

THE RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL LITERATURES:  
THE CANADIAN AND AUSTRALIAN EXAMPLES

by

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being a thesis submitted in accordance  
with the requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in the Department  
of English, University of Queensland,  
January 1987.

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except where acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or at any other university.

.....

(Alan John Lawson)

## ABSTRACT

Leonie Kramer has noted that 'literary commentary . . . is a powerful influence on notions of what constitutes a particular reality'. But literary commentary does not act alone: it also intersects with other discursive acts that together produce a dominant ideology, participating with them in the construction of 'a particular reality'. This thesis demonstrates, for the period since 1940, how arguments about the nature of Canadian and Australian Literatures in English are part of that ideological process. It therefore interrogates the kinds of 'national interests' which the discussions of the national literatures serve. Acknowledging that such debates are conducted as being 'in the interest' of the nation but are in fact in the domain of particular institutions, it enquires into the sources and relations of power within those institutions (and other cultural formations), and the ways in which that power is enhanced by the discussions of the national literatures.

While it is true that the question, 'Is there any?' continued to be used as a dismissive topos in some polemics well into the period covered, this thesis argues that in the significant debates about Australian and Canadian Literatures, and in most of the public use of them, the issues that are engaged are rather 'What is it?' and, implicitly at least, 'What may be done with/to it?' That last question discloses that the debate is about authority. The thesis argues that the attempts to define national literatures have been attempts to privilege the position of the definer.

It proposes that the visibility of national literatures, the general acknowledgement of their 'presence', depends not on the adventitious production of particular literary works -- the epic, a 'masterpiece', the Great Canadian/Australian Novel -- or on the 'mastery' of particular literary material -- the vernacular, indigenous peoples, the natural environment -- but rather on the establishment of the institutions of literary culture. It further argues that, despite the considerable achievements of individuals, this is not a history of individual heroism any more than it is a matter of reaching a quota of quality, quantity, or content. The 'actions' of those notable individuals are subject to, and are often precipitated by, institutional, political, and economic forces such as those examined in Chapters Five and Six. One premise of this thesis is that in Post-Colonial cultures, the 'presence' of history, ideology, and discourse is especially 'marked', and that, for an understanding of the development of literary culture, an examination of the economies of public/ation, of the relation to public policy, is not only necessary but inevitable.

The proof of the existence of a national literature is, indeed, the existence of its infrastructure -- the institutions of writing, teaching, scholarship, and publishing. But a crucial cause seems to be the precipitation of a polemic -- a 'timely' debate about the literature. Equally, the maintenance of a cultural nationalism depends not on the 'existence' of a national culture but upon the promotion of a problematic -- a rhetoric of crisis. In this, Canada has been more prominent than Australia. It is worth noting that the 'crisis' in Canadian culture in the nineteen seventies was especially closely tied to the focussing upon the national in 1967 (the Centennial), upon internal threats to its survival

(the 'Quebec crisis'), and the external threats to its survival (American economic domination of Canadian industry and consequently of Canadian culture): the debate about Canadian culture was a metaphor and a metonymy for each of these.

While it has become axiomatic to observe that Canadian society is pluralist (the mosaic) and Australian society is assimilationist (the monolith), this thesis nevertheless shows that the coherence of Canadian society is in many ways more apparent. This is especially true of the cultural articulations of that society, its concern for principles (rather than Australian pragmatism), its impetus towards defining issues (rather than the Australian dealing with problems), and its concern with self-knowledge.

However, in working comparatively with Canadian and Australian literatures this thesis departs from the customary Australian-Canadian strategy of distinguishing between the two literatures with the implied object of judging the two cultures. Its aim, rather, is to pursue an understanding of the development and workings of national literary cultures. It therefore considers not only the particular histories of literary criticism and literary history, and those of the various cultural institutions, but also endeavours to analyse their sociologies as well. The effects, then, of the particular modes of operation of the institutions (and even individuals) in Canadian and Australian literary culture upon the representation and recognition of those 'Literatures' are considered in some detail in the process of examining the range of social and cultural domains that must be analysed if the stories of national literary cultures are to be made intelligible.

## Publications Relevant to the Subject of this Thesis

(by Alan Lawson)

(with S.A. KRIMMER), eds. Barbara Baynton. Portable Australian Authors. St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1980.

(with F.P. LOCK). Australian Literature: A Reference Guide. (1977) 2nd ed. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1980.

'White for White's Sake: Studies of Patrick White's Novels.' Meanjin Quarterly, 32 (1973), 343-49.

'Unmerciful Dingoes? The Critical Reception of Patrick White.' Meanjin Quarterly, 32 (1973), 379-92.

'Desiderata in Australian Literary Bibliography.' In Seven Essays on Australian Subject Bibliography. Ed. D. H. Borchardt. Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1977, pp. 32-38.

'Meaning and Experience: A Review-Essay on Some Recurrent Problems in Patrick White Criticism.' Texas Studies in Literature and Language 21, (1979), 280-95.

'Australian Literary Bibliography: Some Proposals.' ACLALS Bulletin, Fifth Series, No. 2, (1979), pp. 61-72.

'Acknowledging Colonialism: Revisions of the Australian Tradition.' In Australia and Britain Studies in a Changing Relationship. Ed. A. F. Madden and W. H. Morris-Jones. Sydney: Sydney University Press in association with the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London; London: Frank Cass, 1980, pp. 135-44.

'Going Over the Terrain with a Guide.' New Literature Review, No. 12, (1983), pp. 36-45.

'Patterns, Preferences and Preoccupations: The Discovery of Nationality in Australian and Canadian Literatures.' In Theory and Practice in Comparative Studies: Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Papers from the First Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Canadian Studies held at Macquarie University, Sydney, August 1982. Ed. Peter Crabb. Sydney: ANZACS, 1983, pp. 193-206.

'Australian Literature since 1950 and its Study: A Bibliographical Survey.' Rajasthan University Studies in English, 15 (1982-83), 88-99.

'"Countries of the Mind": Place as Value in Canadian and Australian Critical Discourse.' In Regionalism and National Identity: Multi-Disciplinary Essays on Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Ed. .pn vii Reginald Berry and James Acheson. Christchurch: Association for Canadian Studies in Australia and New Zealand, 1985, pp. 579-86.

'Creative Criticism.' Rev. of A Place to Stand On: Essays by and about Margaret Laurence, ed. George Woodcock. CRNLE Reviews Journal, No. 1

(1986), pp. 37-41.

Rev. of Canadian Writers in 1984: The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Issue of Canadian Literature, ed. W. H. New. ARIEL, 17, No. 3 (July 1986), 122-26.

'Values and Evaluation.' Rev. of Canadian Literature in English, by W. J. Keith. Canadian Literature, No. 110 (Fall 1986), pp. 111-13.

**Forthcoming.**

'Australian Language and Literature: Annotated Bibliography and a Bibliographical Essay. Australians: A Guide to Australian History Sources. Sydney: Fairfax, Syme, Weldon Associates, 1986-87.

'Comparative Australian/Canadian Literary Studies: A Bibliography.' In Australian/Canadian Literatures in English. Ed. Russell McDougall and Gillian Whitlock. Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986.

'"There is Another World but it is in this One": A Cultural Paradigm for the Second World.' Paper presented at Interculture/Intertext: The Badlands Conference on Canadian and Australian Literatures, University of Calgary, Alberta, 29 August 1986. Forthcoming in Proceedings.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### The Discovery of Nationality in Australian and Canadian Literatures: The Basis for a Comparison of the Literary Cultures

Hail our great Queen in her regalia;  
One foot in Canada, the other in Australia.

James Gay<sup>1</sup>

When Claude Bissell wrote his Foreword to J. P. Matthews' Tradition in Exile in 1962 he expressed the opinion that 'comparisons are most effective and helpful when they deal with divergences that spring out of a strong common base.'<sup>2</sup> It is an argument that Diana Brydon pursues more vigorously in a paper, 'True North -- Down Under'<sup>3</sup> and in a chapter in a forthcoming book, Decolonising Fictions.<sup>4</sup> I argue that, for the purposes of my study, the common base is a fundamental structure founded upon the experience of cultural colonialism; that colonialism is a continuing psychic and cultural

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<sup>1</sup> James Gay, quoted in George Woodcock, The Canadians (St. Lucia: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1979), p. 256.

<sup>2</sup> Claude Bissell, Foreword, Tradition in Exile: A Comparative Study of Social Influences on the Development of Australian and Canadian Poetry in the Nineteenth Century, by John Pengwerne Matthews (Toronto/Melbourne: Univ. of Toronto Press/Cheshire, 1962), p. vi.

<sup>3</sup> Diana Brydon, 'True North - Down Under,' Paper delivered at the Australian Studies Centre, Univ. of Queensland, 3 April 1985.

<sup>4</sup> Diana Brydon, 'Australian Literature and the Canadian Comparison,' in Diana Brydon and Helen Tiffin, Decolonising Fictions, forthcoming. I am grateful to Professor Brydon for allowing me to read and comment on a draft of her chapter while I was revising the final draft of this one.



phenomenon and not a political phase; and I refer to some divergences. Diana Brydon in a couple of articles<sup>5</sup> has argued persuasively for ways of seeing Australian and Canadian literatures as different solutions to a common problem -- 'to synchronize our physical environments and our cultural environments'.<sup>6</sup> She, like Matthews, finds comparable (though certainly not identical) images in the two literatures and analyses these to explore patterns of cultural history. But their views of the histories of the two cultures diverge somewhat since Brydon's 1978 essay draws upon some of the revaluations of the Australian literary tradition that had begun in the early nineteen seventies:<sup>7</sup> in the way in which (echoing the famous Canadian critic, A. J. M. Smith, in 1928) it calls for an examination of critical first principles and an acknowledgement of new and liberating contexts for the study of Australian literature, it participates in those revaluations.

In a stimulating and insightful interview,<sup>8</sup> given during her first visit to Australia, Margaret Atwood articulated a number of ways in which the significant cultural experience of Australians and Canadians was a shared one. Since about 1978 there have been a number of articles that have compared (in a couple of cases) the responses of the two literary

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<sup>5</sup> Eg., Diana Brydon, 'Australian Literature and the Canadian Comparison,' Meanjin, 38 (1979), 154-65; 'Landscape and Authenticity: The Development of National Literatures in Canada and Australia,' Dalhousie Review, 61 (1981), 278-90.

<sup>6</sup> Diana Brydon, 'Landscape and Authenticity,' 289: the quotation alludes to Atwood's remark in her interview with Jim Davidson, Meanjin, 37 (1978), 195.

<sup>7</sup> Alan Lawson, 'Acknowledging Colonialism: Revisions of the Australian Tradition,' in Australia and Britain: Essays on a Changing Relationship, ed. A. F. Madden and W. H. Morris-Jones (London/Sydney: Frank Cass/Sydney Univ. Press in Association with the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Univ. of London, 1980), pp. 135-44.

<sup>8</sup> Jim Davidson, 'Interview with Margaret Atwood,' Meanjin, 37 (1978), 189-205.

traditions to particular themes or social phenomena<sup>9</sup> or (more commonly) an implicitly representative text from each.<sup>10</sup> My concern in this thesis is somewhat different. I am looking at the recognitions, the discoveries of cultural history; at the remarkably similar developments in the two nations through which an acknowledgement of the nationality of those phenomena -- 'Australian Literature' and 'Canadian Literature' -- has been articulated. To speak, simply, of Canadian Literature or Australian Literature as entities, is, it seems to me, to depend upon an unproblematised metonymy: a set of premature assumptions about the ways in which those terms have been made intelligible.

At the 1982 MUSNLE Seminar on 'The Sense of Place in the New Literatures in English' at Macquarie University, the South African poet and critic Stephen Gray talked of a phase in which a literature 'came into its own'. That phase, or (as I would argue) process, is the one I address in this thesis. This is how Gray describes it.

Phase three, then, has to be the coming into its own of a literature, not just in terms of a prescribable number of acceptably 'great' works, but in terms of the whole nexus that supports a literature -- its own publishing industry, including newspapers, magazines and journals, its own self-referring use of language, its mutual understanding of a set of infolded norms and values, its own context of myth about the past and the present, its theoretical wing of evaluators like ourselves, its sense of settling in to keep doing a job that has to be continually done, and -- most important of all -- its own community of readership or audience, which receives the work and feeds back into it reciprocally. That is as workable a definition of what was going on in Elizabethan England, and what new literatures

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<sup>9</sup> Most notably in the work of Lee B. Thompson and Terry Goldie.

<sup>10</sup> For a bibliography of Australian-Canadian comparative articles and books see Alan Lawson, 'Comparative Australian/Canadian Literary Studies: A Bibliography,' in Australian/Canadian Literatures in English, ed. Russell McDougall and Gillian Whitlock (Sydney: Croom Helm, forthcoming 1986). See also Appendix 1, below.

are achieving for themselves today, as any. Call it status.<sup>11</sup>

Richard C. Clarke in the Canadian Special Issue of Review of National Literatures claimed that the question, 'is there a Canadian Literature?' is still being asked and is still unresolved after 50 years.<sup>12</sup> That is not the way I see it: the debate in both Canada and Australia (at least outside of Anglocentric circles, which are inescapably monocentric ones) has been for perhaps thirty-five years at least, not 'Is there any', but rather 'What is it'? This is also the proposition made about the Australian situation by Brian Kiernan<sup>13</sup> in his article in the Australian issue of the Review and it accurately points to the most important elements in post-colonial<sup>14</sup> literary developments.

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<sup>11</sup> Stephen Gray, 'A Sense of Place in New Literatures, Particularly South African English,' Keynote Address, Sense of Place in the New Literatures in English Conference, Macquarie Univ., Sydney, August 1982, WLWE, 24, (Autumn 1984), 228.

<sup>12</sup> Richard C. Clark, 'Bibliographical Spectrum and Review Article: Is there a Canadian Literature?' Canada (Special Editor, Richard J. Schoeck) Review of National Literatures, 7 (1976), 133.

<sup>13</sup> Brian Kiernan, 'Bibliographical Spectrum: What is Australian Literature?' Australia (Special Editor, L. A. C. Dobrez) Review of National Literatures, 11 (1982), 211.

<sup>14</sup> I have reservations about the term, post-colonial. For the reasons outlined here and in 'Acknowledging Colonialism' (cited above) I believe colonialism to be an inherent fact of a particular type of cultural situation. To talk of post-colonialism in any of the Second World situations (except that of the United States) is, I think, to use a political sentimentality to obscure a cultural reality. I understand that colonial is a term that has distressing connotations for much of the third world but I agree with, for example, Dennis Lee that we must include in our use of language 'the inauthenticity [I prefer ambi/valence] of our lives here and now' and with Robert Kroetsch that we must recognise the concealed 'other experience' in our language. In my view, the use of post-colonial in Canada and Australia now obscures that 'otherness,' unless it is understood as acknowledging the imperial languages that it speaks against.

It tends, also, to imply a discontinuity between us and the literary experience of the 'colonial' period. Nevertheless, the term has achieved some general currency and with the caveat just expressed it is certainly preferable to the other clumsy and misleadingly euphemistic formulae that have been used. 'Post-European,' a term Helen Tiffin has recently tried to recuperate, offers very interesting possibilities.

Social, literary and political commentators in Australia and Canada have, perhaps, shown an even greater obsession with the problem of national identity than those of most other emergent colonial or post-colonial nations.<sup>15</sup> In the Canadian case it is easy -- probably far too easy -- to point to the provocation from within (Quebec) and from next door (the United States). In Australia the obsession has been remarked upon obsessively for about a century and a half, though the causes are less easy to define. In both countries there are grounds, I suggest, for regarding the problem of national identity as a fundamental, a structural, colonial one. 'Who am I when I am transported?' is an inevitable colonial question and in countries where the climate, the landscape and the native inhabitants offered little sense of continuity, where the sense of distance, both within and without was so great, the feeling that a new definition of self -- metaphysical, historical, cultural, linguistic and social -- was needed was, and is, overwhelmingly persuasive.

The inevitable recognition for the colonial, nurtured either personally or culturally on images of a distant and different place, was that there are 'discrepancies between image and experience and discontinuities between culture and context',<sup>16</sup> a schism, that is, between literature and life. Of those discrepancies the last will serve as a paradigm of the others. It is one of the central tropes in the early discussions of the literatures and a major problematic in the constructions of their literary histories. In varying ways the relation between literature and life was a measure of their quality or a mark of their

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<sup>15</sup> As a theme and as a literary image it is pervasive and persistent and has become something of a fixture in the critical discourse of Commonwealth Literature as the proceedings of any such conference will amply illustrate.

<sup>16</sup> Alan Lawson, 'Acknowledging Colonialism,' p. 135.

inadequacy. It is the intensity of the recognition of the gap between them that makes it an imperative part of the writer's task and a major part of his/her problem to make sense of that gap -- to provide images of the here that will not shock or embarrass by comparison with the long-held images of there. Dennis Lee, the Canadian critic and poet, had written a few years earlier of the colonial problematic of language in an illuminating and particularly moving way when he described his own period of creative impasse in which the language itself came to impede his writing by carrying within it the message of its inauthenticity.

To speak unreflectingly in a colony, then, is to use words that speak only alien space. To reflect is to fall silent, discovering that your authentic space does not have words. And to reflect further is to recognise that you and your people do not in fact have a privileged authentic space just waiting for words; you are, among other things, the people who have made an alien inauthenticity your own.

. . . . . to be authentic, the voice of being alive here and now must include the inauthenticity of our lives here and now. . . .

Beneath the words our absentee masters have given us, there is an undermining silence. It saps our nerve. And beneath that silence, there is a raw welter of cadence that tumbles and strains toward words and that makes the silence a blessing because it shushes easy speech. That cadence is home.<sup>17</sup>

There is then, for colonial writers, especially those of Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, the West Indies, and Australia a psychological responsibility to find out not only what Van Wyck Brooks (writing about American literary history) called 'the usable past' but also the usable here, the usable now, the usable us, and the usable tongue. To define, that is, images of identity, of community, of history, of place and, as Lee and others have pointed out, to problematise the use of language itself:

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<sup>17</sup> Dennis Lee, 'Cadence, Country, Silence: Writing in Colonial Space,' Boundary 2, 3 (Fall 1974), pp. 151-68. The passages quoted are from pp. 163, 165, 166.

the impasse of writing that is problematic to itself is transcended only when the impasse becomes its own subject, when writing accepts and enters and names its own condition as it is naming the world.<sup>18</sup>

Reflexivity, especially as an awareness of the otherness of post-colonial self, is a post-colonial historical imperative; one that is an inevitable condition of the way in which the post-colonial society is situated by history, culture, politics and language. Homi Bhabha addresses an aspect of this issue which he identifies as 'colonial mimicry', 'an ironic compromise . . . constructed around an ambivalence.'<sup>19</sup> And that, I think, is a key to understanding the way in which Robert Kroetsch contributes to the post-colonial debate about language and form against the objection that his critical thinking is merely part of international post-modernism. In 'Unhiding the Hidden', he speaks of the inauthenticity that comes when the writer is

work[ing] with a language, within a literature, that appears to be his own, and not a borrowing. But ... there is in the Canadian word a concealed other experience, sometimes British, sometimes American.

In recent years the tension between this appearance of being just like someone else and the demands of authenticity has become intolerable -- both to individuals and to the society.<sup>20</sup>

But potentially, as Bhabha observes, 'the menace of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority.'<sup>21</sup> Implicitly recognising these needs for authentic articulations of identity, community, history, place, and of language, historians and commentators in both Canada and Australia have

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<sup>18</sup> Lee, p. 165.

<sup>19</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,' October, 28 (Spring 1984), 126.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Kroetsch, 'Unhiding the Hidden: Recent Canadian Fiction,' Journal of Canadian Fiction, 3, No. 3 (1974), 43.

<sup>21</sup> Bhabha, 129.

assumed that it was part of the writer's task to provide a sense of national identity. As the major mid-century critic Northrop Frye (in so many other places, apparently, a Universalist) writes, 'Canadian literature ... records what the Canadian imagination has reacted to, and it tells us things about this environment that nothing else will tell us'.<sup>22</sup> Now, at different periods various terms have been used but, 'Australianness' or 'Canadianness' have been, in whatever guise, felt to be crucial. The problem that this has posed, I believe, arose from the fact that national identity was never just a political phenomenon.

There is in fact a cluster of words within which the notion has, at different times, been located. John Docker briefly noted one such developing cluster in the work of historicist social and literary commentators. He tellingly points to the hegemonic establishment in Australia of 'the national character, or national spirit, or national way of life'<sup>23</sup> as values of consciousness. These are, with minor variations in terminology, the items that Richard White identifies in sequence as forming the successive reformulations of the images of the 'national interest'.<sup>24</sup> One of the most common terms used was maturity, and in the hands of different critics it took on different complexions. G. A. Wilkes, for instance, in The Stockyard and the Croquet Lawn (1981) notes that 'Australian cultural development has normally been seen in terms of an

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<sup>22</sup> Northrop Frye, 'Conclusion to a Literary History of Canada' (1965); rpt. in his The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination (Toronto: Anansi, 1971), p. 215.

<sup>23</sup> John Docker, 'Cultural History and the Philosophy of History,' Arena, No. 52 (1979), p. 22.

<sup>24</sup> Richard White, Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980 (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1981), pp. 158-62. It is difficult to trace an influence here as Docker's article in Arena and White's in Meanjin ('The Australian Way of Life') appeared in the same year; Docker's was originally given as a paper at the 'Wrong Way - Go Back Conference -- Towards the Writing of the Bicentennial History 1938-1988' in Feb. of the same year.

emergent nationalism'.<sup>25</sup> Richard White traces the idea of maturity more precisely and locates its power as a value, in the main, in the 1930s.<sup>26</sup> It is worth noting that each of these terms is almost invariably expressed with the definite article. These cultural key concepts are monistic and, thereby, homogenising forces. Their monistic impulses situate them in the dominating culture of the ruling class and hence aligns them to imperialism by centring the culture. I have argued elsewhere that the traditions of post-imperial literature find their images, forms and aesthetic values outside of that homogenising, unifying, harmonising project.<sup>27</sup>

John Plamenatz argues that nationalism is properly understood as a

desire to preserve or enhance a people's national or cultural identity when that identity is threatened, or the desire to transform or even create it where it is felt to be inadequate or lacking.<sup>28</sup>

He emphasises the conjunction of national and cultural since, rightly in my view, he argues that what distinguishes a people consists of ways of seeing, thinking and behaving: what might be justifiably be called a culture-specific phenomenology. 'Nationalism,' he says, 'is primarily a cultural phenomenon, though it can, and often does, take a political form. . . . Nationalism is a reaction of peoples who feel culturally at

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<sup>25</sup> G. A. Wilkes, The Stockyard and the Croquet Lawn (Melbourne: Edward Arnold, 1981), p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Richard White, Inventing Australia, Chapter 9, 'Growing Up,' pp. 140-57.

