affairs, even though she is only his step-mother. Elise is constantly trying to promote harmony in the home by acting as an intermediary between John and his father. A good mother should be respected and trusted by her family as well as being interested in its welfare. We can see that John respected and trusted Elise when he confides in her and seeks her advice during his romance with Rose and his affair with Miriam.

The pattern of the main symbols, and indeed the whole book, points to the fact that man is a multi-faceted creature who is essentially revolutionary in spirit when he is young, and resolved in spirit during his later years.

NOTES

CHAPTER V

¹Punch (London) said: ". . . Guy and Pauline is not in the least the kind of book I was prepared to find it. It reveals Mr. Mackenzie in a quite new manner, as far removed from the passionate vitality of Carnival as from the realism, perhaps a little aggressive, of Sinister Street. Here is miniature painting, more exquisite and delicate in workmanship, devoted entirely to the portrayal of an episode in the lives of two persons." CXLIX (September 22, 1915), p.259.

²"Books in General," The New Statesman and Nation, XLVIII, (London, December 25, 1954), p.860.

³So The Daily Telegraph (London) compares Guy and Pauline to Meredith's The Ordeal of Richard Feverel: "Like George Meredith, Mr. Mackenzie has tried to draw a very young man at that difficult age when a first love is struggling with a dawning ambition . . . (October 13, 1915) [a clipping in the Mackenzie Scrapbooks, No.30]. We may say the same of The East Wind of Love."

⁴The Ladies' Field (London) called it "a simple but poignant idyll of the heart" (October 16, 1915, p.318). To the Liverpool Courier, "The story is a Victorian romance in a Georgian setting" (October 21, 1915 [clipping in Scrapbook No. 30.]) The Outlook (London) grumbled "Perhaps this is the most sentimental book that was ever written" (October 4, 1915. [clipping in Scrapbook No. 30]).

⁵Newsagent (London), for example, said that it was "a very charming love story, but one that does not end very satisfactory" (September 24, 1915 [clipping in Scrapbook No. 30]). The Standard (London) felt that Mackenzie "might have safely married his lovers" (September 15, 1915 [clipping in Scrapbook No. 30]).

⁶September 24, 1915. (clipping in Scrapbook No.30).

⁷September 24, 1915. (clipping in Scrapbook No.30).

⁸The New Statesman, V (September 18, 1915), p.570.

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⁹October 29, 1915 (clipping in Scrapbook No.30).

¹⁰October 2, 1915 (clipping in Scrapbook No.30).

¹¹October 27, 1915 (clipping in Scrapbook No. 30).

¹²CXX (October 16, 1915), p.viii (clipping in Scrapbook No. 30).

¹³Gerald Gould said of the book: "There is no plot." (The New Statesman, p.570). The Sphere (London) commented that "there is not a suggestion of plot or any development of story". (October 9, 1915. [clipping in Scrapbook No.30]).

¹⁴"Compton Mackenzie", The Manchester Guardian, February 13, 1925, (clipping in Scrapbook No. 8).

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST PART OF THE SOUTH WIND OF LOVE

In many ways The South Wind of Love, Part One, may be considered a love story, as the title might suggest. John Ogilvie is deeply involved in a companionship with a French actress, Gabrielle Derozier, and many of the more beautiful passages of the novel stem from their mutual relationship. It is a colourful love affair, and an intellectualized one, as the following passage from one of Gabrielle's letters indicates:

. . . But now your letters tell me that I am necessary to your happiness, and I think you will be the same John who has taught me to love. And I think you can be very proud because I have not said so much to any man yet. I cannot tell you how follement I long for you. I have never before wanted Carême to arrive so soon, and though it is only February and the weather in Paris is quite abominable I must already call it le printemps to please myself with the reflection that this empty miserable and disappointing winter has departed. Oh, we shall find parmi les orangers such a place for love. And I am so pleased with the fashions this year. They are altogether moi-même. I shall buy myself quite a lovely trousseau. . . . (p.73).

The problems of a struggling playwright searching for meaning and fulfilment in the way of a true artist adds an interesting dimension to the story. Ogilvie never becomes a success in the theatre although he does attain a level of occupation and a feeling of usefulness in the secret service.

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The problem of aging seems to be of central importance when he thinks of Gabrielle Derozier. She, like all women who have passed thirty, is concerned with her own vanity and "Time's grasping fingers". This element in the story is well brought out by Gabrielle herself early in the novel as she gazes upon her features at the home of her parents:

"I really do not look more than twenty-seven in this frock," Gabrielle thought. "Yet in another three years when I shall be thirty-five a frock like this will make me look older than I am. If age's trap were just a net of lines how easily it could be avoided! But it is so mean and stealthy in the way it conquers. It spreads over a woman like a kind of fog. It deadens all the outlines without softening them. No, I have not more than three years to cling to what I was in my twenties. Oh, yes, yes, I shall have to admit to thirty in another three years." (p.4).

Mankind has always been looking for his fountain of youth, and Gabrielle Derozier is no exception. Age and mortality have been the affliction and preoccupation of all men and from it none can escape, although many have tried.

The international flavour of this novel is unusual, for most novels restrict their activities to a specific locale. In this novel the locale is constantly shifting from France to America to Canada, back again to Europe and finally to the Greek islands where the story is concluded.

The author provides the reader with a lively and imaginary experience in locale and setting in most of his passages. The life blood, for example, of New York and Mileto become very real to the reader.

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The actual story does depend more significantly upon those things somehow already familiar than upon those unfamiliar elements because the notions of love, ambition and advancing age are basic themes. Special techniques such as the shifting locale could, perhaps, have been avoided without affecting the core of the novel.

The moods of John Ogilvie in the second part of The South Wind of Love are significantly different from and less clearly defined than those of the first half of the novel. In the latter he is a highly philosophical, although slightly immature, playwright attempting to win success in America with his play, Annette. Thus John appears to be a rather distant person; when his break with Gabrielle occurs, however, he is awakened to the more subtle realities of life, and becomes concerned to a great degree with the current political scene. The struggle for Home Rule in Ireland and the Balkan entanglements bring to the surface his awareness of life's problems. When he joins the Secret Service, his artistic and boyish outlook on life soon becomes submerged. He sees the starving masses in Greece and witnesses the death of a fellow lieutenant, Tom Gardiner, and talks with a wounded Australian on the beaches at Anzac. These things soon have the effect of subduing his excitement over war; and his thoughts from this point onward come down to earth. For these reasons it would appear that John Ogilvie passes through a

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cycle of moods throughout the novel. Nevertheless, his feelings rarely go to any great extreme, for he is a rather stable personality despite his artistic sensitivities. It must be said, therefore, that the moods expressed by John Ogilvie in this novel are impressive more for their variety than for their intensity.

The only basis for a comparison of Derozier and Ogilvie rests upon their artistic sensitivities. Both characters have similar tastes and emotional responses when thinking of their reactions to and appreciation of the stage and the newly developing cinema; however, Gabrielle's major moments of concern and despondency occur only when she reflects upon her age and her loss of John. At all other times in the novel she remains a successful actress with few real problems and while she is fundamentally just as cerebral as John, she never becomes too emotionally caught up in the philosophical matters of life. Gabrielle never becomes a concrete person because she is always playing the part of a romantic stage actress. On the other hand, John does achieve a reality which is convincing.

One cannot help but follow the emotional responses to the reactions of John Ogilvie more than anyone else. This is true especially when Ogilvie is speaking or thinking in his almost exclusively philosophical fashion. His emotional responses can be followed; however, he is far from being the

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only character with whom this is done. Gabrielle Derozier, Tom Gardiner, Emil Stern, Athene and Wacey Langridge, Mr. Manners, Aristides, Dr. Vampos and Condo are all colourful characters, whose inner workings are always exciting interest on the part of the reader. These characters have not been introduced simply as grotesque additions; they are, in most cases, interesting and vivid people whose emotional responses to a situation cannot always be anticipated. Thus, they are also of interest and at times even dominate the reader's interest in the major character. This was just the case in the instance of John's conversation with Euphrosyne on the Greek island of Lipsos.

While emotional response is weighted in favour of John Ogilvie, the author has produced a number of other interesting characters who tend to balance this concentration and make for a rich and smoothly flowing novel.

John Ogilvie, as an artist and a member of the Secret Service becomes a "James Bond" sort of character, especially in the later part of the novel. Vicarious identification with him for this reason would be highly possible. Nevertheless, Ogilvie does have human failings: he is not in perfect health and he has difficulty in handling the problems resulting from his romance with Gabrielle Derozier.

One tends to identify with Ogilvie in his artistic sensitivity and in the reasonableness of his philosophical

ponderings. To a lesser degree, one can identify with Captain "Pow-Wow" Selward. Also a member of the Secret Service, he is likeable for his carefree and happy-go-lucky attitude. Selward, filled with his endearing form of bravado, is especially appealing in his treatment of Mr. Manners, an overly secretive secret agent. Selward rebukes Manners' overplayed rules for secrecy and almost drives Manners into hysteria by mentioning, in Manners' office, the name of the head of the Secret Service, Captain Wade.

Identification with many of the other characters in the story fails to occur, either because they are insufficiently developed or are introduced solely as a means to reveal the characters and conflicts of the principals.

One of the more important values of the story seems to be the author's analysis of character in the form of innumerable short character sketches, especially of some of the minor characters. It is more a physical presentation, however, than a mental description, as the following examples will clearly illustrate.

Monsieur Peccoud is an old man at the home of Gabrielle's parents. Here is how he is remembered in Gabrielle's mind:

The same quill behind his ear! The same
black alpaca jacket of how many summers! The
same rosy cheeks and shining bald head and
flock of silvery curls! (p.2)

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A description of one of the more colourful minor characters in the story is that of Hildegarde Rayner:

. . . She was a typical figure of Germanic womanhood, dressed in a floppy dress of some light material, her hair inclined to collapse like a badly made stook, her white teeth glittering in a wide smile, her forget-me-not blue eyes dancing with pleasure. (p.174).

Withers' Greek assistant, Constantine Condochristopoulos, a name "mercifully abbreviated to Condo", is vividly described by the author:

. . . He was a small man with a sort of bird-like plumpness and, except for about two hours after shaving, with a perpetually unpreened appearance. All the summer he wore a grubby brown holland suit, which he exchanged in winter for a much-stained and shiny suit of black broadcloth. He had just donned this now in readiness for his voyage, and his olivine skin was greasier than ever with agitation. (p.311).

Ogilvie is presented exclusively by his speech and thought but the reader is still left with no clear picture of just what he looked like physically. On the other hand, Gabrielle Derozier is well described physically, although her mental character still remains slightly obscured.

The time of the novel is the early twentieth century and there are many radical and new ideas in the air. People are becoming tired with outmoded Victorian ideals, and the vogue of Freud is just coming into being. The new generation, typified by John Ogilvie and his sister Prudence, an enfant du siècle, are challenging the Victorian regionalists

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and longing for a new and better world. The point of view is further influenced by the newly emergent theatre on two continents and the appearance of the infant medium called the cinema. War occupies the whole of the novel. Mackenzie is concerned with the injustice typified by the mention of the German and Turkish atrocities. There is complete political chaos in a bitter and changing world, but, at the same time, it is apparent that neither the author nor the characters of his creation are embittered by it all.

Ogilvie, trying to avoid the pratfalls of Victorian idealism, is for the most part highly successful. His growth in liberality and radical internationalism reflects the distrust of the old generation for the new. Monsieur and Madame Derozier typify such distrust, and this is seen in observing how highly suspicious they become of the new world to which Gabrielle turns her thoughts.

The author has attempted to incorporate this point of view into one of the central themes of the novel. He tries to show how out of place persons like Miss Peach, Prudence's governess, are in this newly-enlightened society. For the period in which it was written, the point of view suggests a radical departure from that current at the time.

Ogilvie is a child of the new post-Victorian world. He is a young and excitable character, striving to express himself and longing to belong to the war movement because he

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is enthralled with its artistic possibilities. Later he becomes concerned with the universal problem of justice, and the war gives him a deeper insight into the meaning of life. Showing himself to be spiritually disturbed and uncertain, John longs for concrete religious reality and admires Gabrielle's zeal and devotion, but he himself is never able to attain that plateau of devotional sincerity.

These traits of John Ogilvie's character are brought out through three major outlets; his speech, his actions, and his letters. In fact, letters are the major means of communication within the structure of this novel. John's inner self is more fully comprehended by the reading of his personal communiqués to Gabrielle, Miriam, Athene, and Emil Stern. His actions further illustrate the traits of his character, especially those actions which are motivated by his desire to be independent and to live up to his personal ideals, such as his rugged determination to become a member of the Secret Service. The persons around him are also greatly influential in bringing out his character, especially Gabrielle, Gardiner, the wounded Australian, Euphrosyne and Antonia Drimys. Several of these ideas will be clarified in the final section.

Towards himself, life, and the world, John Ogilvie's attitudes mature as the novel progresses. The last part, when he is involved in the war effort, brings out this idea

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very clearly. Ogilvie is more a type, an Everyman, than a specific individual.

Mackenzie writes here on a learned level; except for the allusions to the French dialect of Gabrielle, however, it does not become so immediately necessary to be constantly referring to a dictionary, as is the case with Thomas Hardy's novel, The Return of the Native. The author employs colourfully descriptive paragraphs:

When the Princess Sophia has passed between the Pillars of Hercules into a milky blue Mediterranean and the mountains of north-west Africa were cloudy shapes along the southern horizon, he became obsessed by the desire to see a nautilus sailing across this placid sea. (p.98).

Generally, Compton Mackenzie prefers the short quotable sentence and carries this practice to effective extremes. For example:

. . . Cables to Julius. Cables back from Julius that they could do what they liked about altering the existing music, but that he refused to write any fresh music. Buffalo. Wasn't it here that President McKinley was assassinated? Montreal. The revised version of Annette performed for the first time. A much more appreciative audience than Toronto. That could be explained by the French element. Sleighs bumping over the slushy streets. (p.69).

The ship, Princess Sophia, symbolizes the story's international significance. It brings John from the old to the new world, just as John himself is striving to move from outmoded Victorian ideas to new modern concepts:

. . . This arrival in New York was like passing from one plane to another. The first sight of that

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tremendous profile had been a shock, and the nearer they came to the existence of which those battlements were the challenging proclamation the more profoundly did they comprehend that this was in very fact not a fresh country but a new world. (pp.14-15).

John is seen entering upon the freshness of new thought and new ideas. The same idea is developed in the following passage:

That first night in New York. Julius and himself wandering along Broadway, their heads in the air like two kids at a firework gala. Fountains of rubies and emeralds streaming incessantly over the face of every building. A mammoth kitten in electric light playing with a titanic ball of wool. Cascades of sapphires and topazes. Even the quoted opinions of dramatic critics rutilant above the doors of the theatres. (p.24).

Ogilvie and Julius sit down upon a park bench and gaze upon the Metropolitan Life Insurance Building with its great green illuminated clock turning to red at the hour:

They had sat down on a bench to pore upon this shape with which they could compare nothing in their experience of architecture. The beauty of it, they had decided, lay in its perfect expression of a child's aspiration. Give a child all the bricks in the world with the power to command labour and he would produce a tower like this. They discussed seriously the possibility of living on the conical roof. Europe was seeming sterile and remote in the fecundity of the impressions with which New York was making their brains teem. (p.25).

Here John is aspiring to greater things, and the building can be regarded as symbol both of the barriers and of the heights which must be scaled and overcome. Orange trees have a special meaning to John and Gabrielle:

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Connais-tu le pays ou fleurit l'oranger,
Le pays des fruits d'or et des roses vermeilles?

It is so banal, yet, but it has given me a profound desire to be with you in that country of orange trees. (p.71)

and bring out the significance of John's need for security with Gabrielle Derozier.

The hammering winds of the powerful scirocco coming just before John's break with Gabrielle are highly symbolic: "A wind like this would have made Romeo and Juliet bicker," John tells her. (p.134).

Miss Peach stands as a great symbol of Victorian banality and trivial values. But the major symbol is the island of Lipsia:

"Lipsia," John murmured. "The island of the south wind, I suppose. Let me see, what's the south wind in modern Greek?"