<sup>27</sup> 'The Placing of History: Post-colonial Fiction and the Idea of the Masterpiece,' Paper presented at the Univ. of Calgary, 28 Oct. 1985; '"There is Another World but it is in this One": A Cultural Paradigm for the Second World,' Paper presented at Interculture/Intertext: The Badlands Conference on Canadian and Australian Literatures, Univ. of Calgary, 29 August, 1986, forthcoming in proceedings.

<sup>28</sup> John Plamenatz, 'Two Types of Nationalism,' in Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea, ed. Eugene Kamenka (Canberra: Australian National Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 23-24.



a disadvantage'.<sup>29</sup> Although he is thus in the historicist tradition of Hegel and Herder, he is curiously ahistoric in not stressing, as they do, the historic dimension of this: the notion of Volksgeit which is central to this part of his argument is mysteriously freed from any model of society, insulated from the need to examine the ideological components of culture.

It is a feature of the dominant historicist paradigms of consciousness in both Canada and Australia that they place a single image -- 'garrison mentality' (Frye), 'the Australian character' (Ward), 'metaphysical terror' (Heseltine), 'doubleness' (Wright), 'survival' (Atwood) as the emblematic centre, a subjective correlative of a nation's consciousness and, consequently (given the romantic nationalist assumptions they all share), of its literature. Each of these monisms proposes a single 'tradition' or pattern which it, in thus naming, now appropriates to itself. Nevertheless, taking his clue from Herder again, Plamenatz goes on, very importantly, to remind us that 'a human being becomes an individual, a rational and a moral person capable of thinking and acting for himself, in the process of acquiring the language and the culture of his people.' (emphasis added)<sup>30</sup> These are the important ramifications of the terms nationality and nationalism as I use them in this thesis. It is important to avoid the ahistoric positions which much historicist analysis, inadvertently, takes.

When the cultural identity in question is that of a people transported to a new and strange place the physical environment assumes unexpected importance and the language undergoes great strain. Northrop Frye's famous

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<sup>29</sup> Plamenatz, pp. 24, 27.

<sup>30</sup> Plamenatz, p. 27.

question, 'Where is here?' expresses one version of this problem; the positions of Dennis Lee and Robert Kroetsch quoted above, another. Kroetsch's argument is worth amplifying here as the issue is often oversimplified. Speaking of the inherent problem of using a language developed elsewhere, he pertinently notes that 'the process of rooting that borrowed word, that totally exact homonym in authentic experience, is then, and must be, a radical one.'<sup>31</sup> Judith Wright's formulation is more direct -- 'New Land, New Language'.<sup>32</sup> 'It is not a nation but an environment that makes an impact on poets',<sup>33</sup> Frye wrote, and this is the line of speculation followed in various ways by critics as diverse in their methodologies and ideologies as Margaret Atwood, Judith Wright and Leonie Kramer. The issue, with its Commonwealth implications, was elegantly analysed by D. E. S. Maxwell in one of those articles<sup>34</sup> that one can only wish had been more influential.

But, before I discuss those speculations about the relation between landscape and language (itself part of the heritage of English Romanticism, and one of the particular consequences of following the Romantic programme outside of its native location), I should also observe that, most notably in Australia, a quite different (though also Romantic) proposition was long held to be true -- that it was national values which were important. The ideology which was felt to motivate the work of many of the most

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<sup>31</sup> Robert Kroetsch, 'Unhiding the Hidden,' 44.

<sup>32</sup> This phrase is the title of an anthology she edited; the idea was elaborated upon in her Introduction, New Land, New Language, ed. Judith Wright (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1957), pp. x-xiii.

<sup>33</sup> Northrop Frye, 'Preface to an Uncollected Anthology' (1956); rpt. in his The Bush Garden (Toronto: Anansi, 1971), p.164.

<sup>34</sup> D. E. S. Maxwell, 'Landscape and Theme,' in Commonwealth Literature: Unity and Diversity in a Common Culture, Extracts from the Proceedings of a Conference held at . . . Univ. of Leeds, 9-12 Sept. 1964, (London: Heinemann, 1965), pp. 82-89.

distinctive contributors to the so-called radical-nationalist tradition of Australian literature was a nationalist-political one, a concern with an emerging socially-conscious consensus about the values of the national body-politic: egalitarianism, communalism, democracy of the Chartist kind.

The writers who exemplify this tradition best are, not always with unequivocal justification -- Lawson, Furphy, Dyson, Davison, Palmer, Louis Stone and others.

What seems to characterise each of these attempts to name a tradition is an impulse which, at root, is exclusivist rather than inclusive. The 'single-image' device for characterising a national literature is monocentric and imperialist (in the sense proposed above, p.30) in its attempt to define what is the national literature. As late as G. A. Wilkes' The Stockyard and the Croquet Lawn (1981) we are treated to the apparently radical assertion that there may in Australia have been two traditions and not merely one (whichever single tradition may have been chosen). These, then, were attempts to name Australian literature in a way that incorporated, under that precious heading, that which was approved by the naming critic. It is, in the terms which I use elsewhere in this thesis, an attempt to establish a canon rather than to discover the significant patterns of a tradition. It follows that a tradition may, indeed should, be polycentric to accommodate the diversity of what exists rather than the uniformity of what is preferred and that in post-colonial societies, which are inherently polyphonic, this is especially so. Althusser's formulation is more generally apt: 'a field can be crossed by quite different paths, since it can be approached from many different directions'.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Louis Althusser, Reading Capital, p. 135. Quoted by Humphrey McQueen, 'Images of Society in Australian Criticism,' Arena, No. 31, (1973), p. 45.

Humphrey McQueen's distinction between 'ahistoric' and 'anti-historic' is appropriate, too. In McQueen's terms, 'anti-historic' analyses 'see the past as endless variation upon set themes; the denial of qualitative change, of structural transformations'<sup>36</sup>. It is a charge that he lays principally against a group of what he refers to as idealist analyses of Australian literature in the early nineteen seventies (they seem to me to be, at their best, organicist). As cultural history they are essentially Whiggish in seeking folk-antecedents to legitimise present practice. McQueen's strictures could even more justifiably be made against Margaret Atwood's Survival or D. G. Jones' Butterfly on Rock or Tom Marshall's Harsh and Lovely Land, though to a lesser extent since it is both more cautious and more sensitive to both inward diversity and outward context. Each of these is, in its own way, a perverse attempt to discover a universal that will make coherent a relative field.

In Canada in the nineteen forties and fifties and in Australia in the nineteen fifties and sixties, a new note appeared in the anatomies of the national character, a middle-class snobbery. These essays perhaps exemplify that classic colonial posture identified by the Australian, A. A. Phillips, as 'the cultural cringe'. Essays by John Douglas Pringle, parts of Donald Horne's The Lucky Country, a superficial reading of White's description of suburbia in Riders in the Chariot (1961), or a recollection of his wonderfully acerbic images of Australian life from 'The Prodigal Son'(1958) were enough to turn a whole generation of the culturally-

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<sup>36</sup> Humphrey McQueen, 'Images of Society in Australian Criticism,' p. 45.

sensitive into expatriates.<sup>37</sup>

When Xanadu had been shaved right down to a bald, red, rudimentary hill, they began to erect the fibro homes. Two or three days, or so it seemed, and there were the combs of homes clinging to the bare earth. The rotary clothes-line had risen, together with the Iceland poppies, and after them the glads. The privies were never so private that it was not possible to listen to the drone of someone else's blowflies. The wafer-walls of the new homes would rub together at night, and sleepers might have been encouraged to enter into one another's dreams, if these had not been similar. Sometimes the rats of anxiety could be heard gnawing already at bakelite, or plastic, or recalcitrant maidenhead. So that, in the circumstances, it was not unusual for people to run outside and jump into their cars. All of Sunday they would visit, or be visited, though sometimes they would cross one another, midway, while remaining unaware of it. Then, on finding nothing at the end, they would drive around, or around. They would drive and look for something to look at.<sup>38</sup>

In all directions stretched the Great Australian Emptiness, in which the rich man is the important man, in which the schoolmaster and journalist rule what intellectual roost there is, in which beautiful youths and girls stare at life through blind blue eyes, in which human teeth fall like autumn leaves, the buttocks of cars grow hourly glassier, food means cake and steak, muscles prevail, and the march of material ugliness does not raise a quiver from the average nerves.<sup>39</sup>

Irving Layton, in an almost exactly-contemporaneous poem, 'From Colony to Nation' expresses a remarkably similar vision, seizing upon the same items of cultural inadequacy, but with the appropriate substitution of 'beadle and censor' for 'schoolmaster and journalist'. Similarly, Robertson Davies depicts what he called 'Drabbery and Squirtedom', places where the 'national passion for dowdy unity' is exercised where 'boobs, yahoos and ninnies' predominate. It is significant that A. D. Hope's poem, \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>37</sup> Alan Davies, in 'Small Country Blues,' *Meanjin*, 44 (1985), 245, discusses the complex of problems that expatriates pose for the culture that they have left.

<sup>38</sup> Patrick White, *Riders in the Chariot* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), pp. 486-87.

<sup>39</sup> Patrick White, 'The Prodigal Son,' *Australian Letters*, 1, No. 3 (April 1958), 38-39.

'Australia', which begins by expressing a very similar vision ('monotonous tribes', etc) but ends with the apocalyptic affirmation that 'from the deserts the prophets come', is in fact a product of an earlier decade, the late nineteen thirties: certainly much of Hope's fifties poetry is in this other vein. Some of the Australian examples are gathered in Keith Dunstan's book Knockers.

Tim Rowse and John Docker in Australia and, in different ways, George Grant and Dennis Lee in Canada have drawn attention to the dominant 'ideology of the nineteen fifties as 'the end of ideology'.<sup>40</sup> The anti-ideological liberalism of the fifties (and in particular such influences on literary studies as Lionel Trilling) tended towards a comforting universalism, seen in various ways in the United Nations' world government movement, the world literature movement, the predilection in literary studies for 'the human condition' (replaced in the nineteen sixties by the more acceptably neo-existentialist 'human predicament'), the homogenising belief that 'people are the same everywhere' which obviated the necessity of confronting the 'other'.<sup>41</sup> The judgmentalism of much of this species of criticism, especially in regard to the local -- which is in implied

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<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Tim Rowse, Australian Liberalism and National Character (Melbourne: Kibble, 1978); John Docker, In a Critical Condition: Reading Australian Literature (Ringwood: Penguin, 1984) -- Docker's argument has appeared in many places but most of the articles are conveniently collected here; George Grant, Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1965); Dennis Lee, 'Cadence, Country, Silence,' and in a somewhat more arcane form, Savage Fields: An Essay in Literature and Cosmology (Toronto: Anansi, 1977).

<sup>41</sup> Joseph Jones in the United States and William Walsh in the United Kingdom were the chief exponents of this homogeneity in the field of Commonwealth Literature. For the standard argument against 'universalism,' see Charles R. Larson, 'Heroic Ethnocentrism: The Idea of Universality in Literature,' The American Scholar, 42 (Summer 1973), 463-75; for some of the 'Commonwealth' implications, see Helen Tiffin, 'Commonwealth Literature: Comparison and Judgment,' in The History and Historiography of Commonwealth Literature, ed. Dieter Riemenschneider (Tubingen: Gunter Narr, 1983), pp. 24-25; and more broadly, Edward Said, Orientalism.

juxtaposition to the international/universal -- is a consequence of the absolutist premises of its universalism.

The rejection of the local by the Universalists in Canada in the nineteen twenties and thirties and in Australia in the nineteen twenties and fifties conceals a confusion between universal, which is logically opposed to local (necessarily a relativist concept), and international, which is only geographically opposed to it. Writers have frequently penetrated the confusion. Thea Astley has written that 'literary truth is derived from the parish,'<sup>42</sup> and Marian Engel told the audience at the Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel that,

We cannot escape who we are. I'd like first of all to be human, but I also know that I'm an animal, I'm female, I'm a Canadian, I'm a WASP, and I'm an Ontarian, and these categories get into my work and I neglect them at my peril. Because, though I would like to achieve some kind of universality and get up into that big eternity that's way above my head, I suspect that it's my humanity and my Canadianness that keeps me from disappearing into the hopeless, mythic, imaginary spiral where no one can reach me and I can't reach anyone.<sup>43</sup>

Now there are two points to observe in those expressions of contempt for colonial place quoted earlier. The first, and more obvious, is the Eurocentric urge to express one's own civilised superiority to 'all this fiddle'. It goes back to Kangaroo, to Froude, and to earlier travellers, too and is found in the whole tradition of desiring transcendence. At the end of Voss (1957), White neatly parodies this attitudinising in the character of Mr Ludlow who has been touring the

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<sup>42</sup> Thea Astley, 'Being a Queenslander: A Form of Literary and Geographical Conceit,' Southerly, 36 (1976), 255.

<sup>43</sup> Taking Stock: The Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel, Ed. Charles R. Steele (Downsview, Ont.: ECW Press, 1982), 123.

colony examining 'all and sundry. And ... find[s] that the sundry does prevail'<sup>44</sup> It is interesting to note that many of these works about the national character observed that one of the most regrettable aspects of the national character was an obsession with the national character. There is a nervousness about acknowledging one's Canadianness, or one's Australianness; a constant looking over the shoulder at the sophisticated Europeans. 'It's a complex fate being a colonial' -- to modify Henry James -- 'and one of the responsibilities is fighting against a superstitious evaluation of Europe'.<sup>45</sup> Another manifestation of this phenomenon occurs in literary criticism.

A very good example is the opening paragraphs of Vincent Buckley's early essay on White's The Tree of Man.

Only in this country could the achievement of Patrick White be a subject of such ill-focused controversy. But, in this country, it was inevitable. For what White has apparently done is to take of the conventional subjects of Australian fiction -- pioneering man, the bushman hero, the emerging primitive community -- and treat it in a completely unconventional way. He has, in fact, demythologized one of our national literary myths; and he has tried, in the process, to analyse the humanity, not the Australianness, of Australian man.

Whether he has succeeded is another matter; but he has tried. That, I think, is what the controversy is at bottom about. And it is a sharp controversy . . . .

It is perhaps just as well, though, that controversy has arisen. For White has pricked some bubble, subverted some literary vested interest. The conspiratorial apathy in which most of our writers and critics seem to have agreed to turn all our geese into swans can be defeated only by open discussion. And, in Australia, a sort of blind controversy is often the necessary preliminary to reasonable discussion. Sharp rejections must be made, and

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<sup>44</sup> Patrick White, Voss (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), p. 448.

<sup>45</sup> Henry James, letter from Cambridge, Mass., to Charles Elliott Norton in Europe, 4 Feb. 1872.



values bluntly affirmed.<sup>46</sup>

That is the kind of premise that many influential mid-twentieth century Canadian critics have also adopted. But it is an intricately-confused position. First, Buckley avers a unique Australian characteristic ('only in Australia') to open an argument against a historicist approach to Australian literature; he then goes on to present an account of the hegemonic nature of literary debate while pretending (despite the polemical tone) to remain aloof from it: his overt evaluative position is universalist ('He has tried . . . to analyse the humanity, not the Australianness . . .') but his polemic position in the discourse is relative and national.

The second point that I wish to make about the arguments about colonial space, cultural identity, and literary traditions is, I think, more important. This is that there is a strong element of polemic in all of this writing and, indeed, in so much of the national identity business. Eli Mandel, for instance, in his Preface to Frank Davey's iconoclastic Surviving the Paraphrase (the title allusively tilting at one of Davey's antagonists, Margaret Atwood), begins by noting the important fact that, 'From its earliest beginnings, Canadian criticism has been a surprisingly aggressive art, its practitioners calling on their skills of polemic and contention'.<sup>47</sup> The reasons for this are several and not always easy to disentangle. On the one hand one might do well to observe that a great many of the critics and commentators referred to in this thesis are themselves poets or creative writers of some sort -- Atwood, Davies,

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<sup>46</sup> Vincent Buckley, 'Patrick White and his Epic,' Australian Literary Criticism, ed. Grahame Johnston (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962), p. 187.

<sup>47</sup> Eli Mandel, Preface, Surviving the Paraphrase: Eleven Essays on Canadian Literature, by Frank Davey (Winnipeg: Turnstone, 1983), p. i. See also Alan Lawson, 'Acknowledging Colonialism' (1980), p.138.

Jones, Kroetsch, Lee, Marshall, MacLennan, Smith in Canada; Buckley, Hope, Wallace-Crabbe, Wright, for instance in Australia.

In second world literary cultures 'writers' and 'critics' (particularly in Canada) mix much more easily than the residual Dunciad-like paradigm of natural antagonism suggests, and more easily than in metropolitan cultures. Not only is it obvious that the two activities are not mutually exclusive, as many careers make abundantly clear, but -- and perhaps the old-world paradigm still obscures this a little -- they are not opposed activities in the New Literatures of post-colonial cultures at all: George Woodcock was right, thirty years ago, in identifying 'the creative function of the critic as a unifying and defining element in the emergent tradition.' (emphasis added)<sup>48</sup> In the settler societies of Canada and Australia, in particular, the relation between 'writer' and 'critic' is that of common participants. But although the interpenetration of writing and criticism is much more highly achieved in Canada than in Australia (partly because so many more writers in Canada have, or have had, University appointments as teachers of literature or of creative writing, or both) the general observation remains true and might go some way towards reminding us that it is image-making we are talking about.

There is here a crucial competition for images that will not only crystallise a vision of the national experience but will characterise, emblematised, and vivify a talismanic version of it. This enters, or is a premise for, so many discussions of the national literatures. Even the titles of these books are palpable evidence of the image-making intent --

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<sup>48</sup> George Woodcock, 'The Tentative Confessions of a Prospective Editor,' British Columbia Library Quarterly, 23 (July 1959), 18. Woodcock is quoting from his own earlier 'A View of Canadian Criticism,' Dalhousie Review, 35 (Autumn 1955), 221.

Survival, Butterfly on Rock, Images of Society and Nature, Acquainted with the Night, The Bush Garden. To some extent, of course, such titles are symptoms of the institutionalisation of academic discourse and also of the way in which the language of poetry is appropriated.<sup>49</sup> It should also be noted that there is a possible confusion between images of the literature and images in the literature. However, a recent paper by Ken Goodwin proposes that this may be seen as an important interrelation.<sup>50</sup>

Judith Wright, for instance, begins her book of essays on Australian poets with an intriguing image-making essay -- 'Australia's Double Aspect' -- which starts thus:

It is only necessary to look at Australia's literature, in order to see that for very many of her writers she has presented herself as the most difficult of technical problems. Before one's country can become an accepted background against which the poet's and novelist's imagination can move unhindered, it must first be observed, understood, described, and as it were absorbed. The writer must be at peace with his landscape before he can turn confidently to its human figures.

But in Australian writing the landscape has, it almost seems, its own life, hostile to its human inhabitants; it forces its way into the foreground, it takes up an immense amount of room, or sometimes it is so firmly pushed away that its obvious absence haunts us as much as its presence could do. Thus it haunts us in the novels of Henry Handel Richardson where it is the ever-present, inexorably shabby and ugly background for the downfall of a man who is alien to it until his death) as it does in the passionate and over-coloured descriptions of Eve Langley in The Pea Pickers; and its influence is present by implication as much in Brennan's poetry, where landscape is deliberately universalized, as in the most aboriginal of Jindy jingle.

This is because Australia has from the beginning of its short history meant something more to its new inhabitants than mere environment and mere land to be occupied,

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<sup>49</sup> Image-making and its various implications is considered at greater length and from different perspectives by two writers whose work is outside the period covered by this thesis -- Tony Wilden, The Imaginary Canadian (Vancouver: Pulp Press, 1980) and Richard White, Inventing Australia (1981).

<sup>50</sup> Ken Goodwin, 'Images of National Identity in Commonwealth Literature,' paper presented in the English Department, Univ. of British Columbia, 2 October 1985, forthcoming in WLWE.

ploughed and brought into subjection. It has been the outer equivalent of inner reality; first, and persistently, the reality of exile; second, though perhaps we now tend to forget this, the reality of newness and freedom.<sup>51</sup>

The literary problem then is also an urgent personal problem. The images are felt to be personal, crucial in a way that a discussion of the Lake Poets, or Henry's St. Crispin's Day speech would not be. This is again, I suggest, part of the post-colonial dimension of the problem. We might look too at some of the reactions to Survival or to other consciously iconoclastic works like Humphrey McQueen's A New Britannia in 1970, John Docker's Australian Cultural Elites in 1974 or Manning Clark's In Search of Henry Lawson in 1978 or Robin Mathews' Canadian Literature: Surrender or Revolution in the same year. Each of these was a deliberate attempt to replace one paradigm with another; they were, in this sense, not so much radical as revisionist: each, with the possible exception of McQueen, sought to provide a new orthodoxy. But in each case there was a vehemence of response that reveals an intensity of involvement which surely implies that the traditional views challenged by these books were not merely literary. The 1978 Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel produced the same sort of polemic intensity. What we were observing was a not uncommon protective reaction towards the fragile innocence of a national tradition. It is not surprising to find that organic images of national identity also emphasise this characteristic -- images such as the child<sup>52</sup>, and in the historiography, images of the stream, tributary, branch, tender shoot, etc.

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<sup>51</sup> Judith Wright, 'Australia's Double Aspect,' Preoccupations in Australian Poetry (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), p. xi.

<sup>52</sup> Ken Goodwin, 'Images of National Identity' argues that the image of the child has been used by writers in several national literary traditions as a topos that is significantly modified by the colonial writing situation.

There is one other aspect of this image-making that at first appeared to me to be coincidental but which the comparative approach convinces me is part of an important pattern. The title of Judith Wright's essay sums it up -- 'Australia's Double Aspect'. She explains it in this way:

... the two strains of feeling (for the conservative, the sense of exile, and for the radical, the sense of liberty, of a new chance) have, at least until very recently, been recognizable in all that was written here.

This double aspect of the inner Australia, as we might call it, has been matched and reinforced by the outer physical reality of the country itself.<sup>53</sup>

That sense of doubleness or, even more frequently, of dichotomy, pervades the discussions of nationality and literature in both Australia and Canada -- in Canada it has become a reflex response -- Harsh and Lovely Land (Marshall), Farley's Exiles and Pioneers, Woodcock's Colony and Confederation, Ricou's Vertical Man/Horizontal World, The Bush Garden, Butterfly on Rock, Robin Mathews' Canadian Literature: Surrender or Revolution. In Australia it is pretty common too -- The Stockyard and the Croquet Lawn, Melbourne or the Bush, Lion & Kangaroo, Snow on the Saltbush, Dream & Disillusion, Land of Contrarities. Northrop Frye observes that 'in older countries the works of man and of nature, the city and the garden of civilisation, have usually reached some kind of imaginative harmony. . . . in Canada . . . what the poets see is a violent collision of two forces, both monstrous.'<sup>54</sup> This draws attention to the doubleness of the colonial experience, the felt dichotomy between new and old, between the cultural inheritance and immediate experience. This doubleness becomes the mode of much writing in Canada and Australia.<sup>55</sup> It has been precisely

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<sup>53</sup> Wright, 'Australia's Double Aspect,' p. xii.

<sup>54</sup> Northrop Frye, 'Preface to an Uncollected Anthology' (1956); rpt. in his The Bush Garden, pp. 164-65.

<sup>55</sup> Alan Lawson, '"There is Another World but it is in this One': A Cultural Paradigm for the Second World.'

within the context of those competing contrarities that discussions of national literary traditions take place.

It is also, in a different form, the mode of much comparative Canadian-Australian work. The first Canadian-Australian journal is called True North/Down Under, thus building another binary into the mode of perception. But comparing Australian and Canadian literatures is not new: the first comparative reference I have found was published in 1889, by J. G. Bourinot. The first substantial articles were in the nineteen fifties, the first book in 1962, and the more consistent, continuing comparative practice commenced in the mid-seventies. The common form of these articles is to establish a comparability of literary problems: a similar history, a problematising of geography; and then to look for differences in the way the writers (usually a representative pair) have found 'different solutions' to the 'common problem' -- the form is characteristically binary. In Tradition in Exile, J. P. Matthews doubles the dichotomy by showing how the poetic tradition in each country was divided between the 'Popular and the Academic' but that in Australia the Popular flourished (both the distinction and the judgement have much in common with the analysis offered by Vance Palmer in his The Legend of the Nineties<sup>56</sup>) while in Canada the Academic predominated. Other comparative studies have similarly been attracted to the polar statement: Lee B. Thompson used

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<sup>56</sup> Vance Palmer, The Legend of the Nineties (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1954), Chapter Six.

'Mosaic and Monolith'<sup>57</sup>; Russell McDougall<sup>58</sup> avoids an eponymous antinomy but, like Thompson, adopts an analytical one, nevertheless. The model itself can become the point of comparison. One sometimes feels that the binarist impulse to discover 'significant differences' influences the form of the writing and analysis excessively; and there is the unsettling feeling that the characterising images are inherently evaluative, a feature caricatured by Margaret Atwood in a review of Tradition in Exile as 'the my-daddy's-better-than-your-daddy attitude'.<sup>59</sup> The conclusion of the comparative essay is 'formed' by its mode, by its inscribed paradigm of antinomial monisms. In discussing the dualities embedded within these two cultures, Diana Brydon produces a dualistic explanation of them: Australian dualities, she argues, 'tend toward confrontation', the Canadian ones 'tend toward assimilation'.<sup>60</sup>

The least useful versions of colonial literary history, in my view, borrowed from some early American literary historians, follow the evolutionary pattern -- a growth model. The literature starts off imitating English models, gradually adapts to local/national subjects, and finally achieves maturity. Wilfrid Eggleston in The Frontier and Canadian Letters (1957), significantly titles his first chapter, 'A Plant of Slow

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<sup>57</sup> Lee B. Thompson, 'Mosaic and Monolith: A Comparison of Canadian and Australian Poetic Responses to the Great Depression,' in Awakened Conscience: Studies in Commonwealth Literature, ed. C. D. Narasimhaiah, (New Delhi/Hong Kong: Sterling/Heinemann, 1978), pp. 164-84.

<sup>58</sup> Russell McDougall, 'On Location: Australian and Canadian Literature,' True North/Down Under, No. 4 (1985), pp. 12-42; rpt. Island Magazine, No. 24 (Spring 1985), 3-11.

<sup>59</sup> Margaret Atwood, 'Kangaroo and Beaver: Tradition in Exile by J. P. Matthews'; rpt. in her Second Words: Selected Critical Prose (Toronto: Anansi, 1982), p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> Diana Brydon, 'Australian Literature and the Canadian Comparison,' Chapter Two, Decolonising Fictions (forthcoming).

Growth'.<sup>61</sup> Even this neo-Darwinian pattern of development -- which has been applied to both Canadian and Australian literatures as Hadgraft's Australian Literature: A Critical Account to 1955 (1960), and several essays in the first edition of Klinck's Literary History of Canada (1965) will serve to exemplify -- is premised upon the simultaneous presence (in varying proportions) of metropolitan and colonial elements, of the universal and the local (as critics in both countries persisted in calling them): issues that Brian Kiernan has shown to be pervasive in Australian literary criticism.<sup>62</sup> What so often lies behind this evolutionary model is the notion of improvement: 'every day, in every way, the literature gets better and better'. It is the converse that is more pernicious and, in Canada, more persistent. In this model that is, the early work can be no more than predecessive, apprentice work. The motive impulse for this kind of history is teleological. Though devotedly chronological the method is profoundly ahistoric in its assumption of a paradigm that all developing societies must go through the same succession of 'stages'. Eggleston represents the *reductio ad absurdum* of this approach, speculating whether Canada needed to experience a Neolithic Age before a literary culture of Golden Age proportions could be expected:

Nor do we fully appreciate the fact that the North American colonists from Europe had to recapitulate in a few decades the story of progress from the New Stone Age to modern civilization, an evolution which had taken their ancestors around the Mediterranean many thousands of years.<sup>63</sup>

The model that has been most commonly applied to colonial literary

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<sup>61</sup> Wilfrid Eggleston, The Frontier and Canadian Letters (Toronto: Ryerson, 1957), Chapter One. The chapter-title alludes to Charles G. D. Roberts' comment in his History of Canada (1888), that 'Literature has been a plant of slow growth on Canadian soil'.

<sup>62</sup> Brian Kiernan, Criticism, Australian Writers and their Work Series, (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974).

<sup>63</sup> Eggleston, p. 20.



traditions is also an image-making enterprise. The images employed, as always, tell us a lot about the model and its underlying assumptions. Most are concerned with the derivative relationship to the linguistic and cultural homeland and most emphasise the idea of dependency, subordination and, above all, immaturity. Branch-tree, tributary-stream, child-parent, frontier-centre are the most common and they are all analogues of local-universal, of imperial-colonial. They all conceal authority-subordinacy and locate authority at the Imperial centre, reproducing discursively models of power relation. They are fascinated by the way an organism grows to maturity, but at the same time they see it as a part of its 'parent'. Both of those assumptions are damaging, fallacious and potentially pernicious. To begin with, in being overly-concerned with development, they tend to see each writer standing on the shoulders of his/her predecessors. Commentators on both sides of the Pacific have remarked with surprise and indignation on the remarkable degree to which this does not happen. For instance, Millar Maclure in the 1965 edition of the Literary History of Canada quotes (with obvious approval) an 1892 remark by the poet Wilfred Campbell: 'The grave weakness of our literary life is the same as that at the bottom of our national existence. Sad to say we are less a people with one aim and sympathy than we are a bundle of cliques.'<sup>64</sup> In Australia, the academic and poet Chris Wallace-Crabbe has put it even more memorably:

If we look back on those Australian writers who are our forebears, they can be seen to assume curious attitudes. There they stand in a line, solemn effigies, staring straight towards us, but without so much as a sidelong glance at one another. We see them in their distinctness and utter independence of one another: Clarke, Furphy, Lawson, Brennan, Richardson, Neilson, Slessor, Xavier Herbert and Martin Boyd. Their proximity in the pageant is little more than a geographical accident, for there has

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<sup>64</sup> Millar Maclure, 'Literary Scholarship,' in Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English, ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 535.

been no significant imaginative connection between these writers.

It is surprising, surely, that these figures acquired so very little from one another or from other Australian writers and thinkers. . . . The Australian literary tradition did not flow as a stream: it stood in a succession of waterholes.<sup>65</sup>

I have two responses to offer to that: firstly, to make a theoretical point, Wallace-Crabbe need not have found the phenomenon surprising just as Gordon Roper is wrong in the same sort of way in presuming that, 'By the end of the [nineteenth] century, young Canadian writers could have learned from their American contemporaries that a literature should be literature first, and only then 'national', by being at once local and universal'.<sup>66</sup> That attitude could be duplicated quite precisely from any number of Australian literary critical works. A similar observation was made with a different metaphor in the previous decade by the perceptive editor of Meanjin, C. B. Christesen, in a 1958 editorial:

too many young writers approach their work as if they are the first who ever burst into the silent sea of Australian literature. They ignore the sober charting done by navigators ahead of them, and the critics usually do not know enough to remind them of it. . . . Nothing solid and substantial is built up because each generation feels it is starting from scratch.<sup>67</sup>

Neither Wallace-Crabbe nor Roper should have been surprised because, if these literatures are colonial ones based upon the felt discrepancy between memory and learning, literature (as a body of cultural inheritance) and experience (as immediate fact), then it will

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<sup>65</sup> Chris Wallace-Crabbe, 'The Solitary Shapers,' Melbourne or The Bush (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1974), p. 3. See a discussion of this argument from a different perspective, Chapter Two, below, p.+.

<sup>66</sup> Gordon Roper, 'New Forces: New Fiction (1880-1920),' Klinck, Literary History of Canada, 1965, p. 273.

<sup>67</sup> 'Comment: A Sense of the Past,' Meanjin, 17 (1958), 4, 106-11.

be obvious that each writer has to learn the lessons of art and experience individually.

This is precisely why the most revealing kinds of literary history (broadly defined) in both countries in the nineteen sixties and seventies have been those which avoided the chronological fallacy; those which took the broad speculative sweep and found a connection between the visions of, say, Marcus Clarke and Patrick White (as H. P. Heseltine does), between F. R. Scott and Robertson Davies (as Atwood does). These are literary histories that find their primary realities here and in the literature. As Margaret Atwood said in an interview during her Australian visit in 1978: 'it doesn't seem to me that you can see your own situation in any way that renders it authentic if you believe that primary reality resides elsewhere'.<sup>68</sup>

And it is from the point I have just made about resisting the chronological fallacy that my second objection to the surprise registered by Wallace-Crabbe (and Roper) arises. For in the list of writers that he saw as solitary effigies there is an implied tradition, or a series of them. The relationship between these writers is not influence, as Wallace-Crabbe mistakenly hoped, but affinity. They are not, as he called them, solitary shapers, but rather solitary sharers -- sharers of a problem that is at once literary, personal and national. But the same phenomenon appears in the critical history too. Brian Kiernan has shown how a relatively small cluster of ideas remained central to

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<sup>68</sup> Jim Davidson, 'Interview with Margaret Atwood,' Meanjin, 37 (1978), p. 195.

Australian literary criticism for over a century<sup>69</sup> and Helen Tiffin's account of the development of the discipline of comparative post-colonial criticism incidentally documents a similar case.<sup>70</sup>

One of the most effective and articulate corroborative statements for the position I am taking here comes from an apparently surprising source. Professor Leonie Kramer, the editor of the recent Oxford History of Australian Literature widely-reviled for its narrow conception of literary texts and its virtual dismissal of contexts as well as for its commitment to an evaluative approach, gave the Sixth Murdoch Lecture in Perth in 1979. (This was after the writing of her Introduction to the History but before its publication.)<sup>71</sup> In that lecture she made two vitally important points which I wish to cite here. Although these propositions would be applauded by many Australian critics they have not, I think, been stated so clearly in Australia before. The points are these:

But it is not simply literature itself which imposes modes of thinking on those it addresses. Literary commentary, whether it be mainly historical or critical in intention, is a powerful influence on notions of what constitutes a particular reality.<sup>72</sup>

Diana Brydon in the unpublished paper to which I have referred makes a very similar point: 'we can no longer ignore criticism's complicity in its own constructions'.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Brian Kiernan, Criticism (1974), and also 'Bibliographical Spectrum: What is Australian Literature?', Australia, Review of National Literatures, 11 (1982), 211-34.

<sup>70</sup> Helen Tiffin, 'Commonwealth Literature: Comparison and Judgement,' The Historiography of Commonwealth Literature, pp. 19-35.

<sup>71</sup> Personal interview, Professor Leonie Kramer, Sydney Univ., 1 April 1982.

<sup>72</sup> Leonie Kramer, 'Islands of Yesterday: The Growth of Literary Ideas,' Westerly, No. 2 (1980), p. 90.

<sup>73</sup> Diana Brydon, 'Australian Literature and the Canadian Comparison,' unpublished paper.

The critics are, as I have been arguing, engaged in creating our sense of what Canadian or Australian Literature actually is. This argument could be pursued but it should be observed that by teaching, anthologising, publishing, and above all by the act of describing, critics exercise the power of creating concepts, ideas of the nature of the national literature. Later in that same address Professor Kramer talks of 'another kind of literary evidence, to be found in the metaphorical preferences of writers, and in the kinds of images in which they choose to render the general particular, and the abstract concrete'<sup>74</sup> and she goes on to talk stimulatingly of a relationship between the internal environment and the external environment. As a literary idea this is not quite new -- Patrick White, after all, used the phrase 'the country of the mind' in *Voss* in 1957 and innumerable Australian critics and reviewers since then have used and abused it -- but in Professor Kramer's hands it becomes a justification for a critical strategy rather than a creative convenience. And this is fairly new.

In Australia anyway: in Canada, it is close to the centre of the orthodoxy.<sup>75</sup> It is roughly what Frye has so successfully advocated since the mid-nineteen forties. Indeed, in some details Kramer's argument seems to owe something to Frye. Her emphasis on the local as a feature of the way in which environment influences thought and imagination -- 'It would be rash to assume that the person who lives on the Birdsville Track

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<sup>74</sup> Kramer, 'Islands of Yesterday,' p. 93.

<sup>75</sup> The most thorough critical practice that is grounded in these arguments is W. H. New's Among Worlds: An Introduction to Modern Commonwealth and South African Fiction (Erin, Ont: Press Porcepic, 1975) which goes far beyond the geographical fallacy that threatens many of the other practitioners by considering the interpenetration of language, place, rhetoric and form in a comparative framework.

has the same response to his environment as a man from the Bogong High Plains, or the North Queensland rain forests'<sup>76</sup>, is remarkably similar to Frye's development of his argument that 'Canadian identity, so far as it affects the creative imagination is not a "Canadian" question at all, but a regional question'.<sup>77</sup> He amplifies this in identical fashion by asking similarly rhetorical questions about the imaginative sources of the Canadian regions.

But Frye is important in several ways. He wrote many of the University of Toronto Quarterly's 'Letters in Canada' features (then the one consistent source of regular critical attention), and he wrote a major review of Smith's Book of Canadian Poetry in 1943 contributing in a provocative way to the sense of debate, of controversy about the nature of the national poetic voice, its distinctive features and contexts. For Frye, poetry is a vehicle for encoding and decoding the national psyche, the principal tool of the mythopoeic imagination. It is, therefore, for Frye (but not, of course, inevitable as a logical proposition) timeless and ahistorical. It is a record of the imprints of the nation's psychic expression. Frye is the classic organic critic (in the sense in which the term is used by R. S. Crane) anticipating by decades the theme- and preoccupation-hunting of an Atwood or a Jones. For him the only significant organizing device is the coherence of the image; traditions are founded upon the identified concern of a range of writers with particular symbolic languages that express the condition of living in this country.

There were sporadic studies and appraisals of the literatures of each country in the nineteenth century. Australia was slightly better-served in

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<sup>76</sup> Leonie Kramer, 'Islands of Yesterday,' p. 92.

<sup>77</sup> Northrop Frye, Preface, The Bush Garden, pp. i-ii.

this period -- by commentators such as Sinnett, and Turner and Sutherland. In each country, anthologists played a crucial defining role. Anthologising is of course a part of the polemic and part of the attempt to define cultural values. Northrop Frye's 'Preface to an Uncollected Anthology' demonstrates the point nicely; the argument about the significance of the contents does not actually require the putative contents to have been assembled. Barton's The Poets and Prose Writers of New South Wales (1866), Sladen's A Century of Australian Song and Australian Poets, 1788-1888 (1888), and Lighthall's Songs of the Great Dominion (1889) were each major statements of what constituted literature in the colony. In both countries there was a flurry of attention to the literatures again in the nineteen twenties, a period of consolidation in Australia but fairly vigorous activity in Canada. Nettie Palmer's Modern Australian Literature (1924), Zora Cross's Introduction to the Study of Australian Literature (1922), Stable's Bond of Poetry (1924), Serle's Bibliography of Australian Poetry and Verse (1925), A. G. Stephen's Australian Literature (1929), Green's Outline (1930); in Canada there were McMechan's Head-Waters of Canadian Literature (1924), Lionel Stevenson's Appraisals of Canadian Literature (1926), Baker's History of English Canadian Literature to Confederation (1920), Watson and Pierce's Our Canadian Literature (1922), Logan and French's Highways of Canadian Literature (1924). In neither place, however, do these publications seem to have had the dramatic effects that a similar simultaneous flurry of literary-historical activity had in the United States where it really did signal the recognition of the national literature.

There are other developments in each place that kept the pot bubbling before what I identify as the watershed -- the period from about 1943 in Canada and 1954 in Australia. The ABC and CBC were both formed in 1932 (though the CBC in its modern form dates from 1936) and both have a pretty distinguished record as patrons of the national literature; in 1936 University of Toronto Quarterly's 'Letters in Canada' surveys began and the very public Governor-General's Literature Awards were instituted. Two years later in Australia the activities of the Commonwealth Literary Fund<sup>78</sup> were dramatically expanded in important ways with the inception, inter alia, of the lecture programme. Some Canadian Literature had been dribbling into University courses since J. B. Reynolds began lecturing on it at Ontario Agricultural College in 1906. Some Australian Literature appeared on courses in the 1920s; the process was, however, opposed by many in positions of academic power for many years.<sup>79</sup> Standards in Australian Literature was a bogey that bedevilled the introduction of the teaching of the subject until even the nineteen seventies in some places, even though the inappropriateness of adversarial criticism motivated by 'standards' in post-colonial literatures is exposed in every line, every form, every metaphor which alludes and attests to the ambiguity and ambi/valence of the cultural situation. The question was certainly posed in Canada (and still is) often by 'supporters' of the literature such as Pacey and Woodcock, and

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<sup>78</sup> On the CLF see Barry G. Andrews, 'The Federal Government as Literary Patron,' Meanjin, 41 (1982), 3-19.

<sup>79</sup> For accounts of the development of the teaching of Canadian Literature in Canadian Universities, see John D. Logan, 'Teaching Canadian Literature in the Universities', Canadian Bookman, (December 1920), pp. 61-62; Desmond Pacey, 'The Study of Canadian Literature', Journal of Canadian Fiction, 2 (Spring 1973), 67-72; Margery Fee, 'English-Canadian Literary Criticism, 1890-1950: Defining and Establishing a National Literature'. Ph.D. Thesis, Univ. of Toronto, 1981, Chapter 3; R. L. McDougall, 'Literature in English: Teaching', Canadian Encyclopedia (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1985), 1020. The most substantial account of the teaching of Australian Literature is Bruce Bennett, 'Australian Literature and the Universities', Melbourne Studies in Education 1976, ed. Stephen Murray-Smith (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1976), 106-56 which has a useful section, 'Canada: a Comparison', pp. 141-53; it is supplemented by Brian Matthews, 'Australian

Literary Studies', Australian Academy of the Humanities: Proceedings 1980-81 (Canberra: Australian Academy of the Humanities, 1982), 141-56. A major survey is being conducted currently by the Committee to Review Australian Studies in Tertiary Education headed by Dr. Kay Daniels; both Brian Elliott (in the mid-seventies) and the National Council for English Teaching Committee on Australian Literature a few years later, gathered a lot of data and many submissions, but never published.

When A. D. Hope visited Canada in 1957-58 he found much more academic activity and interest in the national literature than a visitor to Australia would have found at the same time. Hope also found some apologetic and deprecatory reactions and though, while in Canada, he expressed considerable support for Australian-Canadian exchange and for the idea of Australian Studies he does not seem to have pursued this valuable idea any further than his private report to the Australian Humanities Research Council. Publicly, as reviewer, critic, broadcaster and ubiquitous public speaker he maintained his stand on standards. That was an obstacle from which Canada was to some degree freed. Although a deeply evaluative strain is evident in much Canadian criticism it has not become a central item in the orthodoxy largely, I believe, because of the influence of Frye who de-privileged the evaluative stance quite early. 'The qualities in Canadian poetry which help to make Canada more imaginatively articulate for the Canadian reader are genuine literary values, whether they coincide with other literary values or not.'<sup>81</sup> The assumptions are similar to Hope's but the impulse is more positive: the effect may have been similar.

Nevertheless, things began to happen and they happened in the two countries in remarkably similar ways. The pattern inherent in these events is apparent only when the comparative approach is taken. Bruce King asserts

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<sup>80</sup> The first three articles in the Tenth Anniversary Issue of Essays in Canadian Writing, No. 30 (Winter 1984-85) each rather testily present a challenge to the hegemonic assumptions of the Canadian Literature orthodoxy: W. J. Keith, 'The Function of Canadian Criticism at the Present Time;' T. D. MacLulich, 'What Was Canadian Literature? Taking Stock of the Canlit Industry;' John Metcalf, 'The Curate's Egg.'

<sup>81</sup> Frye, 'Preface to an Uncollected Anthology' (1956); rpt. in his The Bush Garden, p. 163.



that the nineteen sixties was the decade in which each of these literatures became a recognisable cultural entity.<sup>82</sup> The evidence gathered here suggests that each was quite well established by then: the crucial steps were taken in the forties in Canada and in the fifties in Australia. I sketch those developments here as schematically as possible to highlight the pattern.

The first phase of the watershed was the appearance of a series of provocatively diverging hypotheses about the nature of the national culture. In Canada, Brown's On Canadian Poetry (1943); Smith's Book of Canadian Poetry (1943), Frye's major review of it in The Canadian Forum, and John Sutherland's reaction-in-kind, Other Canadians (1949); Pacey's Book of Canadian Stories (1947); the Massey Report on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (1951) were followed by Harold Innis' Strategy of Culture (1952), Pacey's Creative Writing in Canada (1952, and written as a companion volume to J. K. Ewers' volume on Australian literature), Ross' collection Our Sense of Identity in 1954 and the very influential series of Carleton lectures, Our Living Tradition (1957- ). In Australia, the pattern was similar: Ewers' Creative Writing in Australia (1945), Clark's 'Tradition in Australian Literature' (1949), Rees' Towards an Australian Drama in 1953, Palmer's Legend of the Nineties (1954), Manning Clark's 'Re-writing Australian History' (1956), Macartney's Australian Literary Essays (1957), Ward's Australian Legend, Phillips' The Australian Tradition and G. A. Wilkes' 'The 1890s' in 1958.

Shortly afterwards this was consolidated -- and shown to be a major enterprise -- by the appearance of standard full-length bibliographical and

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<sup>82</sup> Bruce King, The New English Literatures: Cultural Nationalism in a Changing World (London: Macmillan, 1980), pp. 36-37.

literary historical works. Hadgraft's Australian Literature: A Critical Account appeared in 1960 and was followed shortly by a work long-delayed in the press, Green's two-volume History of Australian Literature in 1962; the standard bibliographical source, Miller and Macartney preceded them in 1956. In Canada, Klinck's multi-author Literary History of Canada was published in 1965, preceded by Park's The Culture of Contemporary Canada in 1958, and R.E. Watters' Checklist of Canadian Literature in 1959 and the commencement of the New Canadian Library in 1957.