"Notia we call it. And can't it blow here. But as you see Grazia is protected against every other wind."

"It's strange I should come to Lipsia," John said.

"Why?"

"Oh, it's a fancy I had to divide my life into the four winds."

"Indeed? And which is blowing now?"

"The south wind. That's why I said it was strange I should have come to Lipsia. I've a feeling that this place will be influential over my life." (pp.389-90).

The symbols are consistent with Mackenzie's theme but to be fully understood this final symbol must be placed within the context of his entire sequence on The Four Winds of Love.

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The theme is implicit; it concerns a new world and the need for new ideas. It is a relatively abstract theme but becomes apparent through John Ogilvie's personal philosophy of life. There are lapses, however, in the story which do not seem completely relevant to the theme. The struggle for John to attain success in his play Annette. The presence of this interval of passages can only be explained as necessary to bring out fully the character of the hero.

Many philosophical values are suggested by the story and for the most part they are self-explanatory. The chief of these are quoted below:

"Movement," he had exclaimed to himself,
"movement! Even the Niagara Falls cannot thrill
when one is too far away to appreciate that they
are moving." (p.68)

John's later negative impression of the New York
skyscrapers is powerful:

He had been seized by such a revulsion against
New York that he had begun to believe that it was
a threat to the rest of the world. The very sky-
scrapers which had stirred his imagination by their
austere grace had turned into menacing portents of
the megalopolitan prison to which humanity was
doomed. (p.71).

On the controversial question of sexuality, he says:

Innumerable aphorisms about men and women in
their purely sexual relationship had been coined
in the verse and prose of every language, all of
which emphasized the unimportance to the man of
the sexual act compared with its importance to the
woman; but humanity continued blithely to ignore
such aphorisms as soon as desire was aroused. (p.119).

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John's feeling about religion is very important as far as he himself is concerned and it is echoed several times throughout the novel:

I wish I could believe as positively that Christianity is the truth as I believe that certain cruel perversions of it like Calvinism are damnably, oh most damnably wrong. If Christianity is true I believe positively that the Catholic Church is the only repository of Christian truth, but if I accept the truth of the Catholic Church I must reach it through my acceptance of Christianity first. (p.127).

On Freud, John has the following to say:

Freud has at least suggested cause for effect, and I think that he is often right, but he completely misunderstands the normal human being. (p.185).

Like Freudianism, Marxism is a new philosophy which was just coming under discussion at this juncture in history.

On Marxism, John has a few well-considered reflections:

. . . Every argument on behalf of Marx's theories can be matched with arguments a million times stronger on behalf of Jesus Christ's theories. Christianity when practised has never once failed to work since God was Incarnate. (p.244)

On war and militarism, especially with regard to England's stand on the matter, John takes this point of view:

" . . . It's not the militarism I object to," John exclaimed, "it's the bureaucracy. England has a few sins to answer for, but she has one supreme virtue. She has remained an amateur. . . ." (.264).

The following passage brings out John's philosophy on the potent topic of love:

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John would have liked to tell poor Gardiner that when a man believed women were a mystery it was a sure sign that no woman had loved him. But that would have involved an exposition on what love was. And that he was not prepared to give Gardiner in this little dug-out on the roof and walls of which the flies were smeared like dark jam. (p.346).

In a particularly bitter frame of mind, John made the following comment on receipt of a letter of thanks from the fiancée of Lieutenant Tom Gardiner, who had earlier been killed. Gladys Hancock had sent a letter to acknowledge John's message of sympathy:

Gladys Hancock was one of thousands of young women to whom this was merely a matter of white feathers and purple crepe. Was not poor Tom Gardiner better dead than married to one of them and liable to produce daughters like his wife? And the influence these myriads of Gladys Hancocks exercised over contemporary life! (p.359).

John Ogilvie's attitude and reactions all point to the realities of life in a world in conflict. As a young man in love with life, he has to learn the verities of the external world of action and responsibility, which presently exist largely as a threat to his self-contained perfection and idealization of the timeless. These realities of historic time are regarded, at first, as an inharmonious intrusion into his world of idealism and romantic adventure.

CHAPTER VII

THE SECOND PART OF THE SOUTH WIND OF LOVE

In the second part of The South Wind of Love, John Ogilvie is an intelligence agent for Spicer's Bureau of the British Secret Service during the first World War. The book traces John's career in Greece; first in Salonika, then in Lipsia, and his love for a young Greek girl named Zoe Gadri-lakis, whom he meets because of the war and loses when a torpedo destroys the ship on which she is travelling to Athens to buy her trousseau.

Mackenzie portrays the life of a British Secret Service agent as humdrum routine and paper work. It is very different from the into-bed, out-of-bed, shoot-and-run type of story characteristic of Ian Fleming's books and even of spy stories such as John le Carré's The Spy who Came In From the Cold.

The love theme is, of course, a universal one, and it contrasts with the world of red tape involved in John's work. Zoe is his "youth and beauty" (p.212), and her death leaves him first despairing, but later he is left with happy memories of her being his south wind. (p.390).

The story covers that segment of John's life between 1912 and 1917. The war affects his career and his meetings with other people, and it is, therefore, described with an

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abundance - perhaps an over-abundance - of detail. John's movements from one bureau to another are important, as are the Athens riots, but some of the rest is not necessary to the story.

As the book is the story of a man, so, logically, the point of view should be his. This makes it necessary for the author to introduce as many characters as possible so that we see all sides of John. The author, it is well known, has certain scapegoats too; the British Navy with its rules and regulations and the British treatment of Ireland can be singled out. He takes care of the first by making John an intelligence officer instead of a sailor and the second by giving him a friend in the Irish Rebellion. Thus he projects his opinions through John.

The story may be divided into episodes according to John's geographical location, and a few slight plot ties hold it together. One is the Grace Harper-Heinrich Wahl plot. In what will be described as episode one, John first hears about them, and in episode three, he captures Heinrich Wahl from a ship bound for New York. Then there are minor characters who appear throughout the book, who travel with him, or whom he meets more than once. There is also the love plot which must be considered separately since it has a separate climax.

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John Ogilvie possesses all the qualities a man could have and would like to have. He is humanity in one person. He is physically mature in his mid-thirties, but as Miriam Stern says of him, "He would plunge from youth into eld, but he would never know middle age." (p.71). He is attractive to women, and it is Miriam who says, "You are curiously feminine in some ways. I suppose that's a great part of your charm for women." (p.114). He is sentimental and not quite "so excessively" a man. He is as gentle and devoted to his friends as he is impatient of ignorant and stupid people. He worries about Lingfield when the latter is sick, and inspires him to confide, "I've made such a putrid mess of my life, Ogilvie, that a bullet would be welcome." (p.85). He writes a sympathetic letter to Fitzgerald's mother and wife, but when they receive it, most of it is censored. Fitzgerald's wife, Nora, says, "It will have been about Edward. . . . He has not forgotten his friend." John himself says to Wade, "I am very fond of people." (p.409).

But of people like Major Wicksteed and all he represents, John is contemptuous. When Wicksteed says to him, "Have you finished talking?" John replies, "Till you make your next remark." (p.25) Yarrow says to him at one point, "There is a streak of inhumanity in you that you ought to learn how to use." (p.131). John also has a sense of humour and of the ridiculous. He says to Miriam, ". . . the war

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must come to an end at last because there'll be no more paper on which to write reports." (p.71).

John is a man who has mastered the art of living, and this can best be seen from his opinions on almost everything from love to war. These opinions are the basis of his philosophy of life.

About war, he says to Major Wicksteed, "But you professional soldiers have a queer notion of running a war. I suppose you'd rather be beaten by the Germans than surrender one point of etiquette?" (p.12) To Colonel Skinner, also on war: "We are living in extraordinary times . . ." (p.44). On the British treatment of Ireland he says to Elise: "Posterity will not praise our treatment of Ireland . . . we will seem blind, cruel fools." (p.47). ". . . the world is suffering from a fever at present . . . bouts of delirium are recurrent in groups of people everywhere," he says to Miriam about the state of the world. (p.63). To Miriam, on himself: "Whether I ever write any more plays, I know now a great deal about life, perhaps too much to write plays . . ." (p.69).

The author says of him, "He realized that from now on for the rest of his life the fundamental inspiration of his political philosophy would be the well-being of the people at whatever cost to his other ideals." (p.82). He is accused of being an idealist by Louis Matheson, who says to

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him, "You can't go into politics, my young friend, and expect to preserve your soul." (p.104).

John speaks of love to Vasili: "You can win a woman's affection, gratitude, respect, admiration; but you can never win more than an imitation of love," (p.310) and earlier he speaks to Julius on modern forms of art:

It seems to me that the most damaging accusation against the mechanization of the arts is the way such mechanization shows up the fundamental hatred of art among the public. Think of the gramophone and the film, of what they might have achieved and what they have achieved. (p.56).

To Euphrosyne he speaks of immortality: "With a secure faith in that the face of death is no longer white." (p.389).

Speaking of the London stage, John thinks: "Oh well, the mass of decayed rubbish left lying around from the Victorian era could hardly be shifted without an unpleasant smell." (p. 411). About Zoe he muses: "I shall keep for ever a memory of unbroken beauty. She will live with me as always young, always fair. . . ." (p.391).

John as a person is believable and real. As a character, he is an instrument of the author, who is subtly yet decisively in complete control, integrating his own combination Victorian-modern ideas with John's character, so that it is difficult to decide where the author ends and the character begins. The personality, however, is John's, and the ideas and ideals belong to the author. John's actions are

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his own, and they reinforce his personality, but the author can be seen in his thoughts. Incidents from Mackenzie's own life as an intelligence officer figure prominently in this volume.

Several points should be noted about John's emotional makeup. Within the author's framework of personal likes, dislikes, prejudices and opinions, John's emotions are always justified. His anger is always just, and no annoyance is without sufficient provocation. His love is idealistic and deep; his sympathy is strong, and his happiness is complete. He is a strong character with intensity of emotion and the book is so centred around his feelings that other people's emotions are incidental if they are not directed toward him.

The second most important character is Zoe. She is beautiful and agreeable. John, in a letter to Miriam Stern, says of her:

She's not clever. All the brains have gone to her younger sister. I suppose she's not well bred. . . . The older I get the more convinced I am that men with brains are happier with wives who express most perfectly for them essential womanhood. . . . (pp.211-12).

That about describes her. She is colourless and even somewhat silly. This is the one remnant of the author's touch of Victorianism, for his other woman characters in this volume are equally scatterbrained and unappealing. Rose, for example, whose reaction to socialists is that they are "such

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dreadful people", is described as having grown "dull and plump in middle age." (p.72). When John visits the Rodneys, Jane tries to say something clever by quoting her husband. When it backfires:

"Oh, dear, have I said the wrong thing?"
 poor Jane asked of the universe, fluttering
 her eyelids . . . in what Freddie himself used
 to tell her was a delicious expression of help-
 lessness. (p.108).

Norma's friends are quoted by the author as calling her "poor Norma". The author himself refers to Jane as "poor Jane". (p.108). His Victorian-modernist condescension is characteristic of the second decade of the century, and should be understood as such.

The style of writing fluctuates between the first and third persons. Mackenzie makes use of dialogue to show two sides of an argument as well as to explain things more clearly. He uses letters to introduce people who do not actually appear where John is located. Were this volume not part of a sequence, this method could be questioned. However, as it is, these characters help us to understand John. Particularly useful are the letters to Miriam and Fitz, while the despatches provide a straightforward way of recounting what is going on in the war.

The author uses colloquial language and slang, for example, in Lingfield's description of Salonika: ". . . old Turks, young Turks, Spanish Jews . . . Greek whores, French

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whores, Armenian whores . . . brothels, stews, dancing-halls, knocking shops, drinking dives, pox, lice, bugs, fever and gold." (pp.4-5). Lingfield's question to John: "Can you tinkle a typewriter?" (p.5) also shows the author's use of familiar and colloquial language, as does "Tank God for dat, sir." (p.369). Some of the writing is literary in style: "When John saw his tower again it was standing up black against the tattered red of a stormy sunset, and the wind was still blowing hard from the west." (p.417).

Figures of speech are scarce and the only metaphor which stands out is not original. "The conception was all right . . . First of all, the generals in France and the politicians in Paris and London tried abortion. When that didn't succeed, they tried to stifle the infant at birth." (pp.4-5).

Mackenzie is fond of using scraps of foreign languages because they help to create atmosphere. Whether in Paris or Athens, language identifies the character as being a certain nationality more clearly than would mere description.

Names are carefully chosen too, although perhaps not as obviously as in the works of Dickens and Hardy. The pompous major is named Henry Woburn Wicksteed. Yarrow, who wears a monocle, is unthinkable with any nickname; nothing is really suitable except James. Wicksteed is amusing to

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the point of being almost pathetic; Yarrow's calculation of the amount of time spent in putting things away is clever and amusing, and his lack of musical ability is the butt of many jokes which he takes gracefully. John and Yarrow thought it funny that the captain of the Argo, who weighed three hundred and fifty pounds, should be named Pneumatikos. The Admiral, who is a flighty person, gets quite annoyed when messengers disturb his dinner several times to tell him his ships have been sunk: "How can I eat my dinner when you come in every other minute to say another damned ship has been sunk?" (p.202).

The story has several major symbols. The political situation in Europe symbolizes the confusion of the world. Major Wicksteed, who is largely a caricature, symbolizes the Army, of which John is contemptuous; and John uses him to bring out his disapproval of their regulations, their high-handedness and their questionable promotions. Ireland is the symbol of the oppressed people of the world. John symbolizes Man as he should be, growing and maturing, benefiting from each experience in life. The South Wind symbolizes love, not first love, but love found later in life after man has experienced the cold side of the world. John's love is spring after winter, but like the south wind, it is blinding, and like the south wind, it brings rain.

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Euphrosyne says to John in the climax of the story:

. . . you believed this island would have an influence on your life, and you told me about the south wind of love. . . . I thought how always the south wind brought rain, and I wondered if you had remembered those tears. The south wind has turned to rain for you. . . . (pp.390-91).

The symbols emphasize the strength of one good and sincere man against the surrounding confusion, and the power of love which makes him strong.

The theme of the story is mankind as he ought to be and as he could be. The author sees man's purpose on earth, and, through the character of John, shows how man can fulfil this purpose. He gives strength and receives strength from those around him. He sees the evils in the world and does his best to correct what he can, and to accommodate himself to what he cannot. He has a fundamental respect for his fellow man and acts accordingly. Mackenzie succeeds in showing a man at a certain period in his life who lives to the fullest and will continue to do so. Because it is the story of one man, the more people he meets and the more situations he is involved in, the better is the picture obtained of this man, and the more universal its relevancy.

In creating this character, John, Mackenzie would seem to have a two-fold purpose. One, mentioned above, is the more important. Of secondary importance, but inescapably present, is his reminder to the English that they are not

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what they think they are. He attacks particularly their Victorianism in the arts and in politics. He expresses deep sympathy with the Irish Rebellion too. By placing most of these attitudes in John, he creates a character who is, while being universal, also a man of his time.

Other ideas found in the characters include Euphrosyne's theory on the immortality of the soul, John's ideas on the futility of the war, and his respect for the dignity of man. But these values are only part of the author's view of humanity. Together with John's relationships with people, his reactions to difficult situations, and his performance of his duty, they represent the author's "Compleat Man". This is all-important, because this is the purpose of the story, and the value of the book depends on the author's success in creating John.