To prove that there was indeed a literature and to give persuasive versions of it anthologists were particularly active at this time. In the first half of the nineteen fifties there were influential, and in the circumstances even polemical, anthologies edited by Birney, Ross, and Klinck and Watters in Canada, by Stewart and Keesing, Anderson, and Wright in Australia. Among the earlier volumes in the New Canadian Library series was a sub-series of anthologies, collectively known as 'Poets of Canada', that were very widely-used in the nineteen sixties; there were also a number of collections of critical essays (by A. J. M. Smith, Desmond Pacey, E. K. Brown, and John Sutherland) that centred the critical texts in the literary tradition that it was the Library's project to construct.

At about the same time many (in Australia, most) of the long-standing magazines focussing on the national literature began. In Australia these included Realist Writer (1952), Overland (1954), Quadrant and Westerly (1956), Australian Letters (1957), Australian Book Review (1961) and Australian Literary Studies (1963); in Canada The Tamarack Review (1956) and Canadian Literature (1959) were the most important, though Contemporary Verse, First Statement and Preview had been founded in the early forties. These were all verse magazines and in their controversialist positions and in-group polemics projected the debates between Frye, Sutherland, Brown, and Smith that followed the appearance of the anthologies.

A significant implication of this activity was that there was a literature, that it was worth talking and writing about, and that therefore it might even be worth teaching (as long as it could be talked about in appropriate ways and places).<sup>83</sup> Carleton's Institute of Canadian Studies was formed in 1957 (and A. D. Hope was one of its first visitors), teaching of Canadian Literature began to spread much more widely and much of this scholarly activity was supported by the Canada Council (1957-78); in Australia, full courses in Australian literature were begun at Canberra University College and the University of Queensland in the early fifties, and a year or two later the movement to establish a Chair of Australian Literature at Sydney University began. This campaign for public support and funds often took the form of public addresses and articles designed to prove that there was indeed plenty to profess. The Foundation Professor, G. A. Wilkes, was appointed in 1961. In Canada a focus was provided at about the same time by the first Canadian Writing Conference, held at Queen's University, Kingston in 1955,<sup>84</sup> and in the General Session on Canadian Literature at the 1956 Annual Meeting of the Royal Society of Canada.

Some years later, books which challenged those earlier hypotheses about the literary traditions and which established patterns, preoccupations and traditions of their own emerged. Judith Wright's Preoccupations in Australian Literature (1965) was the first, followed by Brian Kiernan's Images of Society and Nature written about that time but not published until 1971; others include Tom Inglis Moore's Social Patterns

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<sup>83</sup> As late as 1984, the only Australian Professor of Australian Literature presented a paper entitled 'Where does Australian Literature Belong?' Dame Professor Leonie Kramer, Australian Studies Centre, Univ. of Queensland, 4 April 1984.

<sup>84</sup> The proceedings were published in Writing in Canada, ed. George Whalley (Toronto: Macmillan, 1956).

in Australian Literature (1970) and Bob Burns' Directions of Australian Fiction (1975). In Canada the significant works in this genre were Atwood's Survival (1972) Jones' Butterfly on Rock (1971) and two collections of earlier essays, Woodcock's Odysseus Ever Returning (1970) and Frye's Bush Garden (1971). The retrospective nature of some of these works points to the fact that this period of the early nineteen seventies was really a consolidation of a complementary tradition which had been functioning alongside the conventional one for a decade or more.

More comprehensive revaluations took place in the next period in the work of Bill New and Robin Mathews, of Michael Wilding and G. A. Wilkes. Its institutional component manifested itself in arguments about scholarship, the canon and teaching in articles and papers by Michael Wilding, Alan Lawson, John Docker and Robin Mathews, by several participants in the 1978 Conference on the Canadian Novel at the University of Calgary<sup>85</sup> and more recently, T. D. MacLulich. Out of all that activity in the period under consideration the literary institutions of both countries had developed a tradition of intense argument and the terms of the argument were no longer 'Is there any?' but rather 'what is it and what should we do with it?'

The parallels, particularly in these 'watershed' years, in the ways in which these two literatures have been perceived or acknowledged are, I believe, particularly close ones. These provide a basis for the development of a model of the recognition of national literatures and the growth of national literature studies. Attention should also be drawn to the strong -- I think, perhaps, inevitable -- move towards Canadian studies and

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<sup>85</sup> The proceedings were published in Taking Stock, ed. Charles R. Steele (Downsview, Ont.: ECW Press, 1982).

Australian studies. Having seen these parallels we may ask what has so far been done with them.

Apart from the work of John Matthews and Diana Brydon, a couple of essays by Bob Robertson and Claude Bissell there has not been a great deal of sustained or comprehensive comparative work on Australian and Canadian literature. There have been, as I mentioned earlier in this chapter, a growing number of articles (frequently conference papers) that compare a text from each national tradition.<sup>86</sup> Yet, we share Federalism and Captain Cook; Douglas Sladen and Anthony Trollope; J. A. Froude and Hector Bolitho were among the many late nineteenth and early twentieth-century English literary travellers who took in both colonies and wrote about them; the Canada-Australia Literary Awards were instituted in 1976; there is now an Association for Canadian Studies in Australia and New Zealand (ACSANZ) which is largely comparative in its focus<sup>87</sup> and a journal, Australian Canadian Studies and a volume of comparative literary studies edited by two Australians who did graduate work in Canada; Canada has no equivalent Association but it does have a journal, True North/Down Under, and the first Conference on Canadian and Australian Literatures was held at the University of Calgary in August 1986, and almost all of the comparative

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<sup>86</sup> Since 1980 the number has increased remarkably but only recently, with a couple of papers by Russell McDougall published in 1985, an earlier version of the present chapter published in 1983, a wide-ranging article by Bruce Nesbitt, and a couple of the papers (by Kateryna Arthur, Bruce Bennett and Brian Edwards) at the 1984 Association for Canadian Studies in Australia and New Zealand Conference in Christchurch and most of the papers at the Badlands Conference on Canadian and Australian Literatures, have they gone beyond text-text comparisons.

<sup>87</sup> ACSANZ (formerly ANZACS), The Association for Canadian Studies in Australia and New Zealand was formed late in 1980. It is interdisciplinary and has been, from the outset, comparative as well; a large majority of the papers given at the first two conferences were comparative ones. See Theory and Practice in Comparative Studies: Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, ed. Peter Crabb (Sydney: ANZACS, 1983) and Regionalism and National Identity: Multi-Disciplinary Essays on Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, ed. Reginald Berry and James Acheson (Christchurch: ACSANZ, 1985).

theses have been written in Canadian Universities (mainly at Queen's under Professor J. P. Matthews); the journal which has published the largest number of Australian-Canadian essays has been the Guelph-based WLWE.

A connection that had great promise for comparative work was an early arrangement for academic interchange: its history is emblematic of the promising beginnings of shortlived projects in this field. In the fifties the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee and later the Humanities Research Councils of the two countries sponsored (with Carnegie Foundation<sup>88</sup> funds for some time) an exchange of academics -- A. D. Hope, Brian Elliott, Tom Inglis Moore went north and Reg Watters, Claude Bissell and J. M. S. Careless, R. L. McDougall, and (with Canada Council support) Earle Birney, went south. The prominence of the Canadian 'connection' in the early affairs of the Australian Council is partly explained by the Canadian influence upon its genesis: it was formed as a direct result of the enthusiasm that Brian Elliott (Adelaide University) expressed after his Carnegie-sponsored Canadian visit in 1952. Later Bissell was later elected an Honorary Corresponding Member of the Australian Humanities Research Council. For those brought up on the vision of the 'old' Empire, thoughts turned readily to other parts of the post-colonial world, as the frequent comparisons by both critics and writers up to the fifties attest.

But the real energy for the interchange came from the Humanities Research Council of Canada, which in about 1949 instituted the 'Dominions Project'. This 'Project' was the responsibility of a committee consisting

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<sup>88</sup> Carnegie and Fulbright funds were significant sources of developmental income in both Canadian and Australia from the nineteen thirties until the nineteen sixties. The dependence on American Foundation money was occasionally an embarrassment: it was remarked upon, for instance, in some of submissions to the Massey Royal Commission in 1951. But it funded the first Canadian Writers' Conference, the Munn-Pitt report into Australian Libraries, Smith's Book of Canadian Verse, and Grattan's work on Australia.

A proposal, made by A. D. Hope and A. S. P. Woodhouse (then Chairman of the Canadian Humanities Research Council), during Hope's visit to Canada in 1957, for an exchange of graduate students seems to have had a limited success and never developed into the formalised procedure that Woodhouse had suggested. Indeed, the results of Hope's visit were singularly unspectacular; the Report which he wrote after his return was never made public, although its circulation was promised, and the several proposals with which he returned were not fruitfully pursued.<sup>91</sup> The other Australian visitors to Canada seem to have been even less energetic on their return. Nevertheless, in 1958 the Australian Humanities Research Council established its first two sub-committees, one of which was The Canadian-Australian Relations Sub-Committee with Hope in the chair. Its agenda included the establishment of a permanent Australian-Canadian interchange; \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>89</sup> Canada. Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences. Briefs and Transcripts. Reel 12, Brief 228. Humanities Research Council of Canada, 4. A further account of this committee is contained in The Humanities Research Council of Canada, The Canadian Federation for the Humanities, 1943-1983: A Short History . . . (Ottawa: Canadian Federation for the Humanities, 1983), pp. 15-16.

<sup>90</sup> Revised and extended to 1960 (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1972).

<sup>91</sup> A. D. Hope Papers, Bundle VA, Australian National Univ. Library. See also Chapter Three, below.

in 1960 the Committee's brief was widened and it was renamed The Cultural Exchange Committee; in 1962 a Canadian-Australian Exchange Fund was established after a submission from Professor H. A. K. Hunt (then President of the Australian Humanities Research Council) : but in 1965 the Cultural Exchange Committee decided that 'the promotion of an extensive scheme of academic interchange between Canada and Australia for substantial periods of research and teaching is not its direct concern'<sup>92</sup> notwithstanding the parameters of its original name and brief; in 1966 the Committee was disbanded altogether.

It must be said that apart from an apparent unwillingness on the part of some members of the Council to pursue the matter there were and are practical and financial obstacles to such a scheme in all of the Commonwealth countries except Canada. This has quite simply to do with the manner in which sabbatical absences are calculated and financed: in Canada, they are regarded as 'vacancies' and are funded from sources other than the normal departmental salary budgets; elsewhere, they are computed as part of a department's strength, are not therefore regarded as 'vacancies', and hence no extra funds can be made available to fund 'replacements' -- which was the essence of the Canadian scheme.

On the Canadian side there was considerable practical activity. In traditional Canadian fashion there was a conference, at Carleton, in December of 1962 to discuss ways of implementing Hunt's proposal (which had been provoked by talks between Woodhouse, Careless and Hunt after the failure of their earlier suggestions to visiting Australians). The Canadian Commonwealth Exchange Committee was established as a Standing Committee of

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<sup>92</sup> Australian Humanities Research Council, Report, No. 9 (1964-65), 7-8. The information about the history of Canadian-Australian Academic Exchange is largely derived from the Reports of the AHRC, No. 1 (1956-57) - No. 12 (1967-68).



The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, The Humanities Research Council, and The Social Sciences Research Council. The Australian Committee, during its relatively brief existence, did not extend its activities to the Social Sciences even though this was part of Hunt's proposal. The Canadian Committee is still represented on every Canadian campus though it is by now, due largely to Australian inertia, dormant. In its more active period it kept a register of vacant posts and leave-vacancies that could be available to short or medium-term visiting academics from the Commonwealth -- in practice, mainly from Australia.<sup>93</sup> There was, in the fifties and sixties, considerable support in Canada for the exchange scheme, support that was practical and financial as well as moral. Claude Bissell (with a proven interest in things comparative) of Carleton College, Ottawa and subsequently President of the University of Toronto and Ron Watts (later Principal and Vice-Chancellor) of Queen's University were strong supporters of the scheme.<sup>94</sup> Woodhouse's original supporting argument is still interesting: 'any Canadian trained in Australia or Australian trained in Canada would be a potential recruit for comparative studies.'<sup>95</sup> That was written in February 1958 and it is no less persuasive now than it was then. The careers and backgrounds of the few who have attempted comparative work is justification for its plausibility.

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<sup>93</sup> In the five most active years of the scheme, 1963-1968, 109 out of 208 year-long visitors, and 35 out of 49 short-term visitors, were from Australia. This information (and some of the history of the scheme) was derived from a [1968] Canadian Commonwealth Exchange Committee memo.

<sup>94</sup> For much of this information I am indebted to Professor J. P. Matthews, Queen's University, Kingston.

<sup>95</sup> Letter from Woodhouse to Hope, 5 Feb. 1958. A. D. Hope Papers, Bundle VA, Australian National University Library.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Attitudes to Past and Present:

#### Literary Historical Strategies in Canada and Australia

there is no fine nationality without literature,  
and . . . no fine literature without nationality. <sup>1</sup>

Literary commentary, whether it be mainly historical or  
critical in intention, is a powerful influence on notions  
of what constitutes a particular reality. <sup>2</sup>

'By their metaphors shall ye know them.'<sup>3</sup>

The present era in literary studies is one of almost frenetic re-reading, re-reading of texts, of the relation of texts to contexts, to new ways of situating texts; re-readings of 'the past' as a new kind of knowledge. It is also a period of re-reading our previous readings and especially of the ways in which 'we' have constructed 'our' subjects: this is one of the principal concerns of this thesis -- to examine as widely as possible the 'situation' of national literary cultures. The present

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<sup>1</sup> W. B. Yeats, quoted in Desmond Pacey, Essays in Canadian Criticism, 1938-1968 (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1969), epigraph.

<sup>2</sup> Leonie Kramer, 'Islands of Yesterday: The Growth of Literary Ideas,' Westerly, No. 2 (June 1980), p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> Bruce Bennett, 'Australian Literary Historiography: Some Problems of Evaluation,' in The History and Historiography of the Commonwealth, ed. Dieter Riemenschneider (Tubingen: Gunter Narr, 1983), p. 46.

chapter, in particular, examines the ways in which literary criticism has constructed the subject while appearing to treat it as an object of study.

It is particularly concerned with the various impulses which have produced readings of Australian and Canadian texts as elements in the anatomy of the body of Australian Literature and Canadian Literature (and I introduce such an organic metaphor deliberately) and (therefore) of Australian and Canadian society.

In examining the literary-critical archive, the historical record into which literary history is itself almost immediately accommodated, one notices similarities, correspondences, and coincidences of forms between present and past works in the literary-historiographical mode, works that appear to proceed from markedly divergent positions but which nevertheless issue in similar effects or articulate comparable rhetorical forms or draw their metaphoric energies from a similar set of assumptions. The concern with newness and nowness are also concerns with re-reading and re-writing: the 're' identifies the recurrence as well as the contingency (re:). It is the recurrence I wish to dwell upon. Brian Kiernan<sup>4</sup> has thoroughly demonstrated that a relatively small number of critical problems have motivated most Australian literary criticism; indeed his work, in several places,<sup>5</sup> obviates the need for a comprehensive history of Australian literary history here. For Canada, Margery Fee, and Carl Ballstadt, have systematically covered the period to 1950; Miriam Waddington and Russell M.

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<sup>4</sup> Brian Kiernan, Criticism, Australian Writers and their Work (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974).

<sup>5</sup> See also his 'Literature, History, and Literary History: Perspectives on the Nineteenth Century in Australia,' in Bards, Bohemians, and Bookmen: Essays in Australian Literature, ed. Leon Cantrell (St. Lucia: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1976), pp. 1-18; and 'Bibliographical Spectrum: What Is Australian Literature,' Review of National Literatures ('Australia'), 11 (1982), 211-34; and also his contribution to the symposium, 'Australian Studies,' Meanjin, 37 (1978), 19-23.

Brown<sup>6</sup> among others have engaged more polemically with the period since then. In that sense, and for many suggestive ways of thinking about ideas in literary historiography, this chapter stands upon their precedence. I wish therefore to concentrate on the impulses that have energised those problems and the peculiar rhetorical tropes that they have in/formed. It is possible, I suggest, to see these coincidences of form and focus not as parallels but as equivalences or points of intersection on lines that may well be taking different trajectories.

At the moment of inventing new kinds of history, of reflecting on the species of historical knowledge, there is a need to look back, not at the history of the past but at history's past. As David Lowenthal has observed, 'we are inescapably the creatures of the past we have come through, including its own attitudes towards previous pasts'.<sup>7</sup> Or, as Brian Elliott suggested in, significantly, an essay on the historical novel in Australia, 'the dead are not merely the dead. They are our fathers, mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers. We are their heredity.'<sup>8</sup> It is his notion of descent, of filiation, of the construction of a lineage, of inheritance that I want to demonstrate as one of the central strategies in

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<sup>6</sup> Margery Fee, 'English-Canadian Literary Criticism, 1890-1950: Defining and Establishing a National Literature.' Ph.D. Diss., Univ. of Toronto, 1981; Carl Ballstadt, The Search for English-Canadian Literature: An Anthology of Critical Articles From the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1975); Miriam Waddington, 'Canadian Tradition and Canadian Literature,' Journal of Commonwealth Literature, No. 8 (Dec. 1969), pp. 25-41; Russell M. Brown, 'Critic, Culture, Text: Beyond Thematics,' Essays on Canadian Writing, No. 11 (Summer 1978), pp. 151-83.

<sup>7</sup> David Lowenthal, 'The Place of the Past in the American Landscape,' in Geographies of the Mind, ed. David Lowenthal and Martyn J. Bowden (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1976), p. 109.

<sup>8</sup> Brian Elliott, 'The Historical Novel in Australia,' in his Singing to the Cattle and other Australian Essays (Melbourne: Georgian House, 1947), p. 96.

literary history -- the invention of ancestors,<sup>9</sup> a legitimation of the present and its desired practices. It is, then, the very presence of history that needs to be emphasised; the concern with now. Literary history not only starts from the present but proceeds towards it. It enunciates evolution and emergence, seems to prefer participial forms used adjectivally ('emerging', 'coming'), takes its pleasure in imminence and looks towards the Annunciation.<sup>10</sup> It seeks also to remove the obstacles to this evolution by paring away digressions, smoothing discontinuities, and accommodating the mavericks. Unity is implicit in identity. Thus the editors of the first edition of the Literary History of Canada 'have employed "Canadian literature in English" here, rather than "English-Canadian literature," because the former term puts the name of this country first and suggests unity rather than division.'<sup>11</sup>

Insofar as it is about the present, literary history is a set of strategies, revealed in the metaphors and rhetorical forms in which those strategies are articulated. A few particular strategies have been important in framing the perceptions of the national literatures in Canada and Australia. It is the strategic sense of literary history that I concentrate upon in this Chapter just as in the previous Chapter I

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<sup>9</sup> A. J. M. Smith, The Book of Canadian Poetry (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1943), p. 28: 'What, indeed, the poets of today are bringing back to Canadian verse is an intellectualism unknown since Heavyside and a merging of personality into a classicism of form that might find its exemplar in Cameron.'

<sup>10</sup> William Arthur Deacon, 'Our Emergent Literature,' Globe & Mail, 4 Jan. 1958; Vance Palmer, 'Even now the national movement is beginning. In each of our cities is arising a little band of writers, . . . we . . . are only commencing to find out our characteristics.' [1905] quoted in John Barnes, 'The Time was Never Ripe: Some Reflections on Literary Nationalism,' Westerly, 24, No. 4 (Dec. 1979), 36; the term 'the coming Australian/Canadian' was widely used in each country through, I think, until about the nineteen fifties.

<sup>11</sup> Literary History of Canada, ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1965), p. ix.

identified the clusters of propositions about the national literatures, the arguments about its being and function and the polemic tone of much of the debate as being an essential part of the structural similarities between Canadian and Australian Literatures; in later Chapters, this theme will recur in the analysis of the contests within and between institutions, in the discussion of the structural coincidence of public discourse and cultural debate, and in the contextualisation of cultural production within the matrix of the political economy; the struggles for social and cultural and economic power or authority are of a kind with the struggle to possess the national literature by describing its history.

This is then an attempt to see literary history historically. Among the projected consequences of this perspective is to recognise literary history as a site for that contest for custodial authority, for what Bourdieu calls 'a cultural arbitrary'.<sup>12</sup> It is to see literary history as a series of revolts against hegemonic, dominant or orthodox views of the past, a sequence of attempts therefore to re-read, re-value and re-vision the subject. Most of these revolts actually do very little to alter the shape of the subject or the terms of value that it carries; they are more often concerned to reconfigure its components. The tactics are therefore determined by the particular orthodoxy under challenge but they are nevertheless energised by some recurrent impulses. Some of the early metaphors and manoeuvres anticipate more recent theoretical concerns and some of the underpinning assumptions reveal a complicity between apparently opposing camps, demonstrating their common interests.

As a field of activity rather than a particular form, literary history

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<sup>12</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture (London: Sage, 1977), pp. 5 and passim.

manifests many types. The literary historical impulse, to build a body from found objects, adopts divergent forms. Its strategic sense is to be concerned with the thing constructed, the subject that it constitutes by speaking and arguing about it. In the context of this reading of post-colonial literatures, the most significant types of history-making strategies are the chronological or chronicle history, the anthology, 'propositional histories', organic histories, the studies of patterns, preoccupations and preferences (called in Canada 'thematic criticism' and, in Australia, debates about 'the tradition'), canon-making; revaluation (revising the history) and recuperation (adding to the history); any critical activity, that is, whose underlying concern is with a conception of the whole even if it evidently focusses only upon a part. The energising logic is that of synecdoche.

Underlying those conceptions of a whole body of literary history upon which to act are the various organicist assumptions of the history of the literature as a body that grows, as a stream that flows (tributary to a larger), or as a branch of a tree. But, as those few examples show, there are several conceptions of that body. The conceptualisation of the national literature as a body, or as some other sort of organism, began with the earliest organicist conceptions of European 'nationalism' in the nineteenth century. Herder, Taine, Carlyle, and others were quick to adopt organic metaphors to express their organicist conceptions of the relation between the (then 'newly-conceived') nation and its literature. In an age of Imperialism, and as part of a project to assert the specious unity of new 'federations' of geographical, historical and class interests, it was undoubtedly an imperial notion in itself and in its effects. But it was serviceable enough in writing the histories of those national literatures.