John's south wind is an exhilarating period of his life. At the end of this volume he is ready to embark on another phase of life's experiences. "That booming west wind accompanied John's journey all the way to Naples. . . . When John saw his tower again . . . the wind was still blowing hard from the west." (pp.416-17). With a mixture of happy and sad memories, John faces the next segment of life - the west wind and what it will bring.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WEST WIND OF LOVE

In The West Wind of Love Mackenzie sets himself to depict with psychological realism and historical accuracy the growth and complex development of a young man of the upper class who achieves his majority in the first years of the twentieth century. Young manhood itself is the theme or focus of the book. As Henry James remarked, "Youth clearly has been Mr. Mackenzie's saturation".¹ In Carnival we have seen the emphasis he gave to the childhood and adolescence of Jenny Pearl - an emphasis which many then felt excessive. In Sinister Street he treats the youth of his hero in far greater detail. Mackenzie seems artistically preoccupied with youth for several reasons. First, there is his belief, which has already been alluded to, that the child truly makes the man, or, as Holbrook Jackson observes: "A man in after life is but the extension of what he has been up to the age at which Michael Fane passes out of fiction".² Secondly, Mackenzie could claim that little had been done in English fiction to portray modern youth frankly and realistically. The strange, rather frightening world of childhood, the joys and agonies of adolescence, and the search for identity of young manhood had not yet become commonplace in the novel.³ Thirdly, he could draw upon his remarkably comprehensive memories of his

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own childhood and youth. He has often stated that his earliest vivid memory dates from about the age of seven months and that he has almost total recall from approximately the age of two years. Recently he offered as one justification for writing his autobiography "the exceptional memory I have of my childhood":

So far I have not met anybody who could claim a practically continuous memory of his life from before he was two years old, and not merely of incidents in that life but of what he thought about those incidents at the time.⁴

The West Wind of Love, however, is more than a recollected re-creation of boyhood and youth. It is, also, a study of John Ogilvie, in which the author set out to show, as he had with Michael Fane, "as fully as I could the various influences that went to mold him."⁵ The novel gives a generally convincing account of John's changing patterns of thought and experience.⁶ We mark his growth in various significant areas: intellectual, moral, emotional, spiritual, aesthetic and social. There is, likewise, a meaningful continuity of development in the formation of his character and values, obscured though it may be at times by the comprehensiveness of the design.

The West Wind of Love is, moreover, a portrait and a study founded upon social and historical reality, for John is intended by the author to be representative of his class, of his generation, and of his times. Mackenzie has from the

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beginning taken exception to the denigration of his book as glorified autobiography. As we have seen, he makes the distinction that in Sinister Street he utilized personal experience but did not construct a self-portrait. In this regard he has said of Michael Fane: "I was simply trying to express a young man of the period."⁷ Likewise, he has described John as "Everyboy with a similar social and educational background to that of Michael Fane."⁸ The West Wind of Love, as was early realized, is a brilliant evocation of the atmosphere of post-1914 Europe. It is imaginatively written social history of the young men who joined the Naval Reserve about the turn of the century and then went off to war in 1914. As Ford Madox Hueffer wrote of Sinister Street, "it is really history - the history of a whole class, in a whole region, during a whole period of life."⁹

But The West Wind of Love is not only the portrait of an age. It becomes, perhaps necessarily, an interpretation and criticism of the times.¹⁰ On one level, Mackenzie directs attention to the movements in literature, religion and politics within his purview. Thus, with light but deadly touch, he depicts artistic decadence in Daniel Rayner and a faddish clubmanship in his father. On a deeper level, Mackenzie conducts through the odyssey of John Ogilvie an examination into the English social ideal of the gentleman - the end-product of typical upper-class education. The result

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of his examination is a certain ambivalence. He is attracted to the ideal because of its respect for the past and for tradition, and because of its instinct for quality and beauty. At the same time, he is aware of its limitations as a secular code of conduct unsupported by religious belief. And he condemns as shortsighted and misdirected its exaltation of responsibility and service for others.

Mackenzie's reservations about the English ideal of the gentleman parallel his criticism of English education, which defines and perpetuates the type. Mackenzie's quarrel with formal education is carried on from Carnival. In that novel, we recall, he blames the London School Board for Jenny's intellectual and cultural impoverishment.¹¹ In Sinister Street he attacks more subtly the public-school system itself, on much the same grounds. In The West Wind of Love, too, in his account of St. James', he describes the emphasis on mechanical and pedantic scholarship and the complete disregard of the cultural development of the individual. The object of such education, as Mackenzie sees it, is merely to turn out specialists in the classical languages who can compete for university exhibitions. In the process, they are expected to acquire from the associations of school life certain standards of conduct. As George N. Shuster has remarked, Mackenzie favours "a more vital and individual education that works for the culture of character as distinguished from the

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formation of character."¹² Oxford and the colleges, of course, are largely exempted from these strictures. They offer freedom and leisure for the individual to achieve his own education according to his wishes and abilities. If they err, it is in the assumption, growing more widespread, that education should prepare one for the service of society. In an Address delivered on the occasion of his installation as Rector of Glasgow University in 1932, Mackenzie warned against encroachments on the freedom and integrity of the individual. He said in part:

Even education is being made an implement of servitude. The life of every human embryo performs in the womb the drama of evolution. The life of every human creature performs after birth the drama of social development; but the point capable of being reached varies with every individual, and the object of education is to ensure that every individual shall be given a chance to develop himself to that point. This if anything may be postulated as a birthright, and it may strike you as a truism not worth enunciating. Yet at the back of every contemporary system of education lies the intention to educate a man to be of service not to himself but to others.¹³

By the time Compton Mackenzie began The West Wind of Love he was apparently aware of the artistic lapses in Carnival and The Adventures of Sylvia Scarlett. In the new novel, at any rate, he handles the point of view with greater consistency than in the previous ones. In The West Wind of Love the story is told in the third person, but it limited strictly to the consciousness of John. The artistic problem

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Mackenzie set for himself was not merely to portray the experiences of youth but also to convey those experiences, as it were, from the inside. As he has said of Sinister Street "The scheme of the book demands from the reader that he should identify himself with the principal character through whose eyes he is compelled to look at life."¹⁴ Elsewhere he has observed that the technique of the book "aimed to keep the reader at the same age as the principal characters."¹⁵ Such a plan has its inherent difficulties and dangers. It requires the reader to assume points of view, attitudes and feelings with which, having once outgrown them, he may be impatient. It is inevitable that the mature reader will find John egotistical, callow, sentimental, and much else that is objectionable, for so of necessity he is. At the same time, such detailed exploration of his youthful experiences requires him to be taken seriously. Is the portrait of John cynically realistic or sentimentally idealized? Since the author could not directly comment, because of the limitations of his artistic method, confusion was inevitable. Mackenzie, however, has defended the realism of his narrative technique:

The whole point [of the book] is that it's limited by the experience of a young man. "This shallow book," they've called it. But what else would a man of twenty-two be but shallow? He couldn't be wise or grown up. One couldn't laugh at him, and only up to a point with him. One had to take him at his own solemn word. His profundities would be only in his own emotions. There'd

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be no value in my seeing him from my point of view at thirty. I had to give him as he was.¹⁶

The major difficulty of Mackenzie's handling of the point of view lies in the nature of John Ogilvie himself. The reader is expected to identify with John: to see through his eyes, to experience through him. Yet the entity which is John is not clearly focused. As we have seen, he is intended to be Everyman of his class and generation. At the same time he reflects the experiences and the awareness of the author - the author as a young man both exceptionally capable and possessed of the added insight of maturity (not to mention the undoubted advantages of hindsight). We are perhaps most conscious of this split sensibility in John's abnormally informed awareness of the present - his highly sophisticated sense of the passing moment and of impending change.¹⁷ Although it is difficult to exemplify this quality briefly, the following excerpt from a long passage in which John muses over changes brought about by the war may indicate it:

"We're in for an era of self-pity, I fancy," John speculated. "The majority of people are in the mood of futility I was in during the autumn of 1917. Action has left them tired out, and they're beginning to realize how little there is to show for such an expense of effort. Young people have become prematurely old, and middle-aged people, spared the rivalry of so much youth, have remained irritatingly young. Those who have managed to acquire a positive faith, whether it be in God or man, are inclined to be so impatient of this indecision and futility that they try to impose their definite outlook on others." (pp.277-78).

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The most extreme expression of the manner is to be found when John is in London. According to the chronology of the action, this would be in the summer of 1919. Standing in the Stern's drawing-room talking to Astrid he says: "I think the world has been so shaken about by the war that dancing will be the expression of the general restlessness." (p.277).

In Carnival Mackenzie attempted the Flaubertian technique of "never allowing the chief character off the page."¹⁸ But, somewhat surprisingly, there has been no critical comment on Mackenzie's handling of the point of view. Leo Robertson seems to believe that both Carnival and Madame Bovary are told solely from the perspective of the central character.¹⁹ The Nation (London), even more strangely, was apparently unaware of the obvious intrusion of the author's point of view into the narrative when it says of Jenny that "her words, her actions, her thoughts, along with the words and actions of others, are all the commentary that Mr. Mackenzie vouchsafes."²⁰

It is true too that John Ogilvie is consistently in the forefront of the book and never really leaves the stage. Even on the few occasions when he could not have had direct experience of the things done or the words spoken, notably in the circumstances surrounding his attack of scarlet fever, the matter has clear reference to him. Flaubert in Madame

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Bovary does not seek such complete concentration of attention. For example, at the beginning and end of that book, Charles Bovary occupies the centre of the stage. The Academy, however, has defined what seems to be the specific artistic intention and special technique of Carnival: "All the other characters are grouped about her [Jenny]; we are never permitted to enter to the other characters save through her."²¹ The same is true of John in The West Wind of Love.

Although this concentration on John results in an impressive portrait, artistically the book suffers from certain inconsistencies in handling the point of view and from the author's too obviously and inappropriately obtruding himself and his opinions into the narrative. The review in The Academy gave a sound analysis of the inconsistencies in Mackenzie's treatment of his method and of the effect of these inconsistencies upon his books. It pointed out that there are seven characters who are particularly important at different times in John's life: his father, his stepmother, Miriam Stern and her sons, Fitzgerald and Athene Langridge.

The minor characters in Mackenzie's novels are generally more favourably regarded than the principals. "A long gallery of living portraits," said the Sheffield Daily Telegraph.²² The Athenaeum (London) stated: "There is nothing approaching a failure in the delineation of the minor characters."²³ The Nation (London) said:

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It may be remarked that the characters who are presented in profile, such as the graceful, elusive Mrs. Vere . . . and the minor characters are more subtly drawn than are Alan and Michael, whose doings and sayings are recorded so exhaustively.²⁴

The characterization of the women was especially praised. The Westminster Gazette (London) observed of Sinister Street that:

. . . a remarkable feature of this first [sic] novel is its treatment of women, and the differentiation of the characters of Michael's mother and of the various members of the Carthew family, as well as Michael's various loves, Muriel, Winnie, Kathleen and Lily, is admirable.²⁵

C.C. Martindale said of the feminine characters that "not alone is this author accurate as to fact, and in word, but as to the mentality which interprets the facts and seeks expression in words."²⁶

To Compton Mackenzie characterization has always been the primary ingredient of the novel. As he has said, "The object of the novel, as I see it . . . is to present character against a background of place."²⁷ Certainly this seems the basic concern of The West Wind of Love. Yet one may admit that John Ogilvie is not as vivid a characterization as Jenny Pearl in Carnival. Part of the difficulty lies with John himself. He is not, as his creator has acknowledged, a "particularly exciting young man."²⁸ He is a person to whom experiences happen. Some of the dimness about John as a personality may be occasioned by the fact that he inhabits the

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borderland between autobiography and objective creation of character. Mackenzie has said of John, "He is to me an objective reality: he is not myself in a looking-glass."²⁹ Yet John's environment, both mental and physical, and his experiences are essentially those of Mackenzie himself. The author has described his method in Sinister Street as the selection of incidents from his past and the re-shaping of them to suit the narrative and the character of the hero.³⁰ Thus, in My Life and Times: Octave One, Mackenzie tells how he used in Sinister Street an incident which actually happened to him at seven. In the novel it was assigned to Michael at nine, "because I did not think it would sound plausible for a child of seven," (p.219). Frank Swinnerton, speaking of the autobiographical novels of Oliver Onions, describes a weakness in the characterization of such novels which may explain the curious lack of individuality in John. He says:

. . . the biographical method has a serious defect. It has always, in the work of every author who has essayed it, had this defect. A novelist using, with however much skill and finesse, the skeleton of his own life and memory, tends to leave his central figure a colourless nonentity, a something to which experience occurs. For himself, that central figure is filled in by substantial memory - by egotism; but for his reader the central figure, a name only, represents vacuum. He has traits, but no character. He may suffer; but he is not objectively present. That is a cause of loss of interest in the progress of the book; for unless every detail has importance of its own (which it has for the writer) the book ceases to

hold attention. It is the same whether the book is a narrative or an introspective study of personality; for unless the author deliberately creates for his chief actor a personality larger than life, there is nothing upon which the reader can fix his eye or his imagination. (The Georgian Literary Scene, p.220).

A further difficulty with the characterization of John lies in the role which Mackenzie intends for him as Everyman of his class and generation. For Mackenzie does not always succeed in re-shaping incidents from his own life to achieve verisimilitude for John. Although we are not told that John taught himself to read at twenty-two months, as Mackenzie himself did,³¹ we do learn that at about three years of age "John read many books in a strange assortment." (p.32) John's religious development and conversion to Roman Catholicism might likewise be regarded as a singular aberration for a representative young man of the period. One feels that it is included because it is autobiographically true of Mackenzie, not representationally true of John Ogilvie.

The subsidiary characters in The West Wind of Love are vividly delineated. Mackenzie has a Dickensian flair for capturing the essentials of character in a set description or a few lines of dialogue. And, again like Dickens, he is perhaps at his best with the humorous eccentric character. As an example, there is the conversation of Mrs. Sayers early one morning as she delivers his breakfast:

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John was still asleep when Mrs. Sayers knocked at the door of his room next morning at ten o'clock.

"Come in."

The knocking increased in volume.

"Come in!"

The door opened wide enough to admit a woman's head, which seen thus suddenly on the edge of sleep might have been mistaken for the head of a black Minorca hen. Two beady eyes took in the contents of the bedroom, dwelt suspiciously for a moment on the second pillow, which John had a habit of pulling down beside him in a double-bed, and finally fixed themselves on John himself.

"Your brekfuss," announced what was presumably Mrs. Sayers.

"Bring it in, will you?"

The porter's wife hesitated.

"Well, I had set it down on the floor outside."

She still hesitated, but then abruptly the hen-like head darted down, the door opened, and Mrs. Sayers, tray in hand, advanced into the room.

"Good morning, Mrs. Sayers."

"Good morning," she replied grudgingly. "And in fack it is a better morning than what it was last night."

"Were you celebrating the armistice?"

"I never celebrates," Mrs. Sayers generalized sombrely. "If I celebrates once in two years that's azaggerating. Some people can afford to celebrate morning, noon, and night. I can't. A glass of port wine at a fren's funeral is the most I celebrate, and I'm too busy to be going to fren's funerals every day of the week. Well, there's your brekfuss, and that's a fresh egg. I've dusted out the sitting-room and I'll come up in an hour's time and do your bedroom. Mr. Sayers spoke to me of your requirements, and I'm willing to oblige prervided . . . prervided," she repeated sternly, "it's strictly understood I'm looking after a single gentleman, and by single I mean single, temporary and otherwise. Perhaps you take my meaning?"

"I think so, Mrs. Sayers."

"Since Mr. Sayers took on as porter to these flats, Mr. . . . I didn't get your name exack . . ."

"Ogilvie."

"Ogilvie? That's a foreign name, ain't it?"

"It's a Scottish name."

"It may be," Mrs. Sayers commented oracularly.

"And perhaps it is. But it's what I would call a

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foreign name. Still, now the war's over I daresay we can be less particular about foreign names. As I was saying, since Mr. Sayers took on as porter to these flats, I've seen sights I hadn't thought could happen. I wouldn't digrade myself by repeating to you what I seen, Mr. Ogilvie," she continued with salacious relish in her undisclosed memories. "But I made a strick rule not to enter one of these flats if there was a woman inside. In her cloves or out of her cloves. And which is all the same to the class of women who lives in these flats. Well, I think we understand one another now, and I hope we'll continue without unpleasantness on either side. And you'll find that egg perfeckly fresh."

John could almost have believed that Mrs. Sayers was prepared to add 'because I laid it myself' as, scratching the door-mat back into place with the heel of her left foot, she retired hen-like from the bedroom. (pp.195-96.

Just as Mackenzie used real incidents from his childhood and youth in Sinister Street, so the characters seem, for the most part, to be portraits or adaptations of real individuals. Perhaps this is the source of their greater vitality as compared to John. As H.G. Wells has written:

Every "living" character in a novel is drawn, frankly or furtively, from life - is filched from biography whole or in scraps, a portrait or patch up, and its actions are reflections upon moral conduct.³²

Such, at least, seems the practice of Mackenzie. In My Life and Times: Octave One we learn than Mrs. Sayers - the housemaid described in the scene above - was actually the Mackenzie's cook during the years depicted in the narrative.

Moreover, her real name was Mrs. Frith. Mackenzie says:

I called her Mrs. Frith in Sinister Street because I could not find a name that did not somehow detract from the invaluable service she

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performed for me by letting fresh air into that house and lightening the oppression of my old nurse's rule. (p.194).

The West Wind of Love abounds in such set portraits of real people drawn to the life, though, as in the case of Mrs. Sayers, Mackenzie generally changes the name. So he tells us that Rayner, the young novelist who visits Citrano in the novel, was in real life D.H. Lawrence.

Mackenzie's dialogue in his first two books was highly praised both for realism and gracefulness. The dialogue in The West Wind of Love was generally not found to be so realistic or effective. C.C. Martindale, however, had earlier said that Mackenzie's "conversations are exact." He can write as people talk.

. . . he speaks not only with Michael's lips, and those of his boy friends, but with his sister Stella's. The six pages of conversation between Michael and Stella at Compiègne are, to my feeling, as perfect in comedy and in psychology as anything in English. I remember Richard Feverel, and Lucy and Clare, and do not feel ashamed of my belief that this boy and girl scene among the bracken makes for laughter and for meditation and for melancholy as potently as any page of Meredith's masterpiece.³³

The West Wind of Love has as exact a setting in time as in place. As Mackenzie has remarked of Sinister Street, "it is so exactly dated that it remains alive." (p.xi). And the action of the novel occurs in a real historic time. In keeping with the factual-chronicle design of the novel is the care taken with chronology. But, unlike Sinister Street,

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not every year of the four covered by the novel is treated in detail. References to months and seasons emphasize the passing of the individual years. When John is seventeen, for example, ten of the twelve months of the year are cited in connection with events narrated. This novelistic time-sequence is also related to historic time. Though no great emphasis is placed on such correspondency, we can place the action in its historical setting. So clear is the chronological development that from such hints as the date of a letter or from such historical events as the Easter Rebellion murders or Armistice Day we can cast the historical time. Although Mackenzie's primary purpose was to write a novel, not autobiography, he was clearly aware of the chronological sequence of events in The West Wind of Love. And the autobiographical method was, in general, a convenient means of ensuring accuracy of chronology as well as accuracy of fact.

There is a considerable range of tone in The West Wind of Love. Although the basic scheme of the novel requires us to identify for the moment with the experiences of a young man, there is a leavening in the humour and satire which pervade the book. John himself is humourless, but fortunately his creator has a highly-developed sense of humour and a keen appreciation of the comic aspects of life. Critics have, perhaps, taken John too seriously because he takes himself and his world seriously.

NOTES

CHAPTER VIII

¹Notes on Novelists, (New York, 1914), p.358.

²T.P.'s Weekly (London), November 21, 1914 (Clipping in Scrapbook No. 24).

³That they did so in the English and American novel is due in large part to the influence of Sinister Street. Richard Church says: "The book started a new vogue. From that time novels poured by the dozen from the press, all claiming to reveal the inner workings of the adolescent soul during its desperate adventures at public school and university." British Authors: A Twentieth Century Gallery, new ed. (New York, 1948), p.94.

A.C. Ward also observes that Sinister Street "set a fashion for long and detailed books dealing with childhood, adolescence, and undergraduate experience." Twentieth Century Literature, 1901-50, 3rd ed. (London, 1956), p.55

⁴Mackenzie, My Life and Times, p.13.

⁵Sinister Street, New York ed., p.657.

⁶"Roderick Random", in the Wolverton Express, commented: "Each year finds the boy Fane thinking differently and acting differently, and always as one would expect him to." (November 3, 1913, [clipping in Scrapbook No.24]).

⁷Louise Morgan, "Compton Mackenzie Hits Out," Everyman, (London), November 13, 1930, p.489.

⁸Mackenzie, My Life and Times, p.14.

⁹"Mr. Compton Mackenzie and 'Sinister Street'," The Outlook, (London), n.d., (clipping in Scrapbook No.24).

¹⁰Holbrook Jackson pointed out that "Sinister Street is really an interpretation of our own times," T.P.'s Weekly, November 21, 1914.

F.T. Cooper has also observed that in the novel Mackenzie "has analyzed and criticized in a wide, sweeping way the complex social life of present-day England." The Bookman, XL, (New York, February 15, 1915), 677. These comments can be made of The West Wind of Love too.

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- ¹¹Mackenzie, Carnival, (New York, 1912), p.110.
- ¹²"Compton Mackenzie's Novels", America, p.617.
- ¹³Mackenzie, Address, Glasgow University Publications No.24, (Glasgow, 1932), p.18.
- ¹⁴Sinister Street, p.x.
- ¹⁵Morgan, "Compton Mackenzie Hits Out", p.489.
- ¹⁶Morgan, p.489.
- ¹⁷The reviewer for The Evening Standard (London) seems to have somewhat the same criticism in mind when he said of the first volume of Sinister Street that the atmosphere of the novel is not the atmosphere of boyhood: "Boyhood passes almost unperceived because the power of sensation is latent, and it is only in sentimental conceptions that a boy deliberately enjoys his feelings, whether they are the feelings proper to boyhood or the feelings proper to manhood." September 1, 1913, (Clipping in Scrapbook No.24).
- ¹⁸Mackenzie, Literature in My Time, p.170.
- ¹⁹Compton Mackenzie, p.61. Percy Lubbock, among others, has described how Flaubert varies the point of view in Madame Bovary, but skillfully, "without awkwardness, without calling attention to it", The Craft of Fiction, (New York, 1955), p.87.
- ²⁰X, (February 17, 1912), p.824.
- ²¹LXXXII (March 2, 1912), p.272.
- ²²No date. (Clipping in Scrapbook No.24).
- ²³September 6, 1913, p.235.
- ²⁴October 1, 1913.
- ²⁵September 6, 1913.
- ²⁶"Psychology in the Concrete," p.677.
- ²⁸See Cecil Roberts, "Readers and Writers," The Liverpool Daily Courier, October 12, 1942.

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²⁹Sinister Street, New York ed., p.657.

³⁰My Life and Times, pp.13-14.

³¹See Mackenzie, My Life and Times, pp.39-40.

³²An Experiment in Autobiography, (New York, 1934),
p.415.

³³"Psychology in the Concrete", p.677.

CHAPTER IX

WEST TO NORTH

The West Wind of Love, Book Two, being one of a series of eight novels, offers still another chapter of a man's life - from the summer of 1920 to the end of the year 1922. The novel is a portrayal of a man and his family, his relationship with and influence on the people around him and his views on life and the various problems of the world during those two years.

John Ogilvie, the central character of the series, is a playwright, writing for the London theatre. During this period we see him pass directly or indirectly through the revolutionary upheavals in Germany and Poland, Ireland, and Greece and Turkey, and in addition we are given a thorough look into his personal life.

In this book there are elements familiar and unfamiliar to the reader of novels. The familiar elements are the places John visits, the world problems he discusses, the life he leads, his benevolence, the various "-isms" with which he comes in contact. The events, the places and the "-isms" are familiar in that they actually exist and have been the subject of other novels. The unfamiliar lies in the way in which the novel is written, the author presenting in diary form a series of incidents and relationships of short duration.

In the handling of the familiar elements the details that appear most significant are: the completion of John's play, his chief work during this period; the birth of Corinna, his first child; his home in Citrano, because it is here that John and his family live for the greater part of this period; and the death of Mario, the young Fascist. After Mario's death any curiosity which John had had about Fascism dies, and it is very soon after this that he sells his house in Italy and returns to London.

This story covers only two years of a man's life, but during this period he comes in contact with a great number of people and events, many of which are introduced in previous novels of this series. The reader needs considerable background information to understand the significance of the problems discussed in the novel. One frequently sees very little of a particular individual in this novel, and even then he is rarely seen except through the eyes of one man, John. Many of the events are merely topics of conversation and therefore only what is immediately pertinent to the speaker is brought out. There are exceptions to this, however, and Mackenzie, through his descriptions, makes very real the meeting-place of Prudence and Mario (the Sheil Islands), and parts of Citrano.

The particular combination of emotions experienced by John are found in a great number of people. His most

dominant emotion, love, is perhaps the highest form of true and sincere love. He loved Athene, his wife, in one way; Prudence, his sister and Emil, his friend, in yet another. There is variety in his emotions, but it is not extensive. It can also be noted from the story that the negative emotions he experiences - anger, disgust, bitterness - are rarely directed against an individual but rather against groups of people, their ideals and their methods of attaining these ideals, against systems, or against that which the individual represents. "Yet in that she [Mrs. Vecchione] was an expression of the decay from which youth was struggling to escape he could not but hate her." (p.258). While this is true of the other volumes of this novel, it is perhaps more clearly evinced here.

In the early part of the novel John's character is revealed and from then on he reacts to the various situations as one would expect him to react. Interesting too are the minor characters: Emil, Fitz, Mario and Prudence. Their emotions and feelings are intense, their convictions much stronger than John's, and at times they tend to overshadow John and point up his weaknesses. This is surely in marked contrast to the treatment of character already seen in the second part of The South Wind of Love.

In this volume, reader identification with any one particular character is hardly possible. The elements compensating for this lack of identification lie in the fact that the author is presenting a number of people as representative of life - each with some desirable characteristic, each with some undesirable characteristic. John's love, patience and benevolence are admirable. In Emil, Mario and Fitz the firm conviction they have in their ideals and their willingness to sacrifice things very dear to them to attain these ideals, render them praiseworthy.

West to North would be made less effective by more character analysis. With the exception of John, the reader sees very little of the characters. Because of the nature of the novel he is concerned with them only during this brief exposure. Thus, in this particular phase of John's life we see Emil just before he enters prison, and then one year later after he is released. During this short time we see why Emil is going to jail, and his acceptance of it for what he hopes to prove reveals only a little of his character, but all that we need to know of him. The same is true of the other minor characters. Although this novel covers only two years of John's life, we see what went on before through his reminiscent conversation with friends and we are able to guess his probable reactions. Therefore a greater characterization of him is given, not through the author's analysis of him,

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but rather through his conversation, his actions, what other people say about him, and his reaction to the various events and situations that arise.

The story is told through Mackenzie's description of world events, places, character, conversation, and the reaction of the characters to the various events, places and people. Thus there is unevenness in the point of view. This inconsistency can be justified, however, by the manner in which the novel is written and by the author's purpose in writing it. It is necessary that the author himself give us the details of events, for example, the Poland-Germany relationship, in which the characters are not personally involved, yet which influence their thinking. Other events, in which the characters are personally involved, can be revealed by the characters themselves, and their conversation and reactions help to reveal the central character, John.

A diary of two years of a man's life requires that the man, the world in which he lives, the people with whom he is associated and other factors influencing his life must all be clearly seen. These cannot be revealed by the man alone; we must also see him as he is seen by his friends against the pattern of world events, and how he is affected by them. The function of such a point of view is to give unity to the story.

Little is actually said of John's physical features. Theodore Ladar says to him: "Still you don't show any signs of the years, . . . (p.169). Withers, Vice-Consul of Icaros, tells him: "You have plumped out a bit . . . and by jingo, there was room. You looked like a rasher of wind the last time I saw you." (p.185). Mrs. Torback did not know "whether his face or his voice was reassuring." (p.8). John himself confesses that ". . . I'll be forty a few days later [October 1920]". (p.154).

From his manners and mannerisms, however, John is shown as a perfect gentleman at most times. He is slow to anger, has a great deal of patience, and always seems able to do and say the right thing at the right time. Thus he is held in high esteem by all those with whom he comes into contact. Nevertheless, he is not conscious of any flattery from his friends and associates.

Through his speech John's love, benevolence and kindness is revealed: "I'm sorry I came on the scene before you bought anything from the poor old chap." (p.8), he says to the portress of his club when he interrupted her efforts to dismiss an itinerant plume-seller; and "I have not come on unpleasant business," he explains to Mrs. Torback, the wife of the plume-seller, as he sought admission to her home with the intent of helping them. His worldliness is revealed through his intelligent conversations on world events. He

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values friendship over material things. "Don't let's grow too far apart, Emil," (p.38), he says, in spite of their opposing political views. His deep sense of love is revealed through his various conversations with Athene and Prudence.

These same characteristics are also revealed through his actions. On several occasions he rescues people from despair and brings them up from the level of subsistence so that they can once again face the world with a smile. He finds employment for both Mr. and Mrs. Torback; commissions a poor struggling artist to paint portraits of his sister and his daughter; sets up a shop for the excited wife of a Russian general, who found it necessary to resort to prostitution in order to support herself and her two children; returns immediately to London to be of help to Emil during his trial, and so on. His actions also reveal another of his characteristics. He disapproves of the way the law courts are run and of the Irish revolution, yet he does nothing about it. He is very much against the policies of the Coalition government yet rather than face the issues he escapes to Citrano. He himself says: "I feel I haven't done enough to bring before people the appalling Irish business." (p.112). True, he has done very little. He believes the Roman Catholic faith to be the true religion, yet he never seems to find the time to join it.

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The social environment is that of the post-war era, with revolutions erupting in various parts of the world. All this, and the people's reaction to it, leaves him rather disillusioned with the world and as a result he adopts a very indifferent attitude towards it. ". . . until this bestial folly ceases I must withdraw from any kind of public life in England." (p.58), and towards his own play then being performed in England ". . . but its success or failure will leave me personally indifferent." (p.59).

The physical environment brings out his sense of aesthetic values. He sees beauty in the Greek Islands, Citrano, the old ruins, and the Sheil Islands, and he shuns that which tends to mar this beauty.

People in general he sees as vultures grabbing at whatever means they can to increase their riches over the spoils of the war. The average person just did not care what went on around him. "The moral sense of the average Englishman has been shocked by Sinn Féin . . . Tell him that throughout the civilized world the name of England is beginning to stink because of what his Government is doing in Ireland, and he won't believe it." (p.58), and "It has an odd effect to visit the club . . . and find everybody saying the same things and ordering the same drinks and reading the papers with the same expression." (p.83).

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In particular persons, however, John does find goodness, love, initiative and a care and willingness to strive for ideals.

Gabrielle Derozier sees patience and conscientiousness in John; he admires her as a great actress. Astrid (Emil's wife), thinks of him as being ". . . too readily contented and too much spoilt by easy circumstances." (p.337). Between Athene and John there exists a very great and true love. Prudence thinks of John as being ". . . tremendously sensible," (p.159), ". . . angelic", (p.171) and ". . . awfully good at understanding". (p.215). Of Prudence, John says: "She has not got a sentimental mind and she has a frankness and honesty which prevent her falsifying emotion." (p.276), and to her: "Indeed, I'm beginning to believe you're a very remarkable girl." (p.297).

John sees Fitz as possessing ". . . a life of enviable directness of purpose and the courage to face whatever awaited him at the end of his quest." (p.333). Emil says to John: "You were always the same, always looking back into the irremediable past to find a remedy for the present . . . you feel, you don't think. You aspire; you cannot plan." (p.37).

Of himself, John feels: "Well, I'm one of the lucky ones. . . . I had too easy a success, and I'm running the risk now of following the easiest way to success." (p.69); that he has ". . . a combination of weakness and broadmindedness."

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and of his profession as being "a lazy nomadic existence." (p.209). He also feels that what he has must be shared if it can help someone else.

John sees life as being futile for many people, particularly during the post-war years; that a great number of people pass through life dissatisfied because "the vast majority of human beings have to spend all their time working at work which doesn't interest them." (p.70). And he says of Janet Meriday's world of pretense as an actress: "I wonder if it's any more make-believe than the lives of most people." (p.231).