The significant slide in the use of the notion occurs when those kinds of organic models are used to accommodate the literatures of the post-European societies, for the models, of course, contain (as I have observed in the previous Chapter) project homogeneity onto polysemous and polyphonic cultures, and seek to monistically figure their pluralities. Moreover, in requiring growth and insisting on its stages, organic histories of new literatures rapidly display their normative qualities. Those are problems that arise when the organic model is applied to national literatures from, as it were, within. But the more serious slippage is that which derives from the transformation or extension of the organic model from the European national literature to its imperial relations, when the body is given offspring, the tree develops branches or shoots, the river discovers a tributary. Then relations of power and subordinacy, as well as the normative and monistic impulses, are transferred with the metaphor onto the body of the 'new' literature. The supplement then is that power which is inscribed into the post-colonial literary culture's terms of addressing itself.

The organic images imply not only growth but also a conception of unity in which the parts are mutually consistent. These are not only ways of reading the literature, they are also ways of writing its history. As a kind of literary historical writing this is what R. S. Crane calls 'organic or integral'<sup>13</sup> history, history which has an organizing principle -- Society and Nature, Cosmopolitan and Native, Survival, Exile and Opportunity and so on. Many different kinds of critics belong to this school. Judith Wright's Preoccupations in Australian Poetry (1965) is one of the best examples, as is Kiernan's Images of Society and Nature (1971) despite its rather cautious conclusion; John Moss' Patterns of Isolation (1974), Laurence Ricou's Vertical Man/ Horizontal World (1973), and A. J.

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<sup>13</sup> R. S. Crane, Critical and Historical Principles of Literary History (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 29.

a paradigmatic history, both in its description and in its selection. The evidence, the tradition, and the commentary are all interpenetrating parts of an ideological act.

What these all share with, for example, H. P. Heseltine's 'The Australian Image' (Meanjin, 1962), with Margaret Atwood's Survival (1972), and with much of the radical national commentary in Australia is a basically romantic theory of literature as the history of the national mind, the expression of the genius of the race, deriving from Herder, Carlyle and Taine. They search, usually, for patterns; patterns of literary expression, patterns of national experience, expressions of the national character. They may also be, in the words of Leonie Kramer, concerned with another kind of literary evidence -- 'The metaphorical preferences of writers'<sup>14</sup>; the way, in Judith Wright's terms, they relate the internal environment to the external,<sup>15</sup> or deal in what John Moss calls 'the geophysical imagination.'<sup>16</sup> Their logic, to adapt Barthes' description of the Text, 'is not comprehensive (seeking to define "what the work means") but metonymic; and the activity of associations, contiguities, and cross-references coincides with a liberation of symbolic energy.'<sup>17</sup>

If the forms of literary history are varied so are the impulses that motivate them. As Bruce Bennett wittily observed, it is 'by their metaphors ye shall know them'. But only when the discursive assumptions

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<sup>14</sup> Leonie Kramer, 'Islands of Yesterday: The Growth of Literary Ideas,' Westerly, No. 2 (June 1980), p. 93.

<sup>15</sup> Judith Wright, Preoccupations in Australian Poetry (Melbourne:Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), p. xi.

<sup>16</sup> John Moss, Patterns of Isolation in English Canadian Fiction (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974), p. 7

<sup>17</sup> Roland Barthes, 'From Work to Text,' in Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism, ed. Josue V. Harari (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1979), p. 76.



and their inscriptions are teased out. If literary history is, relatively, discursively determined and (as it customarily assumes its subject to be) culturally and historically specific in this way it is not only because it starts from 'now' but -- perhaps even a fortiori -- because it proceeds towards it; that is, it participates in its own time. And its rhetoric will be that of its time rather than that of its material; the images are not found in the evidence, they construct it and shape it.<sup>18</sup> The images that I am talking about here may or may not be found in the material, but I wish to discuss the ways in which they are brought to it and used on it; they structure the investigation as well as the material. They are exegetical instruments but they are, of course, not ideologically neutral and certainly not simply descriptive. They, unwittingly, inherently privilege works that share their metaphoric preoccupations -- such as the homology between organicist images of literary 'development' and a concentration on autobiographies of childhood, Bildungsromanen, and texts that employ metaphors of growth and maturity.<sup>19</sup> These images become part of the rhetoric of the history.

'Naturally', one draws one's metaphors from what one's culture values. They are then elements of codes of cognition and, as such, are cultural

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<sup>18</sup> This general historiographical axiom, 'a fact is not something that has happened, but something which a historian chooses to consider important', has been made by Humphrey McQueen (paraphrasing E. H. Carr) in his A New Britannia (Ringwood: Penguin, 1970), p.11; and more bluntly by G. A. Wilkes, 'the answer to the question will be determined by the model of literary development that we adopt' (an awareness not vouchsafed to most Canadian thematic critics) in his An Alternative View of Australian Literary History, 1974 Blaiklock Lecture (Sydney: Wentworth Press, 1974), p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of the ways in which the image of the child in fiction is complicit with conceptions of national growth and identity, see K. L. Goodwin, 'Images of National Identity in Commonwealth Literature,' Paper presented in the English Department, Univ. of British Columbia, 2 Oct. 1985, forthcoming in WLWE.

formations of a kind. Laurie Ricou places Barthes' description of history as the 'construction of the intelligibility of the time' in the specific context of the reflexive writing of (new) literary history,<sup>20</sup> emphasising it as being about (at the same time as being itself one of) the modes of understanding (of) a culture. Its discursive grounding has been explained most clearly by W. H. New:

The language of history thus becomes a literary topic, because it constitutes a discourse of perception, requiring that a discourse of alternative possibilities sound before history can be repossessed, renewed.<sup>21</sup>

The sounding of those alternative possibilities is one of the inspirations of that sequence of competing descriptions, the welter of heterodoxies, the series of revolts I have already mentioned as a characteristic feature of post-colonial literary historiography. It is explicitly sounded in the rhetoric of revaluationist history (which is indeed revisionist, but also, in New's formulation, re-visioning as well as re:vision) in Australia in particular but it is a muted tone in some of the better Canadian thematicists also. The rhetoric here is of 'alternative views', 'other perspectives', and, putatively, of 'difference'.

And the cultural grounding of the histories of these two national literatures is markedly post-colonial. David Lowenthal has observed, of the United States in particular, that nature is often substituted for history.<sup>22</sup> To put it another way, time is read in terms of space. The

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<sup>20</sup> Laurie Ricou, 'Rewriting the Literary History of Canada,' Panel Discussion, Association for Canadian and Quebec Literature Conference, Univ. of Guelph, 6 June 1984.

<sup>21</sup> W. H. New, 'Re: Visions of Canadian Literature,' The Literary Criterion, 19, No. 3/4 (1984), 44.

<sup>22</sup> David Lowenthal, 'The Place of the Past in the American Landscape', pp. 90, 102: the title of the essay (unwittingly?) makes the point as well; see also his 'Australian Images: The Unique Present, The Mythical Past,' in Readings in Australian Arts: Papers from the 1976 Exeter Symposium, ed. Peter Quartermaine (Exeter: Univ. of Exeter, 1978), pp. 84-93 passim.

process of colonisation, especially of the settler-society kind represented by Canada and Australia, involves putting time into relation with space in a new way. In the process of translocation of individuals and, implicitly, of a society there is an attempt -- evident in the establishment of institutions and of culture -- to re-place a history. The effect is to replace History. In talking, for instance, of 'the oldest of lands' Australians make it their history. On the other hand, the possibility of, or the need for, a 'fresh start' represents an attempted disengagement with history. The 'radical' half of 'Australia's Double Aspect' for Judith Wright is a 'sense of liberty, a new chance,' while A. B. McKillop's 'liberal-nationalism' (the difference in the terminology, radical/liberal, is characteristic of the two cultures and is taken up later in this chapter) involves a repudiation of part of history. There is then, in various forms, an acknowledgment of a break in (one's) history: hence the endemic post-colonial obsessions with beginnings, with origins (and, though the connection is less obvious, with discontinuity as well), obsessions which are often displaced into the literature and onto the histories of it. In post-colonial cultures, then, space and time constitute a problematic field of relations.

These are of particular concern here because, it seems to me, the relatively different configurations of this field in Canada and Australia provide a kind of conceptual key for understanding some of the characteristic ways in which literary history has been approached in the two countries and, consequently it would seem, locates the source of the distinctive explanatory images adopted in each case.

As in most post-colonial cultures, Australian and Canadian writers and, of course, critics have been concerned with the search for 'the usable past';<sup>23</sup> in Australia, this has also been a characteristic of the dominant stream of literary criticism and of the kinds of literary histories explored in this chapter. In Canada on the other hand the dominant critical mode has been the search for 'the usable place' -- in Northrop Frye's influential formulation, Canadian Literature 'is less perplexed by the question "Who am I?" than by some such riddle as "Where is here?".<sup>24</sup> Its persistence is confirmed by its contradiction, quoted approvingly as the last word in Laurence Ricou's study of prairie fiction as a response to place and space: 'I may not know who I am, but I know where I am from'.<sup>25</sup> As W. H. New has observed, 'it has become habitual to talk of Canada in terms of place.'<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, in the period in which the hegemonic styles of criticism were being established, roughly-speaking the nineteen fifties, the fiction and poetry of the two countries seemed to endorse the values (and therefore the value) of these dominant critical modes. Much of the noteworthy \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>23</sup> The term comes from the American literary historian, Van Wyck Brooks writing at the critical moment for the recognition of American Literature, the nineteen twenties; it has been widely used in Canada and Australia with what Bourdieu and Passeron call 'genesis amnesia', a failure to notice that it actually has a source. Diane Bessai ('Counterfeiting Hindsight', 354) attributes the phrase to Eli Mandel (without, significantly, giving any reference), but it is not used in the Introduction to his Contexts of Canadian Criticism (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 3-25, though the idea certainly informs the collection and the introductory remarks; in conversation Mandel told me that he thought the phrase was A. J. M. Smith's.

<sup>24</sup> Northrop Frye, 'Conclusion', The Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English, ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 826; rpt. in his The Bush Garden: Essays on

the Canadian Imagination (Toronto: Anansi, 1971), p. 220. Subsequent references, abbreviated to 'Conclusion', will be given in parentheses in the text.

<sup>25</sup> Wallace Stegner, Wolf Willow (New York: Viking Press, 1966), p. 23 quoted in Laurence Ricou, Vertical Man/Horizontal World: Man and landscape in Canadian Prairie Fiction (Vancouver: Univ. of British Columbia Press, 1973), p. 139.

<sup>26</sup> W. H. New, 'Re: Visions of Canadian Literature,' 30.

Australian fiction (and even Australian poetry) was visibly engaged in that search for a usable past; the texts noticed by what John Docker, loosely, calls the critics of the metaphysical ascendancy included Voss, Bring Larks and Heroes, For the Term of His Natural Life, To the Islands, the verse of Slessor and FitzGerald, the so-called 'Voyager Poems', some of A. D. Hope, Judith Wright and James McAuley.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, Canadian writing, on the other hand, was rather more firmly addressing the present,<sup>28</sup> in mode as well as in subject -- MacLennan, Richler, and Ross, Buckler, Mitchell and Lowry, Purdy, Birney and Layton. E. J. Pratt was the major and really remarkable exception and it is no coincidence that his work receives such great attention from the Canadian literary historian most concerned with the idea of a 'Canadian tradition', W. J. Keith.<sup>29</sup>

Australian criticism found the idea of tradition especially appealing. The term was embedded in the critical lexicon quite early, in Manning Clark's essay 'Tradition in Australian Literature' (Meanjin, 1949), in A. A. Phillips' The Australian Tradition (1958), in Douglas Stewart's anthology, Short Stories of Australia: The Lawson Tradition (1967), in the concluding chapter of Brian Kiernan's Images of Society and Nature (1971), 'The Australian Novel and Tradition', so that when the period of revision

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<sup>27</sup> The prevalence of Time and History as themes, and their surprising coincidence, in Australian poetry is examined in the comparative context by Lee Briscoe Thompson, 'Land Without Ghosts: Canadian and Australian Historical Poetry,' in The History and Historiography of Commonwealth Literature, ed. Dieter Riemenschneider (Tubingen: Gunter Narr, 1983), pp. 165-73.

<sup>28</sup> This distinction between the cultures, Canada: presence and Australia: history, recurs in this thesis -- in discussions of revisionist criticism and of the editorial preferences of major journals, in this Chapter; in the values of Hope and Woodcock, in Chapter Three; and in relation to the strategies of reprinting initiatives, in Chapter Six.

<sup>29</sup> W. J. Keith, Canadian Literature in English (London: Longman, 1985). The present writer addressed this issue in a review of the book in Canadian Literature, No. 110 (Fall 1986), pp. 111-13.

and reevaluation began in the mid-seventies it was articulated in terms of finding alternative traditions. In the early nineteen sixties, Richard Chase's The American Novel and Its Tradition (1957)<sup>30</sup> was rather influential in Australian criticism despite a long critique of it by a figure whose importance to Australian literary criticism needs to be studied, Grahame Johnston.<sup>31</sup> The influence of Chase's book may be attributable in part to the 'American' training of several of the critics who were early into the academic field of Australian literary criticism; to the fact that, as A. D. Hope, H. M. Green and others had acknowledged, American Literature provided the model that Australian Literature would, with very little doubt, follow, an assumption readily conceded in Johnston's review of it; and to the fact that, as R. T. Robertson suggested,<sup>32</sup> American literary history provided attractive models for the historiography of other new world literatures, models that proved to be persistent and even prescriptive long after they ceased to be influential in the United States.

If revision in Australia was destined to focus on the configuration of the tradition, in Canada it had to focus on the reputation of newer

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<sup>30</sup> Richard Chase, The American Novel and Its Tradition (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1957). Chase's argument stressed the 'Americanness' of his key texts, elevated the Romance above the Novel, and discovered 'radical forms of alienation, contradiction and disorder' (p. 2), notions that appear in various recognisable forms in the 'metaphysical' critics (and others). It is evident, for instance, in reviews of Voss by H. J. Oliver, Vincent Buckley, H. P. Heseltine and R. P. Laidlaw; and in the revisionist histories of Wilkes and Heseltine.

<sup>31</sup> Grahame Johnston, 'The American Novel and Its Tradition,' Melbourne Critical Review, No. 2 (1959), pp. 89-94. Some of Johnston's influential activities are noticed by G. A. Wilkes, 'The Writing of Literary History,' Notes & Furphies, No. 17 (Oct. 1986), p. 5; he might have added to his list of Johnston's entrepreneurial initiatives, the Australian Bibliographies Series and the Oxford Companion to Australian Literature.

<sup>32</sup> R. T. Robertson, 'The Greater and Lesser American Literatures,' Paper delivered at AULLA/FILLM Congress, Univ. of Sydney, 27 August 1975.

contemporary writers (since contemporariness had been so important) or on methodology -- hence the attacks on thematic criticism. To put this another way, each of these critical heritages took its characteristic perspective from the cluster of critical activities that emblematically established the discipline of national literary studies in the nineteen fifties:<sup>33</sup> in Australia, the 'radical-nationalist' critics and those propounding the so-called 'gloom thesis' both worked from a root concern with context; in Canada both the mythopoeists and the realists<sup>34</sup> sought their interest in content -- although the former stressed aesthetic and metaphoric structures and the latter social ideas and action, each in fact dwelt in content and, I think, evinced a characteristic moral sentiment.<sup>35</sup>

George Woodcock explains how he came to understand the relationship between the (inevitable, because organically conceived) formal conservatism of Canadian writers and the necessity for thematic criticism.

at certain stages in literatures, when they emerge from a kind of colonialism to take on their own identity, an emphasis on content rather than on form may be necessary and is to be encouraged. To this extent the recent

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<sup>33</sup> For a discussion of these 'clusters' in the watershed of the fifties, see Chapter One, pp. 52-59.

<sup>34</sup> It might be noted here that these two modes of criticism have been seen to be opposed and in both countries the issue was focussed in joint reviews of literary works from each tradition: e.g. Heseltine's review of Vance Palmer's Seedtime and White's Voss in 1957, and Dudek's article on Scott and Jay Macpherson in the same year.

<sup>35</sup> Miriam Waddington, 'Canadian Tradition and Canadian Literature,' Journal of Commonwealth Literature No. 8 (Dec. 1969), p. 128 uses the terms 'historical-social' and 'apocalyptic-mythic' to describe the two major ways of interpreting Canadian Literature and Canadian identity. These are discussed below in relation to the pervasive dualisms in literary historical discourse. For an account of Louis Dudek's version of social realism and his critique of the mythopoeists, see Terence William Goldie, 'Louis Dudek: A Study of a Developing Critical Position,' M.A. Diss., Carleton Univ., 1975.

Canadian school of thematic critics has been justified.<sup>36</sup>

The Australian critical hegemony was henceforth concerned with tradition and history in ways that saw each in referential terms, the critical perceptions continually leaking out into ahistoric explanations; Canadian criticism was henceforth a more autotelic field in which content and form were approached rather more self-referentially, the critical perceptions concerned with the components of the field and with their configuration.

Myth, the term which those of a systematising bent so often used to signal their alliance with Northrop Frye, is itself a device for replacing history -- by displacing it. It is, like tradition, a secular surrogate for the revelatory function of spirituality; like tradition, it invests status and antiquity; especially in its connotative link with 'primitive' societies it is related to the notion of Canada as new, as a tabula rasa and is therefore associated with the re/request for origins in post-colonial societies. D. G. Jones, for instance, perorates in a quite apocalyptic manner about 'the possibility, at least, that Canadians, English as well as French, have arrived at the first days of Creation, that life is now a matter of naming and discovering . . .'.<sup>37</sup> Unlike tradition, myth declares its interest in synchronic patterns and is therefore spatial, following the Canadian preoccupation with space/place.

But tradition in Australian Literature was not always particularly historical either. Indeed, as Humphrey McQueen argued, most of that

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<sup>36</sup> George Woodcock, 'Possessing the Land: Notes on Canadian Fiction,' in The Canadian Imagination: Dimensions of a Literary Culture, ed. David Staines (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1977), p. 73.

<sup>37</sup> D. G. Jones, Butterfly on Rock: A Study of Themes and Images in Canadian Literature (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1970), p. 183



species of criticism was actually anti-historic as well as ahistoric.<sup>38</sup> Put another way, it was in fact organic, concerned with organising images of coherence that were not motivated by an awareness of historic change but by a desire to legitimise a putative succession. Tradition, in the sense in which I am using it here and in which it has become part of the Australian critical vocabulary is, it is true, indeed ahistoric. It is relational rather than linear, concerned with recurrence within history rather than with development and historical change.<sup>39</sup> The predilection for tradition was, to some extent, derived from the opportunity it offered to avoid the preoccupation with canon-making that was associated with Leavisite criticism and was thus discredited in the polemical counter-movements of other groupings of both the critical left and the critical right. More directly it afforded an opportunity for avoiding evident value judgments.<sup>40</sup>

The close link between tradition and value is often more explicit in Canadian criticism where the interest in value has been foregrounded to a much greater extent. In the nineteen forties and nineteen fifties, tradition was also more centrally placed in the critical lexicon where it did carry the values of conservation, continuity, inheritance and quality.

When Desmond Pacey concluded his Introduction to A Book of Canadian Stories with the words, 'I should like to feel this volume will help to prove . . .

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<sup>38</sup> Humphrey McQueen, 'Images of Society in Australian Criticism,' Arena, No. 31 (1973), pp. 44-51.

<sup>39</sup> A very similar observation is made by Lee Briscoe Thompson about Australian poetry -- 'Australian poets seem to have concentrated on recurrent, individual human situations within the historical context' and evince 'a now firmly rooted sense of History as a living present' -- 'Land Without Ghosts: Canadian and Australian Historical Poetry,' pp. 171, 172.

<sup>40</sup> For a discussion of the ideological and institutional functions of canon-making and value-judgments, see Chapter Four.

that there is a literary tradition of some value in this country,'<sup>41</sup> he drew attention to the way in which a tradition becomes 'valued' (the value-added tradition is an important phenomenon, especially in Canada). Ranking, it might be noted, is a spatial move.

Despite the apparently value-free mask, tradition remains implicitly and often explicitly (in the phrase 'The Australian tradition') laudatory and normative, and at least potentially discriminatory and exclusivist. The methodology, by focussing on the relation between texts and between texts and culture, manages to conceal or elide its selectivity. This is the fundamental historiographical problem it shares with Canadian thematic criticism for which, considered in this way, it can sometimes seem to be just another name.

But the names which criticism takes unto itself are markers of cultural value and it is noteworthy (in terms of my own selective paradigm) that the Australian reaches for images of time while the Canadian takes them from the space shelf. This is not to propose that either of these paradigms is exclusive. In Canada it must be remembered that the Carleton 'Our Living Tradition' series which provided an at least putative continuity between the writing and criticism of the present and the literary culture of the past; the work, especially in the late nineteen forties and in the nineteen fifties of Carl Klinck, Reg Watters, Desmond Pacey, and (by making texts of the past present as editor of the New Canadian Library series, the title affirming that presence) Malcolm Ross, was all concerned with taking an historical view of Canadian Literature. The Literary History of Canada specifically structured itself on the foundation of 'tradition'.

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<sup>41</sup> Introduction, A Book of Canadian Stories, 4th ed., ed. Desmond Pacey, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), p. xxxvii.

The search for tradition or, in Australia in the nineteen seventies, traditions is in essence an attempt to see the work, and less often the writer, 'as a term in wholly different types of diachronic sequences.'<sup>42</sup> This impulse, stated at that level of abstraction, actually unites the work of John Docker and G. A. Wilkes or H. P. Heseltine, a continuity that declares itself in the intensity of the contest between them because it is a contest for the same things. For tradition is not only descriptive. It performs exegesis in the service of certain (in both senses) ends and is therefore teleological (and its telos is the present); it conducts interpretative manoeuvres whose purpose is to appropriate. Like the most conventional of the chronicle histories they are concerned with boundary-marking. Some of those reviews of Voss,<sup>43</sup> in showing that Voss was not sui generis, not a digression from the Australian tradition but rather an important and continuous part of it were 'managing' that tradition, appropriating White to the tradition and, in T. S. Eliot's sense that new works retrospectively re-order the tradition, effectively using White (on whom they were commentators) as leverage to appropriate the re-ordered tradition to themselves.

Miriam Waddington notes that tradition is an ambiguous term:

Tradition has, first of all, to do with belief or custom, and secondly with the handing down of belief or custom to posterity . . . . Usually the origins are indeterminate, ancient, and unspecific. These very conditions of being

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<sup>42</sup> Frederic Jameson, Marxism and Form (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1979), p. 315 quoted in Ian Read [sic], 'Australian Literary Studies: The Need for a Comparative Method,' New Literature Review, No. 6 [1979], p. 34.

<sup>43</sup> They include Vincent Buckley, 'Novelists and Conventions,' Prospect, 1, No. 1 (1958), 21-22; Marjorie Barnard, '"Seedtime" and "Voss",' Meanjin, 17 (1958), 94-100; and culminating in H. P. Heseltine, 'The Australian Image. 1 -- The Literary Heritage,' Meanjin, 21 (1962), 35-49. They were, in a dialectical way, themselves a response to the view expressed by several of the Praetorian Guards of the 'origin/al' tradition.

unspecified and vague are favourable for the development of traditional customs and beliefs in the realms of art, religion, and nationalism. . . .