John sees the new post-war world as "tumbling to pieces a good deal faster than it was being built." (p.4); as a ". . . ruthless new world." (p.10). Yet he is optimistic about ". . . the wonderful new world which is to be built out of the debris of war." (p.16)

The style is appropriate to the author's purpose of presenting a period of a man's life, its situations, the people with whom he comes in contact, his thinking and his reactions.

Mackenzie aptly depicts life in its various aspects, moving swiftly from one event to another, from one character to another, pointing up the world in which John Ogilvie and his friends live.

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The basic symbol of this novel is the west wind. The west wind brings spring, re-birth and changes, and is thus symbolic of the changes that are occurring or about to occur in the new post-war world. Fitz, Emil, Mario, all participants in and representatives of new political factions arising and revolutions resulting from their basic beliefs, symbolize also the change that is taking place and the birth of new ideas and new ideals. The relationship between John and Athene symbolizes love in its purest form. Prudence and Mario first relate their love to each other in the midst of natural beauty, and symbolize the equality of beauty and love.

Janet Meriday, a movie actress, symbolizes the pretentious and artificial life.

Mr. Hanshaw's occupation as a tombstone-maker symbolizes the depth to which change is reaching. "People like something a bit more showy and up-to-date even on a tombstone." (p.79).

John's play, of which the theme is a broken liaison, was to symbolize the relationship between France and England in the 1920's.

The Sheil Islands symbolize peace, love and tranquility.

The club to which John belongs, where he finds ". . . everybody saying the same things and ordering the same

drinks", (p.83) is symbolic of people's attitude of indifference and of the security that they feel in this sort of environment.

Mrs. Vecchione, in John's words, is "an expression of the decay from which youth was struggling to escape." (p.258).

The death of Mario and Fitz are symbolic of the futility of violence.

The pattern formed and the theme to which the symbols point is life - life changing, alert to progress, with its catalyst being altruistic love and love as found in friends, in beauty. Those qualities opposed to love - violence and hate - are seen as futile, depressing and opposed to progress.

The significance of these symbols when taken individually is often not clear; when they are viewed in combination, however, a pattern does indeed emerge from them.

The theme towards which the pattern of symbols points is love of life.

All episodes and characters are relevant to the theme. Taken within themselves, there are perhaps several passages which could be omitted without destroying the basic theme; however, because of the style of the novel, written as a series of events and associations, the author has made them a part of the central character's life.

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Mackenzie recognizes both the good and evil attributes of human nature. He feels it to be quite natural for "the squandermania of the public (p.1) to set in. "Still, we must expect business men to seize their opportunities after a war like this." (p.6). There are also those who have built a nice little protective wall around themselves and turn a deaf ear to that which is violent and immoral. "Tell the average Englishman that a lorry full of drunken Auxiliary Cadets wantonly shot a woman and her baby sitting in a garden as they drove by and he just won't believe it." (p.58). Nor will he believe that man is giving up his freedom, his individuality, by ". . . sacrificing humanity to big cities . . . this mad instinct to congregate." (p.51-52), and by ". . . surrender to the advantage of the swarm." (p.64). He reveals still another characteristic of human nature as found in the English tourists in Italy who ". . . would admire Fascismo so long as Fascismo was content to cure such obvious abuses as the unpunctuality of trains and theft of leather straps, but when its influences spread beyond that . . ." (p.208), they become suspicious.

Values in the post-war world have changed,"and it is no longer the duty of every young man to regard his life as a brief prelude to death; young men did not know what to do with their lives." (p.70); and there are "signs of uneasiness about the future." (p.53).

Feelings of acquiescence and indifference are prominent, but in spite of all this the author is somewhat optimistic of the future of ". . . the new wonderful world which is to be built out of the debris of war." (p.16).

CHAPTER X

THE NORTH WIND OF LOVE

During the six years prior to the beginning of this story, John Ogilvie, now fifty years old, has been identifying himself even more closely with the movement to rouse Scotland to the responsibility of nationhood. Throughout this volume he expresses, in conversation with the people he encounters, his views on various aspects of life. While his wife, Athene, is visiting her son Arthur in America, to straighten out a problem involving his intended marriage to an actress six years older than himself, she contracts pneumonia and dies before John can reach her. John is left to care for his only daughter, Corinna, and much of his time is spent in supervising her education.

Like most patriots, John seems determined to arouse in the people a desire for independence; although he realizes that this will take time, he intends to persist in his efforts, for he believes that only repeated urging will bring results.

In Athene's first letter to John, telling him that she will have to stay on until the business with Arthur is cleared up, she writes that her presence will probably not be indispensable to him, since he is so wrapped up in his political schemes, in the house on the island, and in Corinna's

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education. She also alludes to the disdain with which he regards her political knowledge. It can be inferred from the outset that John and his wife do not always agree as far as politics is concerned. Perhaps Athene, being an American, feels less strongly about the situation than John, and this difference in attitude affects their marriage unfavourably.

John is unable to be reconciled with his wife over past happenings before she is taken ill, and although the reader hopes that he will reach her bedside in time, he cannot do so.

For five years, John has tried to

. . . strike the happy mean between not letting Athene feel that he was excluding her from part of his life and running the risk of resentment over the knowledge that she was bored by his political theories and wishing he would cease to waste any more time in pursuit of an unprofitable dream. He had been aware that this was her attitude but both of them had been able to maintain the pretence that it was not. (p.7)

Thus when Athene mentioned it, it could be argued that if he were honest with himself he could "admit that Athene's preoccupation with her son was a relief. When first he had read the letter he had been touched by a pang of jealous vanity at the thought of her easy acceptance of the situation created by Arthur's absurd engagement." (p.7). However, John, who proves to be clear-headed and logical, begins to see it as a piece of "exquisite tact". "By accepting her duty to Arthur she was relieving him of any prick of

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responsibility over the way he was directing the course of his life." (p.7)

Whatever misconceptions the reader may have entertained concerning John's love for Athene are quickly changed. After Athene's death he visits Mr. and Mrs. Langridge because he feels that Athene would want him to visit them. Mrs. Langridge feels that John is kind and considerate in visiting them at such a sad time. He tells Mrs. Langridge that he will preserve for Corinna Athene's example and the feeling that her mother is still with her.

Other characteristics revealed by John are expressed in the opinions of those whom he encounters. Reverend Donald MacDonald admires John's work in calling attention to the neglect of Scotland. Another example of the esteem in which he is held is seen at the overcrowded Portrose Hotel, when a traveller offers him his own bed. And Alaisdair Macphee says of him that his identification with the cause of Scottish nationalism was not "for what you can get out of it." ". . . your faith in it must have an inspiration." (p.31)

John's consideration for Arthur in having tea with Blanche and her mother (Arthur's future wife and mother-in-law) even when he is still saddened by Athene's death reveals his thoughtfulness for others. He is forgiving and realistic in not blaming Arthur, saying that Athene could just as easily have caught pneumonia in Scotland. He impresses Mrs.

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Halloway, Blanche's mother, who thinks he is a "lovely big-hearted man." (p.87).

John shows his willingness to sacrifice his career for the freedom of Scotland. If the independence of Scotland meant that never another play of his was put on the stage in England, he would still work for independence. He is impatient with the slow progress Scotland is making, and cynical about securing Scottish freedom, for he feels that the notion of a free Scotland is dying.

He is realistic in holding that it is too late to make the study of Gaelic compulsory, although it should be encouraged and could, perhaps, be preserved in the Highlands and Islands, by requiring civil servants and professional persons to be bilingual and by having all official communications and signposts in these districts in both Gaelic and English.

Early during a visit to Scotland John is asked his reasons for becoming a Scottish Nationalist. It was well known that he had never lived in Scotland and that his father was a judge quite unsympathetic to the notion of Home Rule either in Ireland or in Scotland. Local members of the Nationalist movement regard John with some suspicion. To their satisfaction, however, he explains that "it's a question of blood" (p.32), and that he was "sickened by the English treatment of Ireland." (p.33). He elaborates on

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the first of these reasons, proving himself to be as thoroughly Scottish as most of his audience:

My great-grandfather married an Assynt woman - Isabel Macleod, whose grandfather Roderick Macleod of Sandwater was one of five Macleods who accompanied his cousin Torquil Macleod of Ardvore in the Prince's Year. I did not know this when I was a boy, but I was a fervid Jacobite in my sympathies, and from my ancestors on my mother's side I inherited a devotion to the House of Stuart. And the Ogilvies fought under Montrose. That was always a particular satisfaction to my boyish fancy. Well, Jacobitism may long have been a synonym for romantic absurdity, but I think there's something wrong about a boy of Scottish blood whose boyhood is not coloured by his country's history, and there's something equally wrong with the boy who is incapable of passionate partisanship. (p.32)

Any suspicion they may have entertained that John was another "Edinburgh lawyer" (p.11) - a term of derision used to describe a Scottish official sympathetic to Whitehall - are dispelled by this declaration of his background and sympathies.

John shows himself to be a greater radical than most of the native Scots, and one of them ventures to say: "I've gathered from reports I've read of your speeches, Mr. Ogilvie that you advocate something a great deal more drastic than Home Rule in the usual sense of the words?" (p.10). The point is well-taken, because John not only envisages Home Rule, but has worked out a system he feels will ensure that Scotland will become a latter day Utopia. With this in mind The North Wind of Love deserves admission to the canon of

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written fact and fancy about the ideal state.

Berating the cautious attitude of many of the Nationalist leaders, John charges them with a lack of vision and of trying to make a Scottish Parliament hardly more than "a glorified county council". (p.15). He charges that they lack vitality and are "unwilling to sacrifice half a crown, much less imperial [their] own livelihood." (p.15). On the other hand, John believes "that the kind of independence a few of us dream of would involve ten and perhaps twenty years of hardship and bitter self-denial." (p.15). Commenting on the lamentable flight of industry south to England, he shows no patience with the moderates, saying instead:

Nothing can stem that flight of industry except so radical a readjustment of the economic life of this country as would involve not merely separation from England but probably even withdrawal from the Empire and any further subjection to Anglo-American finance. (p.16).

When pressed on the point, John is bound to admit that it is unlikely that Scotland would ever withdraw from the Empire; but as a skillful debater he quickly adds: "It would be more logical to leave that decision to a free Scotland." (p.16).

John fears that it is perhaps too late to "give Scotland back its life," (p.18), because the landed gentry and business men are distrustful of anything that suggested radicalism "at the expense of their pockets" (p.17), and because too many people would regard the preservation of Gaelic

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culture as an idle dream, since there seemed to be nothing left to preserve it for: "What is the use of keeping a language alive for a dying people?" (p.19).

The room that they are sitting in becomes a symbol of the futility of their cause and sums up the Highlands of today:

That steel engraving of a legend which was never worth believing anyhow - a nineteenth-century piece of snobbery spotted by damp and flies. That washy water-colour of Dunvegan hardly fit for a schoolgirl's autograph album. Those two sea-trout to catch the eye of the rich sportsman and persuade him the hotel's bad food is compensated for by the fishing obtainable in the land of bens and glens and heroes. Those rosy maidens from the lone shieling who are smiling so sweetly because next week they'll be meeting their friends again on the Jamaica Bridge in Glasgow. And that meditative shepherd! Ay, ay, meditating on the prices his hoggets fetched at Dingwall last week. That's the reason for so noble an expression of Celtic gloom and dignity. Land of bens and glens and heroes! What is it now? Rabbits and bracken; Indian pedlars on bicycles hawking cheap silks and french-letters; inshore fishing destroyed by English trawlers; unemployment benefit instead of the benefit of employment; education planned to make good North Britons but bad Scotsmen, and to fill the minds of children with the belief that a city man is a bigger fellow than a countryman; ministers without scholarship and scholars without religion; tinned salmon and tinned lobster; Midlothian porridge like clay and Glasgow bread like chalk; plus-fours, Government officials, pink asbestos tiles, and the People's Journal. (p.20).

"Scotland needs an autocrat", John says (p.21) and he suggests that the Prince of Wales should become king in a ceremony to be held at Scone where the ancient Scottish kings were crowned. Perth, he feels, should be the capital,

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remote from the complacency of Edinburgh and the English influence of Glasgow (p.21). An autocratic monarch would run less risk of having his head turned by his own position, and he could not compensate for any failure of internal reform by a policy of external aggression because the geographical situation would make such an ambition absurd.

John wants a Utopian Scotland, and therefore advocates a form of socialism which he calls "Social Credit", (p.24). Mackenzie seems to use John and his friends as spokesmen for his own positive views as to how these ideals can be realized.

Nationalization of the land under the trusteeship of the King, with freehold ownership replaced by tenure under a system of mutual obligation; standardized rates for transportation; amalgamation of the banks into a Royal Bank of Scotland, with perhaps a double currency, one for internal use and one for international trade; regulation of national consumption to the benefit of both producer and consumer; parliamentary representation by profession and trade rather than by territory; abolition of private law practice, with lawyers being retained as civil servants and judges appointed by parliament; regulated sale and taxation of liquor, with restricted use of special currency to buy it, and nationalization of breweries and distilleries; compulsory education up to eighteen years of age, with the first twelve years in

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Gaelic, emphasis on the study of other languages, and specialized craft training for those incapable of benefiting from a long academic program; State-paid travel in Europe for university students; the establishment of a Gaelic University jointly administered by Catholics and Protestants; the outlawing of professional sports, which would be replaced by walking, forestry, shooting and sailing; the destruction and reconstruction of cities and towns into more efficient units, with only buildings of historic interest being preserved for use as museums; the restoration to the Catholic Church of all pre-Reformation ecclesiastical buildings; the provision of libraries in every centre, down to the smallest village; a working week of forty-two hours, giving employment to all and increasing productive capacity: these are some of the measures John proposes for the creation of his ideal State.

The position of women in this new society would be, like that of women in the Scandinavian countries, "nearer to equality with men". (p.28). Co-education would be abolished, giving way to specialized instruction which would make this equality possible. With this in mind, John explains to Miriam his plans for the education of his daughter:

When she is eleven she will live in the twelfth century, at twelve in the thirteenth, and so on until by the time she is nineteen she will be fit to grasp the significance of contemporary history. And she will not learn merely Scottish history and

most certainly not merely English history. She will learn European history. Moreover, her artistic education will not move beyond the century she has reached. I have already taught her a good deal about ancient history and encouraged her to be interested in mythology, Greek and Celtic and Norse particularly. She will not be at the mercy of twelfth-century pictorial art while she is eleven. She will have ancient art to occupy her eyes, and for music she will have folk-songs and Gregorian chants.

. . . One advantage of my system is that as she grows older the centuries will provide her with more and more. When she's sixteen she'll be getting Bach and at seventeen Mozart and Haydn and early Beethoven. When she's fourteen she'll be getting Botticelli, and when she's fifteen Leonardo and Michelangelo. And she shall see Greece and Italy and Spain and France at the right moment and in the right way.

. . . If she can add and multiply and divide and subtract, that will be all the mathematics she will need, unless some hidden talent for mathematics comes to light, and that isn't likely. Science she can study at her own leisure when she is her own mistress. She will know how to recognize the stars in the sky, the flowers and the birds and the insects, and she will be able to study natural history as much as she wants. Of course she'll continue with her languages. (p.103).

Asked about the position religion would occupy in this Utopia, John is not cordial to the idea of an Established Church. "My theory is that no Church flourishes spiritually when it is flourishing materially." (p.27).

Instead he advocates complete religious tolerance. Sunday is to be a holy day until noon, with the afternoon left free for festive celebrations, and no newspapers until the evening

The feeding of the people is not overlooked. "Proper porridge" is to be restored to Scotland to replace "... this

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fine-ground Midlothian stuff . . . uneatable even at a railway meal." (p.23). More rye would have to be grown for good black bread; the "chalk-like Glasgow bread . . . fit for nothing except to make plaster tombstones for its victims." (p.23).

Dream as he may, however, of an ideal and independent Scotland, John recognizes the fact that nationalist feeling is all but dead:

One Scotsman in five is vaguely conscious that something is wrong with Scotland; one Scotsman in fifty is wondering whether the privilege of having a Scottish Prime Minister at the head of a Westminster Government is as much use to Scotland as an English Prime Minister might be at the head of an Edinburgh Government; one Scotsman in five hundred is convinced that the first step to prevent further decay of the national life is to denounce the Act of Union and draft a fresh deed of partnership on the lines of those drawn up with the Dominions; one Scotsman in five thousand believes that Dominion status is an unworthy substitute for the independence of a sovereign State, and that his country would be wise to cut itself free now from a declining concern and start afresh upon its own; but not one Scotsman in fifty thousand is prepared to take a step toward the achievement of such a purpose beyond putting a little extra fervour into the singing of Scots Wha Hae at the end of a Bannockburn Commemoration. (pp.30-31).

The North Wind of Love could be called the climax of The Four Winds of Love because Mackenzie brings together in it all his ideas on nationalism, education and religion. For all of this, however, the critical reception was cool. Read by itself it would seem to be a somewhat meandering affair in which the author is chiefly concerned to exploit his

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own omniscience by airing his views on a diversity of topics. Mackenzie has neglected to furnish his leading characters with a sense of humour, and the other people in the book are similarly lacking.

George Dangerfield has recognized another flaw which badly mars this book:

. . . the conversations occasionally become so inhuman that they resemble nothing so much as a discourse on the various files in a newspaper morgue.

Claire Armstrong objects less to the subject matter than to the manner, "and it is the same old manner":

In the first place, the Mackenzian circumference is that of nice rich people, and there are no greater bores in fiction than nice, rich people when taken as seriously as Mr. Mackenzie takes them. In the second place, that rich, over-ripe Keatsian vocabulary has worn terribly thin with the years, and even occasionally rancid.²

Perhaps there is something rather dismaying about the word "saga" when it is applied to a piece of fiction dealing with the lives and fortunes of twentieth century people. Although it provides a certain amount of stimulating reading, it may not make for a model novel. Mackenzie is crochety and full of unexplained antagonisms and enthusiasms, as has already been seen. T.M. Purdy, in the Saturday Review of Literature, says: "His book blends characters and atmosphere suggestive of the Forsytes with the world of Upton Sinclair's Lanny Budd books."³

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Mackenzie is pre-eminently a novelist of youth and the supernatural. In his "saga" he has served this pair faithfully and well, pursuing them through an era which has not been particularly kind to either:

Occasionally the sun sparkles and the ice crackles gaily, but it is a drear wind blowing from the north, menacing pathetically a dull, drab world.⁴

Another reason for all this may be that Mackenzie is not happy in an atmosphere of farewell. Almost all the people in The Four Winds of Love are somewhat vocally growing old; and eheu fugaces is a theme upon which few, if any, changes can be rung, least of all by a novelist such as he is.

NOTES

CHAPTER X

¹"Winds That Blew Themselves Out", Saturday Review of Literature, XXIX, (New York, March 16, 1946), p.20.

²Review of The North Wind of Love, Catholic World, CLXII, May 1946, p.182.

³XXVIII, October 6, 1945, p.30.

⁴John Hampson, "The North Wind of Love", Spectator, CLXXIII (December 29, 1944), p.604.

CHAPTER XI

AGAIN TO THE NORTH

Again to the North, like Sylvia Scarlett, does not have any clearly defined thematic unity. Its centre of interest, as we shall see, is constantly changing. To be sure, the volume derives a special meaning when related to Sinister Street, and John's general development seems intended to complement that of the younger Michael Fane. But the episodic construction prohibits a more formal unity of effect than that secured by the presence of a central character. Mackenzie, it would seem, deliberately selected a format free enough to include a variety of materials and purposes. He has used the term "improvise" to describe this approach to the novel.¹ And in a very real sense Again to the North is an improvisation.

Mackenzie's purpose in the novel, as a number of reviewers pointed out, seems more serious generally than in the other novels of the series. He makes use of his skills as a writer frankly and directly to instruct on a level below theme or artistic integration. He gives free play to his ability to recall incident and to relate in vivid, fast-moving narrative. Particularly does he manifest his facility of invention, and he indulges as never before in characterizations and caricatures. Satire becomes a more prominent

motif than in his previous novels. Mackenzie frequently employs characters in soliloquies and conversations to voice his own opinions on modern life, the war, the rise of Nazi Germany, the Irish question, Scots Nationalism, Russia and the Abdication crisis. Again to the North is in some ways the most personal of his later works. In it Mackenzie conveys that vivid sense of life, that zest for experience, that delight in the human pageant, which have always been noteworthy elements of his own personality and temperament but which had never before been so fully expressed in his work.

Compton Mackenzie wrote Again to the North in a literary genre which he had attempted in Sinister Street. In purpose as in structure, the form is free enough for him to improvise whatever he wants.

The chronicle form of Again to the North, together with the comprehensiveness and detail of Mackenzie's narrative method, does undoubtedly obscure the fact that a universal pattern of man's experience constitutes the central plot organization of the book.² This pattern of experience is essentially that of the quest. It is not by accident that the basic literary symbol of the book is Ulysses, especially as portrayed in Tennyson's poem.

Reviewers and critics who have commented on Sylvia Scarlett have generally compared it with eighteenth-century

novels and Mackenzie with English practitioners of the genre. Elizabeth Wychoff has said: "It is more like Defoe's Moll Flanders than any other novel that comes to mind." (The Publishers' Weekly, p.1300).

The Pall Mall Gazette (London) already compared Mackenzie to Smollett,³ and The Daily Chronicle (London) said that the novel was "in the Richardson and Fielding way."⁴ However, the major influence upon Mackenzie in the writing of Sylvia Scarlett seems to have been the example of Stendhal, particularly in La Chartreuse de Parme.

During the war Mackenzie read Stendhal for the first time with attention.⁵ He has since spoken of him with the enthusiasm of an auteur d'une découverte as "the greatest novelist the world has known."⁶ In Again to the North, as in Sylvia Scarlett, Mackenzie seems to have been influenced by Stendhal's concept of his art, by his narrative method and techniques, and by elements of his style.⁷ Stendhal, for example, customarily regarded the purpose of a novel as entertainment by means of a story.⁸ Mackenzie seems essentially to take a similar view of the novel in writing Again to the North. As early as 1920 he wrote in a spirit suggestive of Stendhal: "I confess that I like a book to be readable; it seems to me that a capacity for entertaining a certain number of people is the chief justification for writing novels."⁹

More importantly, however, Mackenzie's narrative method in Again to the North seems indebted to the practice of Stendhal. He himself speaks of his talent as an improviser,¹⁰ and says how impossible he finds it to work from a plan.¹¹ The chronicle form offered him such freedom for improvisation.¹² R.P. Blackmur has stated that the structure of The Charterhouse of Parma is like that of Commedia dell'Arte, and he finds the improvisation in the novel to be either careless or planned.¹³

In a famous passage of Le Rouge et le Noir Stendhal compares a novel to a mirror travelling down a highway strapped to a man's pack.¹⁴ The mirror reflects whatever comes within its purview without emphasis or distinction. It exemplifies the episodic, anecdotal technique of a chronicle narrative, in which incidents are presented in sequence but without necessary connection or special emphasis. M. de Sacy finds such technique characteristic of Stendhal and, as we shall see, it is also in some measure characteristic of the narrative method of Mackenzie.

There are other similarities between the novels of Stendhal and Mackenzie's Sylvia Scarlett and Again to the North. The heroes of both Stendhal and Mackenzie are in constant movement and change. The authors are sparing in their use of description. Stendhal, in The Charterhouse of Parma, like Mackenzie, possesses "the art with which the

writer gives life to secondary actors in his story, even when they only make a passing appearance on the stage."¹⁵ Both authors make extensive use of the soliloquy.¹⁶ And just as the Duchessa Sanseverina and Celia Conti are contrasted types of character in the Charterhouse, so there are John Ogilvie and his contemporaries in Mackenzie's novel.

In comparison with Mackenzie's earlier novels, we find the distinguishing feature of the narrative method in Again to the North and Sylvia Scarlett is the concentration upon incident for its own sake as a major source of interest. A number of reviewers compared this technique of the novel to that of the motion picture. Country Life (London) said that the novel was "like nothing so much as the scenario of a cinematographic film."¹⁷ The Liverpool Courier spoke of the "kinematographic rush" of events,¹⁸ and Scofield Thayer referred to "the cinematographic Sylvia Scarlett."¹⁹ This presentation of life as a sequence of discontinuous experience impressed some readers and critics with its realism. The Pall Mall Gazette, for example, said of Sylvia Scarlett: "There is no plot, as there is no plot in real life."²⁰ It is the vivid appearance and flow of life which Mackenzie set out to capture in the book. Life to John Ogilvie and Sylvia Scarlett had always offered itself as "a set of vivid impressions that formed a crudely coloured panorama of action without any emotional light and shade."²¹ This, at least,

is the way it is made to appear in the novel. It is this effect, perhaps, which gave rise to D.H. Lawrence's comment about Sylvia Scarlett: "It's so like life." (Sylvia Scarlett, p.10). It would be safe to say the same about Again to the North.

The rapidity with which incident succeeds incident is especially to be noted. Little opportunity is offered for reflection. There is none of the lingering over scenes and details which is to be found in Sinister Street or Guy and Pauline. All is in movement. The movement is of all kinds and in all directions. We see John, for example, as a middle-aged man and then as a father. We see his swift transitions from politician to philosopher to nationalist. We see his involvement in discussions of various urgencies and commitments. We see his rising from minor roles in a quartette and musical comedy to success as a monologist and then to the shadowy life of a cabaret entertainer. And through it all we meet a bewildering array of characters, as John constantly changes his milieu and his locale. The action passes hectically from Capri to London to a Scottish Island to Greece and Ireland. There is talk of Abyssinia, Spain and the United States, as well as Russia and the Balkans and the days of World War I.

Romantic interest is suggested by John's resumption of a relationship with one of the principal women in his

life, Euphrosyne Ladas, and by Corinna's love for Sebastian Stern. There is structural symmetry in having each of them promised in marriage and the novel ends on the conventional note of love attained. Despite such obvious design, the novel lacks the artistic unity we find in the earlier volumes,²² for the centre of interest changes from book to book in a way that impairs a unified effect.²³

The sheer length of the novel and the profusion of detail tend to obscure whatever coherence or definiteness of structure the book possesses. A common criticism that it shares with Sinister Street is that the book is formless, that it lacks a meaningful artistic unity.²⁴ Sheila Kaye-Smith said of Sinister Street:

It is not so well constructed and satisfactory a work of art as Carnival. . . . in the necessary discarding of plot Mr. Mackenzie may have too defiantly ignored rules of construction.²⁵

It was urged that there is no selectivity in the massing of incidents and details and impressions. Abel Chevalley earlier commented of Mackenzie's work in general:

But what disorder, what over-abundance, what a pell-mell in these two volumes! One would say that in Compton Mackenzie's judgment everything is fit to print. He permits himself neither the faculty nor the leisure of selection.²⁶

The New York Times said: "Mr. Mackenzie has written some thirty-five novels, and in this case practice does not seem to make perfect." Only one critic, Mary Ross, in the

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Times Literary Supplement, had anything to say of Again to the North which might be termed praise:

Again to the North: for a just verdict, as the author called it in his initial preface, on the whole work which has engaged his efforts for the last dozen years one should go back to the beginning and give The Four Winds the continuous reading that the disruptive process of publication has made impossible up to this point. Even without giving it that due, the spaciousness, variety and unity of his accomplishment are impressive. This is not a work into which one can dip lightly. Mr. Mackenzie has something to say, and for its full appreciation one should follow the telling throughout its development. The Four Winds demands shelf-room, time, and attention.²⁷

The physical setting of Again to the North, like that of Sylvia Scarlett, is the least detailed of all these early works. The rapidity of the action forbids much description, and in the novel character and incident are paramount. In addition, Mackenzie seems to have been under the influence of Stendhal and his "theory of unnecessary decoration," (Sylvia Scarlett, p.9). In the novel Mackenzie does not seek to embed his characters in a solidly detailed and accurate topographical setting, as he did in his other books. Setting provides only a functional backdrop for the action, and is not thematically important to his artistic purposes. At times there is even no attempt to create a setting, but action and dialogue alone carry the burden of the story. Thus, when the action shifts from Scotland to Capri or Greece, Mackenzie does not describe these places and there

are virtually no details conveying local colour. The action might have occurred anywhere. Quite unlike Sylvia Scarlett, on the other hand, a detached vignette is never given.

The setting in time, on the other hand, is much more definite and more carefully worked out than that of place. References to actual events, like World War I and the Abdication Crisis, or to the dating of letters, enable us to place the action in a historical framework.

Perhaps the most striking change between Again to the North and Mackenzie's earlier books excepting Sylvia Scarlett is in the style. Descriptive passages are used sparingly, and when used they are brief. The use of decorative prose studded with exotic words is also abandoned.

Mackenzie himself has attributed this change in style to two factors: the influence of Stendhal and the official writing he did during the war years. He has said in this latter connection:

I suppose when I came out after my year at Athens as Military Control Officer I had written in reports, telegrams, and other papers, the equivalent of six novels. . . . I'd got over any weakness for the languorous and the long-drawn out. I'd lost all desire to look about for beautiful words. The only thing that mattered was to get on with the story.²⁸

He further commented that if one "had written about 10,000 telegrams, as I had, at one and sixpence-halfpenny or something a word, you know you've got to cut out everything

unnecessary."²⁹ Although in later books Mackenzie modified his practice in Sylvia Scarlett of excluding descriptive passages from his work, his style never reverted to the mannered elegancies of the pre-war period.

The portrait of John Ogilvie is not as fully developed as that of Michael Fane. We see him mainly with reference to his relationship with Corinna, his daughter, completely absorbed by the politics of Europe. Although the portrait is narrow, it yet impresses as being psychologically exact. John seems distressed by the change and progress of twentieth-century Europe, but Mackenzie suggests, perhaps tenuously, that John could not be a part of the wider world of activity to which Corinna is called by temperament and instinct. She is presented as one more incident for him, one of so many. Mackenzie depicts with insight and skill the stages in the relationship. He shows, for example, John's aloofness toward Corinna as a response to his doubts and uncertainties about the future. In a letter to Euphrosyne he writes:

I am not less distressed than you at this moment, about my own country. As I told you, I have for the present felt it was my duty to give up any notion of trying to precipitate events in Scotland . . . because I feel a tremendous struggle for the soul of man is drawing near. (p.238).

Mackenzie seems to suggest at the book's end that John is about to come to terms with existence as the result

of achieving a religious view of life as well as a satisfying human love. But this conclusion is so tenuous and forced that one can only surmise Mackenzie's intention. John's religious development is never sufficiently explained, or motivated clearly enough, to make his conversion seem more than merely another adventure. As in Sinister Street, Mackenzie seems incapable of a convincing, interior account of spiritual conversion. Similarly, the love affair between John and Euphrosyne impresses the reader as being contrived rather than natural and inevitable. The only attempt to motivate this strangely fated relationship lies in the fact that they have known one another for over twenty years and are interested in the cause of Greek independence.

But John, like his class and his generation, has matured with a certain set of standards and values. Similarly, Michael Fane at eighteen found them embodied in Mr. Neech, the history teacher at St. James', who became for Michael "a grotesque symbol of public-school education." (p.392). The influence of Neech manifested itself in the qualities he demanded from his pupils: "a stoic bearing, a sense of humour, a capacity for inquisitiveness, an idea of continuity." (p.393).

In Book III of Sinister Street Michael set out consciously to obtain the best that Oxford traditionally has to offer questing youth on the threshold of the active life.

According to Mortimer R. Proctor in The English University Novel, Oxford offers profitable leisure, lessons in what becomes the gentleman, companionship with the past, and serene contemplation of the future. To these he might have added free association with one's peers. To Michael and to John Ogilvie in the adjustment to the ritual of Oxford life and its informal intellectual atmosphere, there came further growth in the quest for self-realization. Perhaps what Oxford most essentially gave them was the feeling of sharing in the past. It clarified and reinforced the role of continuity and tradition in human life; that the individual is part of a continuing and meaningful process.