The trouble is that the revelatory values that derive from theology are apt to get mixed up with historical secular values that refer to art and literature.<sup>44</sup>

Brian Kiernan identifies a similar slippage in the way tradition has been used in Australia:

we find attention being paid to Australian literature as an embodiment of social attitudes which have passed into our cultural inheritance. Yet something of a slide is involved here -- a slide from using 'tradition' in the sense of what is interpreted as the continuity of cultural values and attitudes within the Australian community generally, including its writers, to using 'tradition', with all its accumulated weight of approval in literary contexts, to judge favourably writers who embrace attitudes which are felt to be Australian.<sup>45</sup>

Kiernan objects to this on the grounds of logic but also because it is a way of allowing non-literary criteria to intrude. That it is also a fundamentally conservative, and potentially prescriptive, 'slide' is illustrated by the example that he immediately quotes from Vance Palmer. John Barnes argues that Palmer's view of the relationship between literature and life slid from 'mirror' to 'storehouse.' Barnes calls the latter 'a potential force in changing the direction and quality of national life,'<sup>46</sup> suggesting (and his article seems, indeed, a kind of apologia) some complicity with that slide.

This is an issue that Miriam Waddington goes on to explore. She begins, in what is a common Canadian way, by expressing a distrust of

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<sup>44</sup> Miriam Waddington, 'Canadian Tradition and Canadian Literature,' Journal of Commonwealth Literature No. 8 (Dec. 1969), p. 125. Subsequent references will be given in parenthesis in the text.

<sup>45</sup> Brian Kiernan, 'The Australian Novel and Tradition,' in his Images of Society and Nature: Seven Essays on Australian Novels (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), p. 159.

<sup>46</sup> John Barnes, 'The Time was Never Ripe: Some Reflections on Literary Nationalism,' Westerly, 24, No. 4 (1979), 37.

tradition:

We then begin to associate tradition with orthodoxy in religion, conservatism in politics, and resistance to innovation in art. Often enough . . . then we find tradition working not only as a means of conserving, but also as a way of fossilising certain aspects of a culture which have crystallised out of the conflicts of opposing forces, and which honour certain values more than others, even to the point of investing them with magical authority. Literary traditions can thus grow out of a series of revolts against authority . . . (pp. 125-26, emphasis added)

The really crucial understanding that this analysis expresses for my purposes is the explanation of the polemic potential of the notion of tradition. In some ways, the inherent conservatism of the term has been masked in Australia by the fact that it was left-wing critics, the radical nationalists,<sup>47</sup> who spoke of (and for) tradition most often. But radical or conservative, all traditions face revision, all heterodoxies desire to be orthodoxies and hence invite revolt. That 'tradition' can be used by writers both conservative and radical identifies it as a polemic category, and consigns to it the historical necessity of challenge. Thus the feminist challenge to an Australian tradition that made democratic, rural, male, realist readings central, recuperated Cambridge, Praed, Baynton, and Franklin by discovering an/other tradition<sup>48</sup> within which urban, intellectual, female, romance readings were possible. 'Alternative

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<sup>47</sup> The term has been given great currency by John Docker and others following him; it seems to have its source in the opening words of the first chapter of Humphrey McQueen's A New Britannia (Ringwood: Penguin, 1970), p. 15: 'The Australian legend consists of two inextricably interwoven themes: radicalism and nationalism'. A page later, he begins using the compound noun.

<sup>48</sup> This is one of the accomplishments of Gender, Politics and Fiction: Twentieth Century Australian Women's Novels, ed. Carole Ferrier (St. Lucia: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1985); Miriam Dixson's The Real Matilda (Ringwood: Penguin, 1976); and explicitly in Frances McInhery, 'Miles Franklin, My Brilliant Career and the Female Tradition,' Australian Literary Studies, 9 (1980), 275-85 and Susan Sheridan, 'Ada Cambridge and the Female Literary Tradition,' in Nellie Melba, Ginger Meggs and Friends, ed. Susan Dermody, John Docker and Drusilla Modjeska (Melbourne: Kibble, 1982), pp. 162-75.

possibilities sound' but they speak the same grammar.

The valorisation of history in Australian criticism can be exemplified from a couple of critics at either end of the period. In a lecture<sup>49</sup> (one given in the early nineteen forties under the auspices of the Commonwealth Literary Fund's Lecture Programme which is discussed in Chapter Five) Brian Elliott speaks of the extraordinary abundance (a curious notion) of Australian history and examines some major Australian novels which interpret (rather than chronicle) it. In the Introduction to his book on the Convict in Australian fiction, Laurie Hergenhan speaks of the remarkable attraction that the convict period has had for major Australian novelists and in doing so sounds a common note in both Australian and Canadian studies of this 'content-analysis' kind: 'The fiction selected here, while of varying quality, is that commonly judged to be the best; and in its range of concern it can be considered representative'.<sup>50</sup> The subjunctive doesn't quite conceal the anxiety about standards and the desire to associate with the whole culture ('representative'). It is a common formulation in both Canadian and Australian literary history.

Significantly, the principal academic journals in each country adopt different attitudes towards the past. George Woodcock, founding editor of Canadian Literature from 1959 to 1977, held that 'Canadian literature is a phenomenon of the past forty years' and that, moreover, 'little Canadian

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<sup>49</sup> Brian Elliott, 'The Historical Novel in Australia,' in his Singing to the Cattle and Other Australian Essays (Melbourne: Georgian House, 1947), pp. 86-109.

<sup>50</sup> Laurie Hergenhan, Unnatural Lives: Studies in Australian Fiction About the Convicts (St. Lucia: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1983), pp. 1-15; the passage quoted is from p. 1.

fiction that was published before 1900 now seems worth rereading'<sup>51</sup>; consequently, one of Woodcock's policies was to prefer articles on recent writers. Australian Literary Studies, on the other hand, consistently attracted 'scholarly or historical studies . . . mainly of nineteenth-century figures' without this, the editor suggests, being editorial policy.

However, the policy statement has always been read as giving some priority to 'scholarly, historical and critical studies,' and it refers to 'research', of which the journal will become a 'repository'. But the editor, Laurie Hergenhan, spoke of having learned as a graduate student 'the usefulness of trying to look at the literature of the past' and of wanting the journal to take a 'general historical approach' that took in 'the literature from the past to the present (emphasis added).'<sup>52</sup>

If one of the dominant concerns of Australian criticism has been with continuity, one of the Canadian characteristics has been contiguity, and therefore presence. Like the prevailing image (if not the prevailing practice) of the Canadian Confederation the preferred move in Canadian criticism is cumulative rather than progressive. It represents itself in terms of pattern rather than development; it emulates the enabling myth of the mosaic, in which, as George Woodcock has so eloquently put it, 'the pieces create patterns which are more than themselves, but the patterns remain on the same level as the pieces'.<sup>53</sup> The image, and the practice, massages the Canadian anxiety about the integrity of the individual while

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<sup>51</sup> 'Editorial Balance Sheet: Six Years of Canadian Literature,' rpt. in A George Woodcock Reader, ed. Doug Fetherling (n.pl.: Deneau & Greenberg, 1980), p. 218; 'Possessing the Land: Notes on Canadian Fiction,' in The Canadian Imagination, ed. Staines, p. 73..

<sup>52</sup> Laurie Hergenhan, 'Australian Literary Studies,' in Cross Currents: Magazines and Newspapers in Australian Literature, ed. Bruce Bennett (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1981), pp. 211, 213.

<sup>53</sup> George Woodcock, 'Up the Anti-Nation,' rpt. in A George Woodcock Reader, p. 59.

satisfying the quest for unity that lies beneath almost all critical strategies that derive from the nationalist project.

In the article from which I have already quoted, Miriam Waddington provides a more fundamental explanation of the Canadian lack of enthusiasm for the idea of tradition,<sup>54</sup> an explanation which, I believe, provides a crucial insight into the nature of the approaches that are taken:

There is, in fact, no real Canadian literary tradition but only a social matrix, an accumulation of historical events, full of contradictions, forces, and counterforces; we live in a sort of vast cultural chaos upon which we are all free to draw. We possess a promiscuous history, which contains not just abstract patterns, but specific items.<sup>55</sup> (emphasis added)

An accumulation of historical events is not, of course, history. Her formulation parallels, and possibly echoes, Northrop Frye's unavoidable remark in the 'Conclusion' to The Literary History of Canada that 'The literary in Canada . . . is more significantly studied as a part of Canadian life than as a part of an autonomous world of literature'.<sup>56</sup> But of more immediate interest is the idea of a social matrix coupled with the emphasis on items rather than pattern. Much Canadian criticism deals with its subject as if it were a 'field'. In this sense, 'field' is conceived as a space in which elements are made meaningful by the forces that relate them. Eli Mandel characterised Canadian literary criticism as 'seeking something that expresses itself as a sort of conceptual space between its

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<sup>54</sup> George Woodcock, in 'Anthology as Epithalamion' in his Odysseus Ever Returning (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1970), pp. 116-17 presents a simpler explanation, that tradition implies a historical burden that Canadian Literature's extreme recency cannot bear.

<sup>55</sup> Miriam Waddington, 'Canadian Tradition and Canadian Literature ,' p. 140.

<sup>56</sup> The Literary History of Canada, p. 822; rpt. Bush Garden, p. 214.



works of literature'.<sup>57</sup> Each thematic reading of Canadian Literature is, from this vantage point then, a reconfiguration of the field: each reading produces its own autonomous field by occupying the spaces between texts.

Mandel takes up the implication of that image of the conceptual space in a way that I want to emphasise since it seems to me to be an important trope in the critical rhetoric of both Canada and Australia. 'In other words,' he writes, 'its major impulse has been to fill up an emptiness.' Literary criticism must be seen as moving into open ('empty') space, significantly emulating the first move of colonisation. It declares a lack, announces the cultural work to be done, and establishes itself as the supplier of the deficiency. It is not surprising, then, that it finds its energy in that 'space between its works of literature'. Revisionist history almost always begins from the observation that the tradition or thematic reading challenged finds no place for a particular class of texts.

Scholarly history also begins with the customary lament that the materials are unavailable. This lack is announced by Carole Ferrier's Introduction to Gender, Politics and Fiction (1985) as it was by H. M. Green in the first pages of An Outline of Australian Literature (1930).<sup>58</sup>

The point was made tirelessly about Canada by Malcolm Ross, whose General Editorship of the New Canadian Library series did not merely rectify a deficiency but, like all of those literary-historical impulses,

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<sup>57</sup> Eli Mandel, Introduction, The Contexts of Canadian Criticism (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 3.

<sup>58</sup> H. M. Green, A History of Australian Literature: Pure and Applied (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1961), p. x identifies a whole series of lacks and deficiencies -- 'no Australian literary tradition except what survives from the nineties and early nineteen hundreds; . . . no general literary perspective.' The complaint about unavailable books is made by Green in 1930, repeated by Dorothy Green in her revision of the History (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1984), p. xxix. It was the substance of one of the first motions passed by The Association for the Study Of Australian Literature in 1979.

gave a shape to its replacement. As remarked in Chapter Three below, the lack of Canadian (or Australian) criticism was a constant trope in Canadian (or Australian) criticism. Both Margaret Atwood and D. G. Jones figure their vocation as supplying a cultural lack as well as representing the familiar post-colonial rhetoric of origins, of new beginnings, of the tabula rasa on which the 'new' text of Canada and its literary history is written. Atwood figures Canadian Literature, like Canada itself (and the identification is endemic in her book and crucial to its argument), as 'unknown territory'<sup>59</sup> for which a 'map' is required: her book is the map. Ultimately, it seems to me, all of these are re-inscriptions of the original lack, the figuring of the two literatures themselves as void (itself structurally coincident with the common figuring of the countries as absence, as empty).<sup>60</sup>

For A. D. Hope, Australian Literature lacked that sine qua non, the masterpiece, 'the final requirement.'<sup>61</sup> For Frye, 'Canada has produced no author who is a classic' ('Conclusion', pp. 821/213) with the curious but crucially important concomitant, 'It is much easier to see what literature is trying to do when we are studying a literature that has not quite done it.' (pp. 821/214). There is a quite different kind of space here, a space \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>59</sup> Margaret Atwood, Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature (Toronto: Anansi, 1972), pp. 17. Subsequent references, hereafter abbreviated to Survival, will be given in parentheses in the text.

<sup>60</sup> Similarly, Judith Wright (Preoccupations in Australian Poetry [Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965], p. xix) re-works D. H. Lawrence's discovery of 'emptiness, a void' in Australia and Australians; H. P. Heseltine finds the characteristic image of many Australian works to be 'emptiness', 'their true subject -- nothing' ('Australian Image 1. The Literary Heritage,' Meanjin, 21 (1962), 35-49. Subsequent references to Wright's book, abbreviated to Preoccupations will be given in parentheses in the text.

<sup>61</sup> A. D. Hope, 'Standards in Canadian Literature,' rpt. in Australian Literary Criticism, ed. Grahame Johnston (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962), p. 14.

above the text: between its achievement and the standard (for Hope); a space (for Frye) for the undisciplined interplay of social (cultural) and aesthetic structures. It is a sign of the slippages in Frye's essay that the demonstration that Canadian Literature should not be treated to evaluation proceeds from an evaluation of it. Indeed, in an earlier address he had adumbrated a view of literary standards almost identical to Hope's: 'the ultimate standards of Canadian literature have to be international ones.'<sup>62</sup> Like Hope's essay on standards, this was an occasional piece connected with a nationalist movement in one of the Universities, Carleton's elevation from College to University. It is full of the slides that characterise Frye's writing on Canadian Literature. It actually contains several passages straight from his 'Preface to an Uncollected Anthology' delivered to the General Session on Canadian Literature at the Royal Society of Canada just one year earlier but it also contradicts that essay in now denying that 'a new environment is a creative influence' (p. [7]).

One of the difficulties in reading Canadian criticism is the lack of what Margaret Atwood said she was going to provide in Survival -- a view of 'the whole', a map (pp. 18-19). To be fair, Atwood (and Jones and Moss and Marshall) did provide a map, a way of seeing (some) Canadian writers in space, in diagrammatic form -- but they did not, it seems to me, produce a tradition. They did not marry the insights of thematic criticism to an historical awareness and produce a knowledge of the way that 'themes' travel from their conceptualisation in a social-historic-literary context, as an element of culture, into an embodiment in a particular form.

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<sup>62</sup> Northrop Frye, Culture and National Will, Convocation Address, Carleton Univ., 17 May 1957. (Ottawa: Carleton Univ. for the Institute of Canadian Studies, [1957]), p. [7].

As I suggested in Chapter One, new societies in particular often 'expect' writers to produce images and myths of identity, place and history. A relationship between literature and life is desired. And this is where the central problematic of the literary history of national literatures surfaces. Jones, for instance, 'assumes a relationship between literature and life that can never be defined with precision,'<sup>63</sup> in much the same way as Vernon Rhodenizer had forty years earlier:

This method will furnish all who follow the discussions with an opportunity to discern the relation between Canadian life and Canadian literature, to develop a discriminating appreciation of the forms of the Canadian literature, and to ascertain whether there is a Canadian national sentiment of which Canadian men and women of letters are the voice.<sup>64</sup>

John Moss evades the issue of cultural (re)production and transmission in a similar way:

The objectives of art, no matter how indefinable, would seem to me to be universal. But the experience it embodies or conveys or exploits is indigenous to a particular time and place. When the originating context is Canadian, or part of the Canadian experience -- once again, ultimately indefinable -- then it falls to us to explore its indigenous characteristics.<sup>65</sup>

That final justification -- if we don't look after it, who will (the argument from custodial duty) was put often, by for instance A. D. Hope in Australia who on one occasion tellingly supported the argument with Touchstone's remark, 'a poor thing but mine own.'<sup>66</sup> It is one of the

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<sup>63</sup> D. G. Jones, Butterfly on Rock, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup> V. B. Rhodenizer, A Handbook of Canadian Literature (Ottawa: Graphic, 1930), p. 17.

<sup>65</sup> John Moss, Patterns of Isolation in English Canadian Fiction (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974), p.8.

<sup>66</sup> A. D. Hope, 'The Australian Literary Scene,' ABC Radio Broadcast, 25 May 1953. Typescript, p. 11. A. D. Hope Papers, Australian National Univ. Library. See also his 'Australian Literature and the Universities,' Meanjin, 13 (1954), pp. 167, 168.

pressing problems for those literary strategies that take seriously the notion of the cultural grounding of national literatures, to develop a theory of literary production of the way in which specific kinds of experience determine what is written (and how it is read).<sup>67</sup> Russell M. Brown's consideration of the problem is perhaps the most helpful. He suggests that we think of a 'generative grammar [that] resides . . . in the patterns given experience by cultural conditioning.'<sup>68</sup> That structuralist move enables the 'Canadian experience' to be seen in terms of cultural codes that can be analysed as part of the grammar of composition of the text.

In the absence of a theory of cultural production, what the organicist historians unreflectingly fall back on is the notion of reflection, the text as mirror to the world. Only Brian Kiernan, in the conclusion to Images of Society and Nature, a work that addresses many of those organicist assumptions, reflects on the problematic relation of text to tradition that is implied in the 'slide' from social tradition to literary tradition.<sup>69</sup> There are concomitant slides from culture to text, from life

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<sup>67</sup> Russell M. Brown, 'Critic, Culture, Text: Beyond Thematics,' Essays on Canadian Writing, No. 11 (1978), p. 179.

<sup>68</sup> The idea is approached obliquely in most organicist histories; is an unexplored premise in Romantic-nationalist histories; it is taken up a little diffidently by, for example, Frye (Bush Garden, p. ii), Leonie Kramer, 'Islands of Yesterday: The Growth of Literary Ideas,' Westerly, No. 2 (June 1980), 89-96, and by David Malouf, 'A First Place: The Mapping of the World,' Southerly, 45 (1985), 3-10.

<sup>69</sup> Brian Kiernan, 'The Australian Novel and Tradition,' in his Images of Society and Nature: Seven Essays on Australian Novels (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 159-81, but especially p. 164, 171. One should note the co-incidence, in Canada and Australia, of works of this general kind: Jones' Butterfly On Rock (1970), W. H. New, Articulating West (1972), Atwood's Survival (1972), Moore, Social patterns in Australian Literature (1971). It should be noted that Moore's book was largely written in the later fifties, Kiernan's was based on his 1962 Melbourne M.A. thesis, rewritten by around 1967 (personal interview, 31 March 1982): in a sense, then, they belong with Wright's Preoccupations in Australian Poetry (1965).

to literature. Reflection has several implications that affect the relations of text, world and reader. Principally, it makes the text passive -- (merely) a mirror of some external agency -- and therefore available as 'material' for the critic, an object rather than part of a process. 'Reflection' also obviates any social analysis; society becomes merely something that literature reflects. Jones solves nothing by declaring that 'The land is both condition and reflection, both mirror and fact.'<sup>70</sup> But the reflection is not the mirror, a fact is not itself a condition. This kind of slippage characterises much of Jones' general argument. The particular slippage that is written there is the slide from literature to life (and back again): 'It assumes a relationship between literature and life that can never be defined with precision and that invariably involves one in a maze of circular arguments' (Butterfly on Rock, p. 4).

Indeed, what most organicist versions of literary history privilege is the life over the letters, to enlarge upon Frye's rhetorical coding of the 'problem' ('it is more significantly studied as part of Canadian life than as a part of an autonomous world of literature,' 'Conclusion', p. 822/214). They conspire to produce the view that the dominant mode is 'realism' (a 'fact' cited, and lamented, as often in English-speaking Canada as in Australia),<sup>71</sup> the mode of 'reflection', because the literary history assumes that the literature 'reflects' life; and that it is the inevitable duty, or weakness, of colonial fiction to do so. In this fashion the \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>70</sup> Butterfly on Rock, p. 34.

<sup>71</sup> So Patrick White's famous remark in 'The Prodigal Son' (Australian Letters, 1, No. 3 [April 1958], 39) that he was (in writing Voss) 'determined to prove that the Australian novel is not necessarily the dreary, dun-coloured offspring of journalistic realism,' actually reinscribes for another generation the Palmerian orthodoxy of Australian literary realism, however pejorative the description of it.

literary not only 'constitutes a particular reality' but inserts an evaluation into its reading of the past. Warren Tallman, in what may well have been the founding text of thematic criticism, 'Wolf in the Snow,' acknowledges that his readings of the central characters of four Canadian novels are 'most worth close consideration by those who take the visions of fiction as a decisive mode of relatedness to the actual house in which we live.'<sup>72</sup> This is a much more careful statement of the purpose (rather than just its function) of the critical work than Jones'; it is more aware of its role as cultural polemic, finding in the phrase, 'mode of relatedness' something rather more dynamic than 'reflection'.

Because of their composition by field, the dominant Canadian critics did not produce a knowledge of what constituted 'a particular reality' -- Canadian Literature -- a form of cultural articulation that was recognisably Canadian in its lineaments. The difficulty, then, is in seeing Canadian Literature as a whole; as with Canadian culture generally the whole seems less than the sum of its parts as, in some ways, the image of the 'mosaic' suggests. Even the totalising impulses of Atwood did not produce a vision of her chosen writers as parts of a changing literary tradition. So that when the revisionist critics inevitably arrived there was not a hegemonic knowledge to deconstruct but rather a hegemonic method; for the revaluers there was not an alternative tradition to construct but rather a different psycho-literary profile to shade in.

Each of the histories of the national literature, even the propositional histories I have been discussing, has at their root a totalising impulse, an attempt to write the national text, and in the

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<sup>72</sup> Warren Tallman, 'Wolf in the Snow,' [1960] rpt. in Contexts of Canadian Criticism, ed. Eli Mandel, p. 253. Jones figures his descendance from Tallman by using the image of the house: 'we must now move into our own cultural house' (Butterfly on Rock, p. 4).

manner inherited from Western aesthetics, to discover its unity and harmony. Leonie Kramer notes that the national impulse displaces or appropriates the properly regional (a proposition often made by George Woodcock in Canada)<sup>73</sup>, reminding us that Lawson and Furphy, the nationalists' mascots, are in fact very regional writers.<sup>74</sup> But the quest for the overview overlooks difference. Vance Palmer in a 1933 lecture argued that one has 'to think of Australian writing as a unity, something cumulative.'<sup>75</sup> H. M. Green's 1961 Preface laments the absence of a 'general awareness of Australian literature as a whole' (p. x) and sought to provide it. Laurence Ricou concludes that 'For all its variety, both of quality and theme, the unity of Canadian prairie fiction, if not readily apparent, is, I believe, radical and compelling.'<sup>76</sup> However strong its pluralist sentiments it is very difficult for the study of a single theme or tradition to produce, by virtue of its very form, anything other than an illusion of totality. And it is the quest for underlying unities in literary cultures that are in many respects fragmentary which provides one of the recurrent dualist tensions that characterise both Canadian and Australian literary history. Waddington's objection to 'tradition' is in these terms, that the phenomena are not a tradition, nor even a mosaic, but 'more like a collection of solitary fragments' ('Canadian Tradition and Canadian Literature,' p. 140).