At Oxford, also, John came to see the traditional concept of the gentleman as a social and moral ideal. This realization is dramatically expressed for him when he visits Miriam Stern. His friends, too, possess a clearly recognizable common code which sets them apart from other social groups. The basic distinction is that they are gentlemen, or, less formally, "Good Eggs". In conversation with Stella, Michael Fane describes the importance of the gentleman to society:

My theory is that a gentleman leavens the great popular mass of humanity, and however superficially useless he may seem, his existence is a pledge of the immanence of the idea. Popular education has fired thousands to prove themselves not gentlemen in the present meaning of the term, but something much finer than any gentleman we know

anything about. And they are not, they simply and solidly are not. The first instinct of the gentleman is respect for the past with all it connotes of art and religion and thought. The first instinct of the educated misfit is to hate and destroy the past. Now I maintain that the average gentleman, whatever situation he is called upon to face, will deal with it more effectively than those noble savages who have been armed with weapons they don't know how to use and are therefore so much the more dangerous, since every weapon to the primitive mind is a weapon of offense. (p.497).

A belief in the stoic ideal of the gentleman as being one who by training is prepared to face any situation was shaken for Michael by the suicide of his father's friend Prescott, but it became a way of life for John Ogilvie.

From their school years, Michael Fane and John Ogilvie had acquired the traditional ideals and values of their class as expressed in the code of the gentleman. But as yet their ideals and their beliefs were untested. Moreover, they lacked any sense of commitment to something which could give future life purpose or direction. As Michael explains it to Mr. Viner:

I'm groping in the dark after a hazy idea of subordination. That's something, you know. But I haven't found my own place in the scheme. . . . I want to surrender myself, and I'm not going to surrender anything until I'm sure by faith that I'm not merely surrendering the wastage of myself. (p.538).

Freed from the necessity of earning a living by his inheritance, John was faced with the still larger question of what to do with his life. As playwright, soldier, political

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philosopher, lover and finally parent, John both tests his assumptions about life and proves the value of his preparation for participating in it.

Corinna at seventeen is a picture of girlhood in transition to womanhood under the impetus of a love affair. She is divided between her attachment to her home and her father and the force of her passion for travel and for Sebastian Stern. She wants Sebastian, but at the same time she wants all else to remain unchanged. She does not change or grow significantly because there are no sufferings imposed by her love. Mackenzie, however, is interested only in her youthful experience; he does not deal with her maturity. As Mackenzie depicts her, she seems rather arbitrarily destined not to grow up. She cannot, therefore, be a fit life-companion for her father. More than a generation separates them. John early sees her as Aphrodite (p.185) and easily capable of being transplanted to another environment.

To Sebastian Stern she appears to be both a fairy's child and a wild daffodil. (p.259). She would flourish amid new scenes, and could not be happy remaining in the beautiful but narrow world of Tigh Non Ron. "I only want to live for love," says Corinna, (p.265), but John cannot really be content with such an aim.

Again to the North, despite much of interest and worth, is not a successful novel. Its lack of artistic

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integration and central focus ultimately wearies the reader. It attempts too much and at the same time not enough. Perhaps the fault lies with the chronicle form itself, which seems to demand of an author a great simplicity or a great subtlety of conception to be eminently successful. In Again to the North, as in Sylvia Scarlett, one feels that there is merely complexity. But if the novel fails as a whole, there is much that is rewarding to the casual reader. There is, for example, the brilliance of individual episodes and the vivid portrayal of certain characters. There is also a perceptive commentary on human life and character for those who will look for it, and for those who are familiar with the other novels of "The Theatre of Youth" sequence, Again to the North carries on into the thirties the stories of those men and women introduced at earlier stages in their careers. The tragedy of that generation is summed up earlier in the death of Fitzgerald in the Irish rebellion and that of Gardiner in a plane crash.

It should be noted that the volume gains in significance when it is read in conjunction with the other novels of "The Theatre of Youth". It offers further insight into the generation coming to maturity in the early years of the twentieth century. And it is not true, as is so often asserted by reviewers, that "Mr. Mackenzie has done this same thing before."

NOTES

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¹See p.195 of text. Mackenzie, "Compton Mackenzie and Sylvia Scarlett," p.600.

²Lascelles Abercrombie expressed the opinion regarding Sinister Street that there is not a page that is not in one way or another engaging, and many of them are profoundly moving; and the story is most decidedly a formal whole. But it is not altogether our fault, we believe, that it is easier to remember the story as one fine thing after another than as a single effect." The Manchester Guardian, November 11, 1914.

³August 23, 1918.

⁴August 21, 1918. Salann in The New Republic, (New York) thought that a comparison with Fielding's Joseph Andrews "makes Sylvia Scarlett look like an oversweet Jack Rose cocktail," "What to Read," XIX, January 4, 1919, p.386. The Glasgow Herald, on the other hand, found more modern parallels: "Could one imagine 'The Adventures of Harry Richmond' written by Mr. George Moore . . . the result . . . would not be unlike this story." August 19, 1918. (Clipping in Scrapbook No.30).

⁵He says: "I had tried to read the Chartreuse de Parme when I was at Oxford and had been bored by it. Nobody should read the Chartreuse de Parme until he possesses the experience to appreciate it. It is not even intelligible to the unversed mind." Aegean Memories, pp.241-42. The Charterhouse of Parma was Mackenzie's favourite among Stendhal's novels. Elsewhere he has spoken of it as "that immortal guide to worldliness, that supreme novel of manners. . . ." First Athenian Memories, p.77. He has called the Duchessa Sanseverina in the novel his favourite character in fiction. ("My Favourite Character in Fiction: A Symposium," John o' London's Weekly, (London), October 6, 1934, p.4.

⁶Mackenzie, Unconsidered Trifles, (London, 1932) p.75.

⁷In speaking of the influence of Stendhal upon the writing of Sylvia Scarlett, Mackenzie has mentioned only the

matter of style. He says, for example, that having read Stendhal he was "bewitched by his theory of unnecessary decoration, and the demand that his characters should express so much of themselves in direct speech." Sylvia Scarlett, p.9.

⁸He says, for example: "Le roman est un livre qui amuse en racontant." "La première qualité d'un roman doit être raconter, amuser par des récits." "Le roman doit raconter, c'est là le genre de plaisir qu'on lui demande. La dissertation, la recherche ingénieuse à La Bruyère sont des dégénération." (Quoted by S. de Sacy, "Le Miroir sur la Grande Route," Le Mercure de France, CCCVI, (May 1949), p.69.

⁹Compton Mackenzie, "Francis Brett Young," The Bookman, LI, (London, August 1920), p.638.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³He gives examples of the two types of improvisations. "When Mosca met Gina he was already married; that was careless improvisation. But when the time comes to marry Gina, the existing wife is readily forgotten, which is planned improvisation." (The Charterhouse of Parma," The Kenyon Review, XXVI (Winter 1964), pp.226-27.). A similar distinction might be made of Mackenzie's improvisation of incident in Sylvia Scarlett, as we shall later see.

¹⁴Scarlet and Black, trans. M.R.B. Shaw (London, 1953), p.367.

¹⁵M.R.B. Shaw, "Introduction," The Charterhouse of Parma (London, 1958), p.10.

¹⁶Shaw, speaking of The Charterhouse, comments on "the many soliloquies by which inner workings of the mind are revealed. . . ." (pp.9-10).

¹⁷September 21, 1918.

¹⁸September 24, 1918.

¹⁹"Compton Mackenzie," The Dial, LXV, (November 30, 1918), p.474.

²⁰August 23, 1918.

²¹Sylvia Scarlett, p.97. The New York Globe commented on this passage: "In other words, life to Sylvia is apparently one long and continuous movie, with about as much rhyme and reason. To the reader the story is hodge-podge: clever, perhaps, but hodge-podge." (September 18, 1918, [clipping in Scrapbook No.30]).

²²Reviewers frequently objected to the lack of structure and unity in the two volumes of Sylvia Scarlett. Representative is The Nation (London,) which said of the first volume: "One cannot pass any comments on its construction or form, because the author, so far as we can see, had not made any attempt to gather the book up into a unity, emotional, aesthetic, or practical." (September 7, 1918, [clipping in Scrapbook No.30]). When the second volume appeared, the same publication said: "... it [the novel] is no more a work of art than an official document. It is not a book at all, but a book-shop, with as little order and as much variety, as little purpose, philosophy, and meaning, and as much inconsequence." XXV (April 19, 1919), p.88.

²³The Morning Post (London) may have some such idea in its comment that "... the episodes themselves do change character somewhat when we pass from the earlier of them to the later." (March 29, 1919 [clipping in Scrapbook No.30]).

²⁴Mackenzie remarked in his "Epilological Letter" to Sinister Street: "I am tempted to hope that with the publication of the second volume many irrelevancies have established their relevancy." (Sinister Street, New York ed., p.657.

²⁵"Compton Mackenzie and his Work," The Bookman, LXII, (New York, December 1925), p.392.

²⁶The Modern English Novel (New York, 1925), p.226.

²⁷April 21, 1945, p.185.

²⁸Morgan, p.490.

²⁹"Sir Compton Mackenzie 'Face to Face'," The Listener, LXVII, (January 25, 1962), p.166.

CONCLUSION

F. Scott Fitzgerald met Compton Mackenzie on Capri in 1925. "I asked him," Fitzgerald was later to tell Edmund Wilson, "why he had petered out and never written anything that was any good since Sinister Street and those early novels,"¹ and to many students of the twentieth-century English novel, this still seems to be the central question about the work of Mackenzie. But, as Mackenzie replied to Fitzgerald, the criticism is not valid. It is my contention that it can be successfully argued that The Four Winds of Love is as important a work as Sinister Street, and one written with a more mature command. His Scottish novels, of which Whisky Galore may be the best, are certainly his most original and satisfying creations in a comic vein. Mackenzie's style has become less self-conscious and more flexible with the passage of time; his Thin Ice, published in 1956, is a little masterpiece in a taut, restrained style.²

It is true, nevertheless, that Mackenzie's reputation with the critics was never again to be as high as it had been before he went off to war in 1914. Such devaluation was inevitable, unfortunately, if only because his early reputation had been so highly inflated; and it could hardly be expected to survive the resounding accolade of Henry James or the belief that Mackenzie was the hope of the English novel.

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The reaction, when it came, was bound therefore to be all the more severe. And yet Mackenzie's early success is understandable; and his considerable talents as a writer found a suitable medium in his chronicles of modern life. These books appeared at the right moment, and Mackenzie became widely regarded as the originator of important new developments in the novel. Gerald Gould, for example, in 1925 sought to define Mackenzie's innovations:

Mr. Compton Mackenzie did not invent the English realistic-autobiographic novel. That goes back to Defoe; but Mr. Mackenzie has given it a local habitation and an Oxford accent. He did not invent the picaresque - picaresque, which was flourishing under Elizabeth. But he has adapted it to modern conditions - not very successfully. And he has wedded the two types by the rites of Bohemia.⁷

To evaluate Mackenzie's achievement in the novel, early as well as late, one must take into consideration a number of separate factors affecting his work and its reputation. Mackenzie's own attitude toward his art requires special clarification, because since World War I he has habitually stressed a non-idealistic view of his profession as a writer. He describes himself, as we have seen, as an "entertainer" rather than as an "artist" or even a "novelist" but in doing so, he seems motivated not by false modesty but by a dislike for what he conceives to have happened to literature since the war. He regards much of it as having become self-conscious and pretentious. Poetry, he believes, became

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the province of the obscurantists and the poseurs - chief of whom in England, according to many, is Ezra Pound. Fiction, similarly, became falsely intellectualized, after the fashion of Aldous Huxley, devoted to what was currently fashionable in psychology.⁴ It is against such tendencies that Mackenzie has consistently affirmed the traditional view that the function of the novel is "to entertain by the representation of life."⁵ The fundamental object of the novelist, he has said, is not to express ideas or philosophical attitudes but to "present character against a background of place."⁶ Such a notion of the novel is, however, quite in accord with the descriptive definition given recently by Lionel Stevenson in The English Novel (Boston, 1960).⁷ It is, perhaps, unfortunate that Mackenzie has not made use of some such method of classifying his fiction as that of Graham Greene, who distinguishes between his novels and his entertainments. This sort of distinction would give a more realistic picture of the nature of Mackenzie's work than he himself usually tends to convey.

Because Mackenzie seems to depreciate the significance of his own work by describing himself as an entertainer, his reputation has been more seriously weakened by the forces of literary and social change. Mackenzie's early work so vividly expressed much of the atmosphere, the preoccupations and the conventions of the Edwardian past that it inevitably

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fell from favour during the reaction of the twenties and the thirties. This new era was intolerant of the mood of the past, its own youth, its literary fashions and the literary reputations formed before the war. Douglas Goldring in 1918 voiced the sentiment of the times when he posited the importance of "a reconsideration of every opinion, whether aesthetic or political, which was entertained before its [the war's] outbreak."⁸ He continued:

The war has hung up all literary careers, those of the successful and of the unknown, and it is hard to believe that any novelist will emerge from it with his pre-war reputation untouched.

Unfortunately, Goldring and many other critics were of the opinion that there was some unique quality about the plain fact of the war which would make such re-evaluation definitive:

For the war has provided a rough-and-ready test for true metal. The popularity of the work which can pass this test should be enhanced, and the popularity of that which fails to pass it must wither.

In truth, however, it was to be expected that the war, because it had imposed violent changes upon life and man's conceptual world, would have a similar effect upon literature and the arts in general: conventional subjects, attitudes and techniques perforce gave way to newer; and with the twenties the fashion turned toward the psychological, introspective novel, as writers turned inward and away from

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society, except to satirize it. The social chronicle, which Mackenzie surely had made his own, was no longer in favour. Similarly, Mackenzie's romantic temperament did not match the mood of the times, which insisted upon a sterner outlook on the part of its serious writers.

Mackenzie's reputation has suffered decidedly from a changed fashion, but it is equally true that his work as a whole is uneven. Not only has he produced a distressingly bad serial like Coral, but, as has already been seen, there are imperfections of technique even in his best work. One may safely surmise that he apparently lacks a sufficiently developed faculty for self-criticism, and this on occasion his taste betrays him. In his early novels, for example, the faux bon manifested itself especially in his over-fondness for striking verbal effects. Even so, it must be said in his favour that he has never made a virtue of an unimaginative consistency; for within his limitations, he has always been willing to experiment and to try something new, rather than to repeat or re-present what has already been approved. With similar boldness he has been known to persist in a cherished undertaking, like the three volumes of The Altar Steps, despite considerable critical disapproval and lack of popular success.

Writing is a profession for Mackenzie. It is not a way of life or a religion. Neither is he of the school of

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Flaubert: he does not insist that every work be a masterpiece; but like a professional, he frequently writes out of the margin of his superfluous talent.⁹ On occasion he may be touched with greatness. It is significant, however, that he has never been satisfied to regard himself as merely a writer. His curiosity, his love of life, his conviviality, and his innate optimism, have filled his life with many interests and careers. He eagerly accepted the opportunities and challenges of the post-war world, and his enthusiasms generated countless plans and activities. For example, in 1919, Mackenzie was fascinated by the possibilities of the motion picture, and he tried to interest D.H. Lawrence in chartering a yacht with him for travel in the South Seas, where they would write and film their own stories,¹⁰ but this plan was abandoned in the summer of 1920 when Mackenzie obtained a Crown lease on the two Channel Islands of Herm and Jethou. For the next eight years he expended a great deal of money and effort in the attempt to make the islands self-supporting through agriculture and the raising of cattle. In 1923, moreover, while still living on Jethou, he founded The Gramophone, a magazine which is still in existence and which is devoted to a discussion of recorded music and the review of phonograph records. Later, in the late 1920's, Mackenzie's interest in the Scotland of his ancestors led him to return to live in that country, to work

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for the cause of Scottish nationalism and to become one of the founders of the Nationalist Party. His political activities led to his election in 1930 to the Rectorship of Glasgow University. W.H. Auden has celebrated Mackenzie's brief political career in the following lines from The Orators:

Scotland is stirring: in Scotland they say
That Compton Mackenzie will be king one day.¹¹

In Mackenzie, the man as well as the author, vitality and enthusiasm are personal qualities strongly in evidence and would seem to be the sources of the fulness and richness of his life as well as of his extensive literary output. Frederick Cowles, for example, says: "Intense vitality is the dominating impression that one receives from Compton Mackenzie and his work."¹² L.A.G. Strong further observes of Mackenzie:

He is a talker who writes novels, rather than
a novelist who talks. Both talk and novels are
by-products of an extraordinary aptitude for being
alive, sparks thrown off by a vital flame.¹³

Eric Linklater describes him as being "like a plume on Scotland's dusty bonnet . . ."¹⁴

There is, to be sure, a striking harmony between Mackenzie's personality and his work; and those who cannot, or are unwilling to, take Mackenzie seriously as a novelist may overlook the fact that the bulk of his fiction, including

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even the comic novels, expresses, at times insistently, a coherent philosophy of life.

The central concern of Mackenzie's life, as well as the dominant theme of his work, has been insistence on the value of freedom and self-determination against the forces of conformity and the tendencies toward the mechanization of human life. Mackenzie has said that even from the age of three he was filled with the desire for freedom and that "freedom has been the guiding principle by which I have lived my own life and desired it for the lives of others."¹⁵ His change from the classical to the historical side of St. Paul's, for example, was motivated by his resolve to avoid the well-worn path of an Oxford scholarship, academic distinction, and the conventional career of a civil servant. His ambition, simply, was to live fully, richly, freely - and this aim, he believed, he had achieved.¹⁶ Similarly, Mackenzie has ever been on the side of the individual, even the eccentric, and against the social group, conformity, bureaucracy, or other similar restrictions and inhibitions on human freedom. Moray McLaren has suitably pointed out that:

Through all Mr. Mackenzie's many activities there runs this love of individualism, and no attempt to understand him or his literary work . . . can succeed unless this fact is held in view.¹⁷

McLaren has also remarked of Mackenzie's propensity for living on islands that "the island is his domestic or

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geographical proclamation of his rights as an individual."¹⁸ In his opinions and beliefs and his championship of causes, Mackenzie has repeatedly been a "minority" man. During the period between the two world wars, for instance, he sailed consistently against the currents of the time.¹⁹ He is a romantic in his dislike of a drab, bland uniformity in life; but he is a humanist in his defence of traditional values, ideas and practices threatened by the pressures of modern life; along with George Moore he believes that:

Respectability is sweeping the picturesque out of life; national customs are disappearing. The kilt is going or gone in the highlands and the smock in the southlands. . . . Too true that universal uniformity is the future of the world.²⁰

Mackenzie's humanistic individualism is most apparent when, to cite one example, he speaks against Esperanto as a world language if it is going to lead to the neglect of the traditional languages of mankind:

. . . I shall continue to think that a language like Basque, or even Albanian, will be more worthy of study, because I look in a language for the evidence of humanity's continuous life, for the lack of which logic and ingenuity are no substitute.²¹

Similarly, his principles have led him to campaign enthusiastically on behalf of Scottish nationalism. Edmund Wilson suitably sums up this aspect of Mackenzie's "message" as expressed in his post-war work:

For years he [Mackenzie] has been trying to plead in his books for the rights of small nations

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and cultural minorities, as against all the forces that are driving us in the direction of a centralized power that tries to process or crush them.²²

If the values of liberty and individuality have shaped the personal life of Compton Mackenzie, they have equally shaped the vision of life he expressed in his novels. From the beginning these values have offered thematic material for him; and in The Passionate Elopement, for example, the moral is drawn that the freedom of the individual to lead his own life is never to be violated - even for the best motives. Beau Ripple is most explicit in his speech at the finish of the novel: "My lords, ladies and gentlemen, never meddle with other people's business when it happens to concern the heart or the soul of a human creature. . . ." ²³

In "The Theatre of Youth", too, Mackenzie explores more fully the problem of freedom and the individual. In Carnival also, Mackenzie studies Jenny Pearl, who fails to achieve an important degree of human liberty in spite of the vitality of her personality. Despite the forces of heredity and background which are shown to have influenced her, the principal criticism is leveled at the education which Jenny has received, and which has failed to develop her imaginative and intellectual life, thereby failing to enable her to live a full, human, responsible life. Jenny was not perfectly free, because her natural capacities as a human being had never been awakened: "The fault was not hers. She was the victim of

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sterile imaginations. Her soul was bleak and cold as the life of man in the days before Prometheus stole fire from heaven."²⁴ In Sinister Street and Sylvia Scarlett, the point is taken that freedom is not only an objective, but also a means to self-realization and personal fulfillment. In those novels, Mackenzie has portrayed the search that explores, beyond freedom, toward and for individual commitment. In centering his attention upon youth poised on the threshold of the active adult life, as he does in Guy and Pauline, Mackenzie reveals the tensions created when the desire for freedom and the desire for commitment come into conflict.

Compton Mackenzie has a number of impressive and distinguishing talents as a writer. He has a Dickensian ability to create character, and a fertility of imagination in the telling of story; and he has a strong sense of place somehow reminiscent of Hardy so that the backgrounds of his novels are solidly and accurately constructed. He has a decided flair for farce and humorous characterization; and he writes, at his best, with distinction, having curbed an early tendency towards a purely decorative style. For the sake of the vividness and the vitality of the work as a whole, it is sometimes necessary but not difficult to bear with the immaturity and lack of exactitude of technique which detracts from most of the early novels.

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Despite two works that are excellent of their kind, namely Sinister Street and The Four Winds of Love, Mackenzie must be judged an interesting minor writer of a transitional age. World War I seriously marked a change in the fashion of literature which set him apart from the main development of the post-war novel, but his early work should not be dismissed peremptorily. "The Theatre of Youth" is one of the most ambitious and engaging sequence novels in English literature, and, moreover, it offers to modern readers two valuable sources of interest beyond the appeal of story: first, these novels offer a lively and detailed account of the Edwardian era and of that generation which, coming to maturity in the early twentieth century, went off to war in 1914. The picture of that era provided by the novels can never be outmoded. Secondly, the romantic humanism which infused these volumes has a peculiar significance and relevance for our own time because Mackenzie's insistence on the values of human freedom and the rights of individuals possibly have more meaning and urgency for readers today and in the future than they had for the public of the second decade of the twentieth century.

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¹ Arthur Mizener, The Far Side of Paradise, (Boston, 1951), p.167.

² With an eye obviously on his own career, Mackenzie described in 1930 the three periods which a writer goes through: "In his youth he begins enthusiastically, full of things he must say. Then follows a period of fatigue, when others begin to imitate him. Then comes a time when he could vomit at the sight of another rehash of this or that book. But if he really is a writer, he has become a professional, and settled down to the business of writing regardless of critics or imitators or anyone else! . . . Then if our novelist be something more than a capable professional writer, he enters a third period in which he combines the passion of his first period with the accomplishment of his second." Louise Morgan, "Compton Mackenzie Hits Out," Everyman, (London, November 13, 1930, p.489. The first two periods offer clear parallels to Mackenzie's career down into the 1920's. I believe that he achieved the third period intermittently, from the late 1930's on.

³ The English Novel of Today, (New York, 1925), p.41.

⁴ So in conversation recorded on June 16, 1961.

⁵ Mackenzie, "Sidelight", The Spectator, CXCI, (London, October 15, 1954,) p.468.

⁶ R. Barry O'Brien, "A Talk with Sir Compton Mackenzie", The Wiltshire Herald and Advertiser, September 18, 1953. (Clipping in Scrapbook No.61).

⁷ See introductory chapter, "What is a Novel?", pp.3-10

⁸ "Three Georgian Novelists," The Egoist (London, November-December, 1918), p.134.

⁹ Morgan, p.489.

¹⁰ See Lawrence's letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith, written on January 25, 1920. The Letters of D.H. Lawrence, ed. Aldous Huxley, (London, 1932), p.498.

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¹¹"Ode IV", (London, 1932), p.102.

¹²"Some Contemporary Writers: Compton Mackenzie," Publishers' Circular, (London, July 17, 1940), p.2.

¹³"Books and Writers," The Spectator, CLXXXVII, (September 14, 1951), p.336.

¹⁴The Man on My Back: An Autobiography, (New York, 1941), p.305.

¹⁵Mackenzie, My Life and Times: Octave One, (London, 1963), p.122.

¹⁶In conversation recorded on June 19, 1961.

¹⁷"An Island His Castle," The Daily Record and Mail, (Glasgow, February 18, 1931. [Clipping in Scrapbook No.61]).

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Indeed Mark Longaker and Edwin C. Bolles assert: "By the end of the twenties . . . Mackenzie lost many of his readers, largely because of the increasingly propagandist character of his novels. He is a man of strong and often eccentric opinions that he has allowed to pervade his work at the cost of its artistic merit." Contemporary English Literature, (New York, 1953), p.312.

²⁰Confessions of a Young Man (New York, 1923), pp.419-20.

²¹Mackenzie, "Would the World be a Better Place?", Radio Times, (London, August 22, 1930. [Clipping in Scrapbook No.17]).

²²"An Interview with Edmund Wilson," The New Yorker, June 2, 1962, p.121.

²³Mackenzie, The Passionate Elopement, (London, n.d.) p.383.

²⁴Mackenzie, Carnival, (New York, 1912), p.80.

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A trilogy of novels dealing with the life and experiences of a young Anglican priest, Mark Lidderdale, and his ultimate conversion to Roman Catholicism. These books offer a detailed study of English ecclesiastical history and biography of the period.

Carnival, London, Martin Secker, 1912.

The story of Jenny Raeburn, a London chorus-girl, whose life-history from birth to death is related in detail. The book presents a vivid picture of the poverty and hardship of theatrical life for the countless thousands who never rise to stardom in their careers.

Coral, London, Cassell, 1925.

A sequel to Carnival, which follows up Jenny Raeburn's story through the life of her son, Frank Abel, and his romance with Coral Avery, daughter of the man who loved and deserted her.

The Four Winds of Love, London, Rich & Cowan and Chatto & Windus, 1937-44.

An ambitious multi-volumed saga recounting the life-story of an Englishman of the upper middle class from his adolescence to his middle fifties. The eight volumes of the series, each of which covers a specific period of his life, were published almost simultaneously in England and in the United States (by Dodd, Mead), and each of the "Four Winds" is represented by two volumes.

The East Wind of Love covers the life of the hero during the period from the turn of the century until 1911.

The South Wind of Love deals with the period from 1912 to 1917.

The West Wind of Love (the second volume of which was published in the United States under the title West to North), carries the story through the last year of the first World War up to the year 1922.

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This book, together with First Athenian Memories and Greek Memories, presents a narrative record of Mr. Mackenzie's experiences as a member of the Intelligence Staff of Sir Ian Hamilton's Headquarters.

Guy and Pauline, London, Martin Secker, 1915, (Published in the United States by Harper under the title of Plasher's Mead.)

An idyllic love story, set in the Cotswold country of England, the hero and heroine of which were among the characters appearing in Sinister Street [q.v.]

The Life and Adventures of Sylvia Scarlett, London, Martin Secker, 1918-1919, (Published simultaneously in the United States by Harper.)

A two-volume chronicle of the life of a girl in the Victorian era. Volume I, The Early Life and Adventures of Sylvia Scarlett, recounts the experiences of a heroine of doubtful parentage and unhealthy upbringing, while Volume II, Sylvia and Michael, brings the narrative to a satisfying conclusion during the first World War.

Literature in My Time, London, Rich & Cowan, 1933.

A literary autobiography in which the author traces the history of English literature from the 1880's to the time of writing, through the medium of informal comments on the books he read and the movements he witnessed during the various periods of his life.

My Life and Times, London, Chatto & Windus, 1963-66.

The autobiography of Compton Mackenzie which, when completed, will consist of ten volumes. To date, five have been published: Octave One (from 1883 to 1891) and Octave Two (1891-1900) in 1963; Octave Three (1900-07) in 1964; Octave Four (1907-14) in 1965 and Octave Five (1915-23) in 1966.

On Moral Courage, London, Collins, 1962.

A commentary on the subject of human integrity, especially as it has been demonstrated over the centuries by those who dared to oppose popular opinion, even at the risk of losing wealth, position, security, and life itself.

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(Published simultaneously in New York by Putnam).

A costume piece depicting the fashionable frivolities of an eighteenth-century spa - card parties, routs, drinking the waters, cock-fighting, flirtations both innocent and the reverse, and exaggerated etiquette - presented in a mock heroic style reminiscent of Stevenson, Anthony Hope and Hewlett.

Sinister Street, London, Martin Secker, 1913-14.
(Published simultaneously in the United States by Appleton.)

Sinister Street was originally published in two volumes, the first of which - Youth's Encounter - tells the story of Michael Fane's childhood and at an English public school, while the second deals with his life as an undergraduate at Oxford. Later editions combined the two volumes under the title of the original second volume. The work is an extraordinarily vivid and vital character study, developed with every value that a rich diction can supply.

Thin Ice, London, Chatto & Windus, 1956.

Covering the period 1878-1941, Thin Ice tells the story of Henry Fortescue, politician and traveller, and of his fatal penchant for young men. The usual situation is reversed, in that Fortescue's career is not ruined as a result of his immorality, but rather it is the failure of his career that saps his moral character.

Whisky Galore, London, Chatto & Windus, 1947, (Published in the United States by Houghton Mifflin in 1950, under the title Tight Little Island).

The novel from which the successful comedy film, Tight Little Island, was made. It describes, in superbly comic vein, the sufferings experienced by the people of two small islands of the Outer Hebrides, deprived of whisky as a result of the second World War.

The Windsor Tapestry, London, Chatto & Windus, 1952.

Biography of the Duke of Windsor and account of his abdication, with chapters on his ancestry back to the time of George III and on the Royal Marriage Act. Includes a list of authorities and an index.

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APPENDIX 1

ABSTRACT OF

The Chronicle Novel of
Compton Mackenzie 1937-1945
A Study of The Four Winds of Love

In 1914 Henry James described Compton Mackenzie as perhaps the most brilliant and promising of the young novelists. Time, however, has not confirmed James's opinion of Mackenzie's importance. Though he achieved both popular and critical success with his first three books, published between 1911 and 1914, his reputation as a serious novelist declined in the decade following World War I. His early work was attacked and as his new novels appeared, they were dismissed as undeserving of serious attention. Mackenzie's present reputation is that of an "entertainer" - to use his own description - who failed to fulfill his early promise.

This thesis examines eight of Mackenzie's novels, published between 1937 and 1945, the period when his reputation was at its lowest ebb. The novels treated are The East Wind of Love (1937) in two parts, The South Wind of Love (1937), likewise in two parts, The West Wind of Love, (1940), West to North, (1940), The North Wind of Love, (1944) and Again to the North (1945). Together they constitute a "saga" or chronicle novel of the life and times of John Ogilvie entitled The Four Winds of Love.

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Mackenzie was instrumental in reviving the long chronicle novel and had previously published two of them - The Theatre of Youth (1913-1920), and The Heavenly Ladder, (1922-24). He wrote, under the influence of Balzac, Stendhal and Proust, an ambitious and intricate roman fleuve.

In these early novels Mackenzie manifests impressive talents as well as weaknesses. He is capable of creating memorable characters, authentic dialogue and skillful plots. In The Four Wind of Love he vividly and accurately re-creates the world of his own generation between 1900 and 1937. By his excessive massing of details, however, he often obscures his central design and wearies the reader.

Mackenzie's reputation declined for three reasons, mainly. Much of his work mirrored the world immediately before and after the first World War, and his readers reacted to that world of their youth. His romantic realism and his devotion to the chronicle novel set him apart from post-war literary fashion. Mackenzie seemed to have become less idealistic and more tolerant of his role of entertainer, of being somewhat apart from the mainstream of the modern novel.

The novels which comprise The Four Winds of Love deserve respectful consideration. They present a perceptive record of human experience during times of trouble, crisis and change. The romantic humanism pervading these volumes, like much of Mackenzie's earlier fiction, has special

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significance to the modern reader. They affirm the importance of freedom and of the discharge of individual capability as opposed to social conformity and the mechanization of life.