On the other hand discontinuity in the literary tradition, in the

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<sup>73</sup> See Chapter Three, below.

<sup>74</sup> Leonie Kramer, 'Islands of Yesterday,' p. 90.

<sup>75</sup> Vance Palmer, 'Our Life and its Literature,' n.d. [on internal evidence, approximately mid-1933]. Vance and Nettie Palmer. Papers. National Library of Australia. NLA MS 1174/14/12.

<sup>76</sup> Laurence Ricou, Vertical Man/ Horizontal World, p. 137.



reaction to it and knowledge of it are also customary laments; frequently, of course, they are inscriptions of the deficiency that the speaker arrives to repair. Nettie Palmer, complaining of P. R. Stephensen's failure to acknowledge other commentators on Australian Literature, noted that 'there is a curious jealousy and spite that makes each one who writes about it want to be the only one instead of rejoicing in the vision of a chain.'<sup>77</sup> The announcement of a lack is the validation of the speaker's authority to speak:<sup>78</sup> hence Atwood's announcement of the need for a map of Canadian Literature -- there can be gaps in space even more easily than there can be discontinuities in time, especially when that space is itself conceptualised as absence.

This is intricately tied also to the notion of the culture as absence. Hence another manifestation of the discontinuity of culture is the often-expressed assurance that one cannot expect culture in a 'new' society, and its corollary that one can only expect 'primitive' forms of literature (ballads, folk-tales) in a new society: literary history usually satisfies this belief by 'finding' the evidence, evidence which, because it fits the pattern, is thereby privileged (the ballads in Australia, the animal tales of Roberts, the folk humour of Leacock in Canada). If post-colonial history is sui generis then it must have origins, and it must be improving.

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<sup>77</sup> Nettie Palmer to Frank Dalby Davison, 10 Aug. 1936. Letter. Frank Dalby Davison. Correspondence. National Library of Australia, NLA MS 1945/1/10.

<sup>78</sup> For a description of some instances of this in relation to the reception of Patrick White, see my 'Unmerciful Dingoes? The Critical Reception of Patrick White,' Meanjin, 32 (1973), 379-92.

This is the 'evolutionary fallacy.'<sup>79</sup>

It appears in Judith Wright's argument that writing is conditional upon absorption of the landscape, learning the country of the mind is pre-requisite. Even A. J. M. Smith, in his Introduction to his 1960 Oxford Book of Canadian Verse in English and French, describes a development from 'the backwoods, pioneer, colonial poets to the 'literary', 'cosmopolitan' poets which was made possible once the environment had been faced squarely and conquered (p. xxv). Wright and, to a lesser extent, Smith speak in the third-person masculine singular about the generalised writer (and in the feminine third-person singular about the land, engendering that conception of absence in the discourse of criticism), eliding the distinction between a particular writer and 'the writer'. And this confusion is at the very heart of the organic fallacy for, in treating the body of literature and the literary tradition as though each was an individual, it assumes that growth (meaning improvement) is inevitable and that when an individual 'solves' a problem so the whole culture does too -- at the same time and probably apocalyptically.

Both Northrop Frye and Diane Bessai, though their premises differ and Bessai's article is a considerable attack on Frye, agree that Canadian society is discontinuous.<sup>80</sup> Bessai objects to Frye, however, also on the grounds that he is un-scholarly, hasn't done the homework to support his

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<sup>79</sup> I used the term in 1978 to describe what I took to be a 'common Australian literary mistake' ('Acknowledging Colonialism,' in Australia and Britain: Studies in a Changing Relationship, ed. A. F. Madden and W. H. Morris-Jones [Sydney: Sydney Univ. Press, 1980], p. 142). I have since discovered it was used in the same way in an article (occasioned by the appearance of the first edition of The Literary History of Canada) by one of the pioneers of Canadian literary history, Lionel Stevenson ('Literature in an Emerging Nation,' South Atlantic Quarterly, 64 [1965], 399).

<sup>80</sup> Northrop Frye, 'Conclusion,' Literary History of Canada, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1976), III, 325; Diane Bessai, 'Counterfeiting Hindsight,' WLWE, 23 (1984), 353-66.

notion of Canadian settlement as a clean break with the culture of Europe.

She then becomes reactionary to his radical, a neat role-reversal. The polemic forms are interesting ones, marking the constant hegemonic contests. Hence, the objections to that great Canadian whipping-boy, thematic criticism, are from the literary right and from the literary left: thematic ('apocalyptic', 'mythic') criticism is both un-scholarly and un-theorised. Bessai's particular point is a revival of an argument made by Roy Daniells in 1969 about the transmission of European culture as one conception of the colonial's duty, 'a widespread belief in the value of continuing tradition to a nation beginning its independent course.'<sup>81</sup> This is a perception that informs some of the revaluations in Australia of such nineteenth-century figures as Charles Harpur (by Leonie Kramer) and Henry Kendall (by G. A. Wilkes), and the early non-fiction writers (by Robert Dixon).

In Australia, too, the discontinuity of culture has been a familiar figure. Perhaps the most notable articulation of it is in Chris Wallace-Crabbe's 'Solitary Shapers' essay, discussed briefly in Chapter One. The view is reasonably widespread, was expressed by earlier critics and writers lamenting the lack of a cultural community and by later ones stressing their revolutionary input into Australian Literature. Nettie Palmer (who anticipates many later Australian critical insights), in a letter to Frank Dalby Davison in 1936, speaks of 'the inconsecutive nature of literary life in Australia' and stresses, in a delightfully suggestive phrase, the need

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<sup>81</sup> Roy Daniells, 'High Colonialism in Canada,' Canadian Literature, (1969), rpt. in Colony and Confederation, ed. George Woodcock (Vancouver: Univ. of British Columbia Press, 1974), pp. 42-53, the passage quoted is from p. 42.

'to acknowledge the enchainment of utterances in fugitive form.'<sup>82</sup>  
Wallace-Crabbe's version is even more metaphorical.

If we look back on those Australian writers who are our forebears, they can be seen to assume curious attitudes. There they stand in a line, solemn effigies, staring straight towards us, but without so much as a sidelong glance at one another. We see them in their distinctness and utter independence of one another: Clarke, Furphy, Lawson, Brennan, Richardson, Neilson, Slessor, Xavier Herbert and Martin Boyd. Their proximity in the pageant is little more than a geographical accident, for there has been no significant imaginative interconnection between these writers.

It is surprising, surely, that these figures acquired so very little from one another or from other Australian writers and thinkers. . . . Several of them, certainly, were blessed with a strong sense of immediate physical environment. But for modes and forms and literary concepts, each had to draw anew on his sense of a cultural past that was essentially European. The Australian literary tradition did not flow as a stream: it stood in a succession of waterholes.<sup>83</sup>

Each of his major metaphors is revealing. Firstly, the figures of the past are conceived as monuments, appropriate in a way in a list as canonical as this one; secondly, the metamorphosis of the standard metaphor of Australian Literature as a stream (a tributary, that is, of English Literature) into the insistently indigenous 'succession of waterholes.' One response to that was made in Chapter One, above (pp. 47-50) but it might be observed here that such a perception presupposes not only a different literary history but a different kind of literary history.

If as I suggested in Chapter One, the lessons of art and culture must be learned by each writer individually, then a chronological history will not suffice. Writers do not, as Wallace-Crabbe noted, 'build' naturally

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<sup>82</sup> Nettie Palmer to Frank Dalby Davison, Letter 10 Aug. 1936. Frank Dalby Davison. Correspondence, National Library of Australia. NLA MS 1945/1/10.

<sup>83</sup> Chris Wallace-Crabbe, 'The Solitary Shapers,' in his Melbourne or the Bush: Essays on Australian Literature and Society (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1974), p. 3.

upon one another; one writer does not 'solve' a literary problem for an entire culture. These beliefs (like that in the transformative force of the single masterpiece) are derived from the organic histories of the nineteenth century, and from Carlyle in particular; they are versions of the 'great man' theory of history, relics alike of that period's liberal individualism. That liberal individualism marks a certain conception of power that also privileges the role of the individual critic and is reflected in the form of the chronicle history. Wellek and Warren express it cogently, if severely:

we are all disenchanted with those picaresque adventures in pseudo-causality which go under the name of literary history, those handbooks with footnotes which claim to sing of the whole but load every rift with glue.<sup>84</sup>

Wallace-Crabbe's metaphors come from that capacious repository of images of absence (void, emptiness) out of which Australia and its culture have habitually been described. He goes on to name Australia's various literary lacunae ('No Australian has risen to such confident hymning' [as Whitman], p. 9), quotes Hope's lines (from 'Australia') about a country 'without songs, architecture, history,' and constitutes Australian Literature as one, like Australian society, lacking its own patterns, principles and perceptions. Regrettably eclectic, it also lacks unity.

As post-colonial nations, Canada and Australia are inherently eclectic. A. J. M. Smith talked of 'eclectic detachment' as being the distinctive quality of Canadian poetry.<sup>85</sup> It has certainly also been a notable, if sometimes excessive, feature of Australian literary criticism: John Docker's talk of a dominant and systematic New Critical hegemony in

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<sup>84</sup> Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (1948), quoted in Geoffrey H. Hartmann, Beyond Formalism: Literary Essays, 1958-1970 (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1970), p. 356.

<sup>85</sup> A. J. M. Smith, The Oxford Book of Canadian Verse in English and French (Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1960), p. 1.

Australia is little more than a convenient stage-trick. Donald Horne complains that Australia's eclecticism is often not detached enough, that much cultural baggage is imported unknowingly during the raiding of the world's intellectual archive.

Australians 'learn' their culture. They 'learn' it as if it described their own life and attitudes, when in part it does not, and this process seems to make the relevant in the culture they 'learn' also unreal. This sense of unreality can affect even those who have 'learned' their culture very thoroughly: they cannot detect the difference between their own society and the societies of the culture they have 'learned'. . . .

Is Australia really inimical to ideas? Or has there been something wrong with the ideas presented to it?<sup>86</sup>

There is a perception here that echoes one of the early Australian axioms of literary history, that the problem confronting the early poets was to adapt the models and perceptual grids they bought with them to local 'realities'. Since those grids are embedded in language itself, it is not surprising to find literary history following that clew into the labyrinth of voice.<sup>87</sup> Once again, the metaphors divide along characteristically time/space lines. W. H. New, in Articulating West (whose very title makes the point), identifies the 'major task' of the mid-century Canadian poets as being 'to explore the landscape that is language itself.'<sup>88</sup> Gaile McGregor's recent structuralist semiology of Canadian culture<sup>89</sup> makes the pun that for others was tactfully tacit: langscape.

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<sup>86</sup> Donald Horne, The Lucky Country: Australia in the Sixties (Ringwood: Penguin, 1964), pp. 205, 206.

<sup>87</sup> Shirley Neumann and Robert Wilson, Labyrinths of Voice: Conversations with Robert Kroetsch (Edmonton: NeWest, 1982).

<sup>88</sup> W. H. New, Articulating West: Essays on Purpose and Form in Modern Canadian Literature (Toronto: New Press, 1972), p. xxiv.

<sup>89</sup> Gaile McGregor, The Wacousta Factor: Explorations in the Canadian Langscape (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1985).

A common enough view, derived again from the American model, the idea of linguistic adaptation was given an intriguingly modern note by Cecil Hadgraft in 1960. Writing out of a firmly evolutionary model of adaptation to environment, he stresses the need for poets to absorb into their poetic vocabulary 'words that fitted the Australian setting' to replace those English words (codes of perception) that made the place seem strange. 'In a word, they first of all had to forget.'<sup>90</sup> Though Hadgraft was hardly a postmodernist, the potential playfulness of that 'in a word' and the stress on removing the inauthentic brings him close to some recent intersections of post-colonial and post-modern. One of the more striking theses to be advanced, among the many manifestoes, polemic poetics, and propositions about the place and purpose of the Canadian writer has been Robert Kroetsch's assertion of the need to 'un-name', to take that inauthentic 'other' experience out of the borrowed words of our vocabulary.

At one time I considered it to be the task of the Canadian writer to give names to his experience, to be the namer. I now suspect that, on the contrary, it is his task to un-name. . . .

The Canadian writer's particular predicament is that he works with a language, within a literature, that appears to be authentically his own, and not a borrowing.

In recent years the tension between this appearance of being just like someone else and the demands of authenticity has become intolerable. . . .

The process of rooting that borrowed word, that totally exact homonym, in authentic experience, is then, must be, a radical one.<sup>91</sup>

The fundamental perception is anticipated in Canada as well, by A. J. M. Smith who, fourteen years before Kroetsch, observed that 'their language, whether English or French, already contained a rich poetic

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<sup>90</sup> Cecil Hadgraft, Australian Literature: A Critical Account to 1955 (London: Heinemann, 1960), p. 8.

<sup>91</sup> Robert Kroetsch, 'Unhiding the Hidden: Recent Canadian Fiction,' Journal of Canadian Fiction, 3, No. 3 (1974), 43, 44.

inheritance.'<sup>92</sup> That 'painful tension between appearance and authenticity', between the borrowed word and the world of their own experience leads, potentially, to the fruitful practise of contra-diction.

Kroetsch's description of that tension is but one inscription of one of the prevailing dualisms that characterise the literary historiography of the two countries. Smith's response to that inherited culture-in-language is another (and one which, incidentally runs close beside Judith Wright's formulation of 'the double aspect of the inner Australia')<sup>93</sup> -- 'a handicap or an advantage according as one looks for a continuation of the old tradition or hopes for something new.' I have argued elsewhere that a perception of doubleness is part of the cultural grounding of particular kinds of post-colonial cultures, of which Canada and Australia are examples, and that it is hence part of the cognitive and epistemological codes of those cultures.<sup>94</sup>

The type of all of those dualisms is, it seems to me, the one to which Northrop Frye gave notation in his 'Conclusion' to the first edition of the Literary History of Canada. The view, as will be apparent in Chapter Three, was a 'standard' one in both cultures.

If no Canadian author pulls us away from the Canadian context toward the centre of literary experience itself, then at every point we remain aware of his social and historical setting. The conception of what is literary has to be greatly broadened for such a literature. The literary, in Canada, is often only an incidental quality of writings which, like those of many of the early explorers, are as innocent of literary intention as a mating loon. Even when it is literature in its orthodox genres of poetry

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<sup>92</sup> A. J. M. Smith, The Oxford Book of Canadian Verse in English and French, p. xxiii.

<sup>93</sup> Judith Wright, Preoccupations, p. xii.

<sup>94</sup> Alan Lawson, '"There Is Another World But It Is In This One": A Cultural Paradigm for the Second World,' Paper presented at the Badlands Conference on Canadian and Australian Literatures, Univ. of Calgary, 29 Aug. 1986. Forthcoming in Proceedings.



and fiction, it is more significantly studied as a part of Canadian life than as a part of an autonomous world of literature. ('Conclusion,' 821-22/214: emphasis added)

Notwithstanding the gratuitous simile (itself figuring 'local colour') about early explorers, who were brought within the extended boundaries by the strategy of his own previous sentence, this reveals rhetorically its implicit evaluations anchored in dualist assumptions that seem Platonic in their pervasiveness. The particular dualist grid into which the passage dumps all its perceptions is the colonising one of the separation of life and letters. It is the cultural base upon which the other dualisms stand and the one which they all, in one way or another, re-inscribe. As the valency of the terms shifts it inscribes various others: life and culture, colonial and imperial, regional and universal, here and there. In a post-colonial society it could hardly be otherwise.

And a number of the writers who mobilise dualist metaphors do so in a culturally-alert way. Judith Wright's ordering of Australia's double aspect,

the two strains of feeling (for the conservative, the sense of exile, and for the radical, the sense of liberty, of a new chance) have, at least until very recently, been recognizable in all that was written here. (Preoccupations, p. xii)

becomes a source for divergent traditions, as a reading of G. A. Wilkes' The Stockyard and the Croquet Lawn (1981) makes apparent. It is also remarkably consistent with A. B. McKillop's enterprising use of the work of Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook to produce his account of the 'two nationalisms,' liberal-nationalists who value the fresh start and imperial-nationalists (Daniells' 'high colonialism' and Wilkes' 'heroic/romantic') who value the historical and geographical continuity of the culture;

whereas liberal-nationalists were forced by the dictates of their political assumptions to ignore, if not repudiate, an integral part of Canada's history, imperial-nationalists in Canada were on the other hand never fully able or willing, given the demands of their own assumptions, to accept much

of its sociology.<sup>95</sup>

These formulations carry many of the same valencies as others among the dialects of dualist formations in the national literary cultures. A. J. M. Smith, in the 1943 Book of Canadian Poetry proposed native/cosmopolitan and its variant, pioneer/immigrant as a way of understanding both individual writers and periods; in the 1948 edition this had slid to colonialism/nationalism: in his 'rejected preface' to the 1936 New Provinces anthology it had been cosmopolitan/provincial. By the time of writing his Introduction to the 1960 Oxford Book of Canadian Verse, he had addressed the issue even more directly (and less censoriously), suggesting that

From the earliest times Canadian poets, both French and English, have held, consciously or unconsciously, to one of two distinct and sometimes divergent aims. (p. xxiv)

while a few pages later he discovers that 'both Cremazie and Frechette had a divided aim and were attempting to do two somewhat incompatible things at once' (p. xxxiii).

I have elsewhere drawn attention to the dualist conception of the culture and the writer's task in the recent history of Canadian Literature in English (1985)<sup>96</sup> by W. J. Keith who regarded most of the dualities as weaknesses, failures to keep to the straight and narrow. Others are more pluralist. Warren Tallman, in 'Wolf in the Snow', recuperates an old Yankee distinction between crude and fine (and finds the former culturally appropriate, and therefore appropriates it as a term of approval); for Colin Horne, in Australia, that became rough/smooth; W. H. New orientates

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<sup>95</sup> A. B. McKillop, 'Nationalism, Identity and Canadian Intellectual History,' Queen's Quarterly, 81 (Winter 1974), 540-41.

<sup>96</sup> Alan Lawson, 'Values and Evaluation,' rev. of Canadian Literature in English, by W.J. Keith in Canadian Literature, No. 110 (Fall 1986), 111-13.

that paradigm as East (order)/West (undefined) in Articulating West.

This, I think, reveals that the terms Canadian Literature/Australian Literature are themselves being conceptualised in a dualist way, and therefore inevitably attract double standards -- because two separate categories, Canadian : Literature, are being judged. When conceived thus as an adjective-and-a-noun, definitional controversy is also inevitable. Hence the boundary-marking (who qualifies as a Canadian/Australian author?)<sup>97</sup> which is characteristic of almost all of the earlier chronicle histories. But it also makes possible that interesting move to 'broaden' 'the conception of what is literary' in a way that prefigures the later extension of the conceptions of textuality and discourse.<sup>98</sup> There were later moves to consider the term instead as a compound noun that altered the 'constitution of the particular reality' quite profitably: these are discussed later.

But the idea of boundary, especially when fused by a dualist energy, is indeed constricting, requiring both the right and the left to be constantly on guard, requiring some to be inside, some to be out. But dualities may be conceived either as a pair of parallel lines functioning

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<sup>97</sup> For a parodic treatment of this, see the passage cited from Hal Dahlie in Chapter Four, below. Almost every chronicle history anxiously marks out its territory with feline care; only Lionel Stevenson in his Appraisals of Canadian Literature (Toronto: Macmillan, 1926), p. vi repudiates the task and Cecil Hadgraft, in his Australian Literature: A Critical Account to 1955 (London: Heinemann, 1960), avoids it by turning the problem into an historical one by concentrating his boundary-marking energies on periodisation. I recall a long (and futile, but apparently important) debate about these kinds of definitions that overtook a staff/graduate student seminar in the Australian National University English Department as late as 1972.

<sup>98</sup> Neither H. M. Green's History of Australian Literature with its confidently assertive sub-title Pure and Applied (another dualism, though not Green's own it would seem) and Klinck's Literary History of Canada confine their subject within narrowly aesthetic limits: both have expansive margins and include 'writing' rather than 'literature'.

as sites of interdiction or as a pair of axes offering an infinite array of points of intersection.

Certainly, most of the earlier critics attempted to retain the dichotomies as ways of ordering their evidence (or finding it); some attempted the dialectical synthesis, such as Hadgraft's progression from 'English poets' through 'Australian poets' to 'poets'.<sup>99</sup> Clearly, most were anchored in an undeclared vision of Australian (or Canadian) history and its metaphysical prospects -- as in Wright's 'double aspect', or James McAuley's poetic treatment of the idea in 'Terra Australis' in which, in a manner that the Canadian organicist critics would instantly recognise, he figures Australia as 'your land of similes, where reside all things in their imagined counterpart': the similes, derived from landscape of course, divide neatly into the model of exile and opportunity, metaphysical and radical nationalist.

It was G. A. Wilkes' project to 'disrupt' the simplicity of those statically opposed monisms by looking beyond the dualities of his own title The Stockyard and the Croquet Lawn. Nevertheless, in his 1969 Australian Literature: A Conspectus he follows the familiar historical pattern, though his theme is the tension between the extension of European civilisation to the South and growth of an 'indigenous' [sic] culture in Australia. These twin processes have operated simultaneously in all three periods. His literary tradition -- at this stage anyway -- is based on the centrality of Lawson, and Furphy and Paterson and 'their absorption in the Australian scene and their chauvinistic attitude to it' (p. 46). He does, however, in a subsection called 'Diversifying the Pattern' begin to talk of the writing that doesn't fit the tradition -- Quinn, Louise Mack, Daley, A. G.

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<sup>99</sup> Cecil Hadgraft, Australian Literature, p. 4.

Stephens' international side etc. He then speculates about another tradition that might take off, also in the 1890's, from O'Dowd and Daley and, via McCrae and Neilson, take in Henry Handel Richardson and Christopher Brennan. This tradition is, he feels, explicable in terms of his theme, the tension between the extension of European Civilisation and the development of an indigenous tradition. 'Any monistic approach to the writings of the time must break down in the face of the facts' It seems to me that this is where Wilkes begins to look at the terrain in a different way. Of course, his much earlier work on Brennan and his article on the 1890's are themselves major challenges to the familiar route over the terrain but it is here -- in the Townsville lectures in 1967 -- that he begins to work out the implications for the map itself. It's not just the place of a couple of writers that needs adjusting but the tradition itself and the conceptualisation of 'tradition'.

But it is in the 1974 Blaiklock Memorial Lecture, printed as An Alternative View of Australian Literary History, that he proposes a retrospective reordering of the Tradition and this, I think, has been the principal impulse of the revaluation movement -- to recognise the apparently anomalous place of one writer -- White, Boyd, Baynton -- and then to discover, with ingenuous surprise, antecedents, a legitimate line of succession.

However, the impulse of this endeavour (and it emerges as much in The Stockyard and the Croquet Lawn as in the Alternative View) is not to disrupt the pattern and produce genuine plurality of traditions but rather to overcome apparent discontinuities, disjunctions and discrepancies. Wilkes' theme is the continuity of Australian literature. This is, I take it, the fundamental theme of any organic literary history. It is what, at the historiographical level, joins a Wilkes and an Inglis Moore and The Oxford Anthology of Australian Literature (which inscribes the belief that 'themes which were introduced in the earliest writing . . . are treated with critical self-awareness and a growing sense of historical perspective, as well as with a just appreciation of the advances made in writing overseas').<sup>100</sup> In The Stockyard, Wilkes takes this further and proposes, within the broad tension set down on the first page of his Conspectus ('European civilisation' and 'indigenous culture'), various models. Even more promisingly, he proposes various modes of nationalism which see the work of different writers and periods articulating different literary forms -- an elementary-sounding, but essential and I think previously-ignored task. So we see Kingsley, for instance, as a pastoral, Tomson as a formal literary, nationalist and so on. The basic dualities he works with are modified through exile/utopia; idealistic/pessimistic, heroic/sardonic. Throughout the book, Wilkes posits a number of 'alternative' models to show the inadequacy of monistic traditions and the misreadings they often require (especially, for example, of Lawson, Furphy, Kendall).

So while plurality, what W. H. New referred to as the sounding of alternative possibilities,<sup>101</sup> is a manifestation of the post-colonial imperative of representing the historical and cultural and linguistic polyphonies appropriately, it tends to falter in the totalising effect of most writing of literary history. David Malouf's approach to the problem significantly uses the participial forms of the continuous present, opposes the boundary-marking, re-iterates a concern with history's presence, and even invokes the revelatory mode that combines imminence with immanence:

I am wary of attempts to define too clearly what our tradition is and proclaim too loudly what is essential to it. Australia is still revealing itself to us. We

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<sup>100</sup> The Oxford Anthology of Australian Literature, ed. Leonie Kramer and Adrian Mitchell (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985), p. 211.

<sup>101</sup> W. H. New, 'Re: Visions of Canadian Literature,' p. 44.

oughtn't to close off possibilities by declaring too early what we have already become.<sup>102</sup>

But if a plurality of traditions is a way of dis/solving the dualistic conceptions of literary historical models, attention to what R. S. Crane called the history of forms may be a way of re/solving them. It has been urged on several occasions; Frank Davey's strident but timely Surviving the Paraphrase, appropriately enough, has its ancestors, too. Diane Bessai quotes Charles G. D. Roberts giving an early hint of what might be looked for when he suggests that the Canadian contribution to what Frye called 'an autonomous world of literature' would be in 'the tone, the quality of handling,'<sup>103</sup> a concern with voice, with irony for instance, that Canadian critics have indeed shown.

In Canada this interest in the history of forms was notably present in the 1984 Long Poem Conference, and in Davey's call for attention to be given to 'literary issue[s] of para-national interest.'<sup>104</sup> A much earlier example is Dorothy Livesay's 1969 essay on 'The Documentary Poem: A Canadian Genre.'<sup>105</sup> It is especially interesting in this context because it pays attention to 'Canadian' and 'Literature' simultaneously, regarding it as a compound noun, a category in which 'Canadian' does not merely 'qualify' Literature, but modifies it. I think this history of forms approach enables us, too, to go beyond 'subject matter' as the one distinguishing property of the term 'Australian' (Canadian') and to

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<sup>102</sup> David Malouf, 'Lugarno Postscript,' Notes & Furphies, No. 3 (October 1979), p. 4.

<sup>103</sup> Bessai, 'Counterfeiting Hindsight,' 360.

<sup>104</sup> Frank Davey, Surviving the Paraphrase: Eleven Essays on Canadian Literature (Winnipeg: Turnstone, 1983), p. 9.

<sup>105</sup> Dorothy Livesay, 'The Documentary Poem: A Canadian Genre,' in Contexts of Canadian Criticism, ed. Eli Mandel, pp. 267-81.

recognise certain forms, modes, genres, and types of literature as being 'Australian' ('Canadian') too, just as a slightly earlier kind of criticism enabled us to recognise certain metaphoric preferences and preoccupations as being a property of the term Australian (Canadian) literature.

For a comparative study, like the present one there is a further serendipitous reason for dwelling on Livesay's identification of the documentary poem as a Canadian genre, because one of the best Australian examples of history-of-forms criticism takes up (without, of course, any awareness of her article) the same issue: Brian Matthews' article proposing a 'tradition' of what he calls 'fictional documentary'.<sup>106</sup> Others<sup>107</sup> have made this point, too, though in the characteristically discontinuous Australian tradition the cross-references do not get made. It's a matter of trying to create a tradition without realising that you are already part of a tradition. Livesay's piece, on the other hand, is part of a tradition, having a brilliant descendant in Stephen Scobie's 'Amelia, or: Who Do You Think You Are? Documentary and Identity in Canadian Literature',<sup>108</sup> (a title which simultaneously inserts itself into several traditions). Scobie's article pays attention to the form of documentary and at the same time reflects on its own form.

It has been one of the implicit themes of this chapter that the forms of literary history themselves become, to a considerable degree, grids of

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<sup>106</sup> Brian Matthews, 'A Kind of Semi-sociological Criticism: George Orwell, Kylie Tennant and Others,' Westerly, No. 2 (June 1981), 65-72.

<sup>107</sup> See, for instance, Dorothy Green, 'The Novels of Kylie Tennant,' Meanjin, 12 (1953), 395-403; for a less positive reading of the documentary tradition, see Nancy Keesing, 'Fact of Fiction: An Aspect of Australian Writing,' in A Sense of History. Papers Presented at . . . the School of Librarianship, Univ. of NSW, 21-24 May 1974, ed. Margaret Trask (Kensington, NSW: School of Librarianship . . . , 1975), pp. 3-20.

<sup>108</sup> Canadian Literature, No. 100 (Spring 1984), 264-85.



perception. This is one of the ways in which the argument of this chapter has followed its second and third epigraphs. If 'literary commentary is a powerful influence on notions of what constitutes a particular reality', on modes of thinking, then its forms as well as its metaphors are among the strategies that it, wittingly or otherwise, adopts. But those constituting acts need themselves to be seen historically. For what is constituted rapidly becomes naturalised.

As the initial provisional half-truth becomes an axiom writers and works which do not conform seem less and less interesting and less Australian and are omitted from anthologies, critical discussions, reading lists, and publishers' catalogues. The first generation of critics and readers excludes them, the second ignores them, the third simply doesn't know about them: the perpetuation of an incomplete vision gets easier as the contra-evidence becomes less accessible.<sup>109</sup>

In that particular sense, anthologies are especially instrumental in history-making, reality-constituting. It is no accident that the flurry of hypotheses about Canadian Literature in the mid-nineteen forties, and about Australian Literature a decade later, as well as the revaluations of the early nineteen seventies in each place, were accompanied by polemical anthologies. Though the rhetoric varies intriguingly, this is often recognised -- Woodcock reviewed Smith's Oxford Book of Canadian Verse under the title, 'Anthology as Epithalamion'<sup>110</sup> while Harry Heseltine spoke of the New Impulses in Australian Poetry anthology as having 'a fighting purpose . . . to represent their work as a real departure from a (now outworn?) Hope-McAuley tradition' (emphasis added).<sup>111</sup>

That re-inscription of departures and beginnings brings us back to a

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<sup>109</sup> Alan Lawson, 'Acknowledging Colonialism,' pp. 137-38.

<sup>110</sup> George Woodcock, 'Anthology as Epithalamion,' rpt. in his Odysseus Ever Returning (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1970), pp. 115-18.

<sup>111</sup> H. P. Heseltine, 'Australia: Introduction,' Journal of Commonwealth Literature, No. 8 (Dec. 1969), p. 34.

consideration of the purpose as well as the function of the characteristic rhetoric and preferred metaphors of the literary-historical enterprise. This chapter has itself inscribed a particular reading of literary history, a reading that discovers the strategies of cultural polemics. Hence it has emphasised the connections (the 'decisive mode of relatedness' in Warren Tallman's terms) between the language and forms of literary history and those of cultural politics, an emphasis many of the writers give to their own utterances. Particular attention has been paid to those writers, especially thematic critics in Canada and those concerned with the/a Australian tradition, to foreground this polemic purpose.

The particular polemical force of the reactions to, in particular, John Docker in Australia or Margaret Atwood in Canada, makes it clear that the principal arguments are within the parameters of the national. One of those two axes of which I spoke continues to be the nationality of the literature, though the terms in which it is inscribed do vary as I have demonstrated here. The contentiousness was at its most intense between Margaret Atwood and Robin Mathews because each laid claim to the same credentials: Canadian readings of Canadian Literature. The issue is only slightly concealed in Australia because of Docker's success in privileging the radical nationalists (which he now naturalises by calling them RNs). He allows only them the valorised name, 'nationalists', depriving the 'other side' of it and thus eliding the fact that they too are nationalists. They merely take up different points of intersection on those same axes. If we followed the lead of A. B. McKillop in acknowledging, as G. A. Wilkes is inclined to do in his discussion of modes of nationalism (Stockyard and Croquet Lawn, Chapter Two), difference within the field of 'literary nationalism', we might have a clearer view of other continuities and discontinuities in each of our literary histories, and hence of their plenitude. We might also come closer to an understanding of the dynamic forces that have constructed them. We need to understand how past literary history informs our own practice by constituting the fields in which we act; how our practices participate in that continuing 'series of revolts against authority.'<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Miriam Waddington, 'Canadian Tradition and Canadian Literature,'  
Journal of Commonwealth Literature, No. 8 (Dec. 1969), p. 126.



## CHAPTER THREE

### The Road Not Taken: Internationalism and the End of Ideology

#### A. D. Hope and George Woodcock: A Case Study

'and in the end  
. . . . the unnamed  
whale invaded.'<sup>1</sup>

While it is true that the principal arguments about Canadian and Australian Literature in the period under discussion accepted the basic premise that the national was a central defining category, there were a couple of major and very influential figures who pressed, often quite persuasively, the force of rather different claims. In the history of literary commentary of the period their contribution is in some ways now obscured, their influence concealed -- not only because their positions were not those that were ultimately sustained by events but because the nature and form of much of that power and influence was of the kind that is often absent from the public record. This Chapter, then, explores the nature of the arguments that proceeded from internationalist (and hence evaluative) assumptions about literature by focussing on the work of A. D. Hope in Australia and George Woodcock in Canada. In doing so it examines the kinds of authority and influence that emerge in the development of

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Atwood, 'Progressive Insanities of a Pioneer,' in her Selected Poems (Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1976, pp. 62-63).

national literary institutions, even for those whose relation to the idea of a National Literature is at least ambivalent.

Both Woodcock and Hope were not only prolific in their writing, broadcasting, reviewing and correspondence but, more notably, pervasive in their influence and it could, with varying emphasis, be said of Hope as Doug Fetherling has said of Woodcock that the extent of his output has 'tended to obscure his views while enhancing his reputation.'<sup>2</sup> Both Hope and Woodcock were, despite their somewhat heterodox positions, strategically placed at the very keystones of the disciplines of Australian and Canadian Literatures at their historic moments. Hope's position was, professionally and institutionally, more central and his intellectual position rather more concerned with authority than was Woodcock's: for those two reasons his power and prestige were more concentrated. Woodcock's output, and in many ways his permanent contribution to the development of the national literature, was more substantial than Hope's. Although each held a University post (Woodcock's was only briefly a conventional academic one) neither, quite properly, regarded himself as an academic critic or scholar: indeed in scholarly matters, despite their concern with values and quality, they were each quite careless and unscholarly at times.<sup>3</sup> Both of them did much of their publicising 'on the

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<sup>2</sup> Doug Fetherling, 'George Woodcock,' Canadian Encyclopedia (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1985), p. 1963.

<sup>3</sup> Like Hope, again, Woodcock was not noted for his accuracy in such matters. A letter in the Malcolm Ross Papers from R. E. Watters to Ross identifies several errors in a report Woodcock wrote on the possible inclusion of de Mille's Strange Manuscript in the New Canadian Library; they include post-dating the novel's publication by twenty-two years (R. E. Watters to Malcolm Ross, 14 Sept. 1962, Malcolm M. Ross Papers, Special Collections, Univ. of Calgary, Box 3, file 1. Hope also frequently misdated books and events; in his Address to the Founding Meeting of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature in May 1978, for instance, he dated the foundation of the Australian Humanities Research Council in 1969 instead of 1954 (or formally, 1956); there are many others.

run' and their most effective work was often that which has not survived in the public record -- radio talks, lectures, reviews, editorial work, pamphleteering, letters, conversation. They both made their major impact as 'men of letters', in a kind of eighteenth century sense, involved in the broadest way in the cultural life of their times and places while refusing to be either bound or even named by them; both derived their contemporary authority from the aggregation of their activities rather than from any single work or kind of work; theirs is the kind of influence that wanes with memory.

A. D. Hope, like Woodcock again, did not achieve prominence early. Indeed, his early career was quite unremarkable. A child of a Tasmanian country manse, he was a graduate of Sydney University in the heady days of the late twenties when John le Gay Brereton was Professor of English and Christopher Brennan was already a myth and only occasionally a presence. One of Hope's characteristic anecdotes tells of his meeting with Brennan in the urinal of a King's Cross Hotel when Hope pencilled a Latin graffito on the wall for Brennan to complete.<sup>4</sup> The measured tones and distinguished appearance of the later eminence grise Hope belies the younger man's reputation for Bohemian raffishness, a reputation that enhanced his authority as Australia's most savage reviewer.

After returning from Oxford in 1930, he was, among other things, a relieving teacher and a Vocational Guidance officer before he was appointed to Sydney Teachers' College as a lecturer in education where the poet James McAuley was one of his early students. With McAuley he established a close friendship that was also a considerable alliance in literary politics.

<sup>4</sup> A. D. Hope, 'Native Companions,' in his Native Companions: Essays and Comments on Australian Literature 1936-1966 (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1974), pp. 39-43. Subsequent references to this collection, hereafter cited as Native Companions, will be given in parentheses in the text.

Hope's poetry appeared fugitively until the publication of his first volume, The Wandering Islands, in 1955. His reputation, then, depended on rumour as much as on public knowledge of his work. The author of harshly witty, satiric poems of an often brutal sexuality<sup>5</sup> (a contemporary soubriquet was 'Phallic Alec'), they announced, in the words of G. A. Wilkes, 'a critical observer, intent to expose fake and sham wherever they are found' -- an unacknowledged echo of Cecil Hadgraft's 'the caustic analyst of the sham, the fake, the ersatz'.<sup>6</sup> There is also, in many poems, a calculated perversity, an iconoclastic upending of customary interpretations of myth and theory. These characteristics are also the foundation of Hope's reputation as a critic; a rhetoric that he, it would seem self-consciously, cultivated throughout his career both as critic and commentator. The carefully-staged comparisons with Alexander Pope produced a version of Hope as the foremost judge of the pretensions of his age and especially of its writers. In his writings as a critic, Hope's wit never quite compromised his censoriousness (though it often compounded it) and his conventional tentativeness never diminished the magisterial tone.

In 1945, Hope was appointed Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Melbourne where the Headship of George Cowling, the legendary originator of the 'Australian Literature: is there any?' quip, had just come to an end. Hope has recently implied that he (and perhaps others)

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<sup>5</sup> For a comprehensive analysis of Hope's approach to sexuality see John Docker, 'Sex and Nature in Modern Poetry,' Arena, No. 22 (1970), pp. 5-24; and more extensively in 'The Image of Woman in A. D. Hope's Poetry,' in his Australian Cultural Elites (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1974), pp. 42-58.

<sup>6</sup> G. A. Wilkes, Australian Literature: A Conspectus (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1969), p. 118; Cecil Hadgraft, Australian Literature: A Critical Account to 1955 (London: Heinemann, 1960), p. 201. That a recollection of Hadgraft's passage is behind Wilkes' phrase is suggested by further echoes in the paragraph from which this quotation is taken.



tried to persuade the new Head, Ian Maxwell, to introduce a few more Australian texts; he also claims that when he was interviewed for the Chair of English at Canberra University College in late 1950 he told the selection committee that he intended to introduce Australian Literature there,<sup>7</sup> although it was only fortuitously that an opportunity arose a few years later when the appointment of Tom Inglis Moore to the unit for Trainee Diplomats ended and the College redeployed him to Hope's English Department (an event which figures differently in the tales of different tellers). A poet and professor, he was one of the foundation members of the Australian Humanities Research Council and its Australian visitor to Canada in 1957-58 under the exchange scheme administered by the two national Humanities Councils that was described in some detail in Chapter One. On that visit (from October 1957 until February 1958) he visited sixteen Universities, gave lectures, inspected Australian collections and discussed the teaching of Canadian Literature (mainly with a view to considering the ways in which Australian Literature might be taught). Later in 1958, he made a similar tour of the United States to examine the teaching of American Literature and especially American Studies.

For a period during the nineteen fifties he was 'Anthony Inkwell', the resident poet and poetry adviser on 'The Argonauts', an extremely popular children's afternoon programme on ABC radio. His voice was also heard as a regular reviewer and commentator on the literary programmes of the ABC, and occasionally the news commentary programmes as well. He was one of the \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>7</sup> A. D. Hope, 'Opening Address to the Conference for Founding the Association for the Study of Australian Literature at Monash University, May 1978,' Typescript. The specific remark about the Chair interview was made in a personal interview with the present writer, Canberra, 2 June 1982, in which yet a different version of Moore's appointment was given. The same ground is covered in 'Teaching Australian Literature: Notes and Recollections,' in An Introduction to Australian Literature, ed. C. D. Narasimhaiah (Milton, Q.: Wiley, 1982), p. 157-65.

most frequent Commonwealth Literary Fund lecturers under the University Australian Literature Lectures Scheme initiated by the Fund in 1939 and continued until 1964 and a popular speaker, often invited by groups and organisations to deliver addresses on literary topics. As overseas visitors began coming to Australia to learn something of the culture, Hope became one of the experts they were taken to hear. He was, himself, often approached by editors for standard pieces on Australian Literature: he wrote the Australian literary entries for Chambers' Encyclopedia (and was invited to do the ones for Britannica), and contributed to a series on 'Australian Literature in the Universities' for Meanjin (1954) and on 'The Australian Outlook in our Literature -- is it Desirable?' on ABC Radio (1957). In 1956 he wrote an article called 'Standards in Australian Literature' for the Current Affairs Bulletin, a fortnightly magazine issued by the Commonwealth Office of Education with a very wide circulation, at the time of the public Campaign for a Chair of Australian Literature at the University of Sydney. This essay was reprinted as the opening piece in Grahame Johnston's canon-setting anthology, Australian Literary Criticism (1962), and in the similarly-intentioned Oxford Anthology of Australian Literature (1985), edited by Leonie Kramer and Adrian Mitchell.

Hope was a contributor and something of an adviser to Meanjin from the its early years in the forties (though he may also have been responsible for putting forward James McAuley's name as editor of the new magazine, Quadrant in 1956)<sup>8</sup> and while some of his reviews achieved notoriety, some

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<sup>8</sup> This is the version given by Geoffrey Dutton in Snow on the Saltbush: The Australian Literary Experience (Ringwood: Viking, 1984), p. 248. Dutton's book is, however close he may have been to many of the events described, undocumented. Lynne Strahan documents, from Hope-Christesen letters in the Meanjin Archive, another version which has Hope and Christesen each passed over as unsuitable candidates for the job, and (predictably enough) a plot against Meanjin: Just City and the Mirrors: Meanjin Quarterly and the Intellectual Front, 1940-1965 (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984), pp. 198-99.

of his articles, with similar authority, became classics; the Furphy piece (actually a review of the Miles Franklin/Kate Baker Joseph Furphy)<sup>9</sup> which argued that the novel was 'based on a theory of the novel' was frequently cited by the next generation of Furphy critics, the generation in which the critical reputation of Furphy was established in its modern form; his article on Maurice Guest, also from Meanjin, has also been reprinted in an authoritative way in Clement Semmler's influential Twentieth Century Australian Literary Criticism: it was so effective that Dorothy Green in her major book on Richardson devoted an entire chapter to refuting his interpretation which 'has held the field for fifteen years without ever having been seriously questioned'.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, it was something of the measure of Hope's authority that so much of his work held the field without ever being seriously questioned. Most of his influence stems from work done 'on the run', lectures, talks, reviews, short articles. Yet the influence was great, the authority unchallenged. Max Harris long ago called for Hope's criticism to be scrutinised; he drew attention to its wide and unchallenged influence and its narrow range of sympathies.<sup>11</sup>

Hope's complaint about Australian criticism, that it was 'in the words of Hobbes . . . "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short"<sup>12</sup>, could with only a little exaggeration be made of his own critical work. There is not

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<sup>9</sup> A. D. Hope, rev. of Joseph Furphy: The Man and His Book, by Miles Franklin in assoc. with Kate Baker, Meanjin, 4 (1945), 225-29; rpt. The Australian Nationalists, ed. by Chris Wallace-Crabbe, (Melbourne Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 108-13; rpt. Native Companions, pp. 54-60.

<sup>10</sup> Dorothy Green, Ulysses Bound: Henry Handel Richardson and Her Fiction (Canberra: Australian National Univ. Press, 1973), p. 161.

<sup>11</sup> Max Harris, 'Conflicts in Australian Intellectual Life,' in Literary Australia, ed. Clement Semmler and Derek Whitelock (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1966), pp. 30-31.

<sup>12</sup> A. D. Hope, 'The Literary Pattern in Australia,' University of Toronto Quarterly, 26 (1957), 132.

a single extended work; the books are collections of occasional pieces; and while there is a strong thematic consistency about his arguments there is no systematic development of any of his positions. But, as he makes clear in his judgment of Australian criticism at large, it is work of its time and of its institutional and cultural conditions. But in his own case it was also very much work for his time as well.

As in Canada, one of the principal tropes in the discussion of the national literature was the great need for critics. A. J. M. Smith's famous 1928 call 'Wanted -- Canadian Criticism' was echoed to the point of cliché in Australia as well. It is worth observing the similarities between Hope's position and that of Smith. Smith's desideratum was 'the critic-militant', one who will counter Canadian poetry's excessive consciousness of space with the corrective consciousness of time; he noted with scornful regret the reliance on local colour:

If you write, apparently, of the far north and the wild west and the picturesque east, seasoning well with allusions to the Canada goose, fir trees, maple leaves, snowshoes, northern lights, etc., the public grasp the fact that you are a Canadian poet, whose works are to be bought from the same patriotic motive that prompts the purchaser of Eddy's matches or a Massey-Harris farm implement, and read along with Ralph Connor and Eaton's catalogue.<sup>13</sup>

Smith's call to free the subject matter of Canadian poetry took him into another argument with which he and Hope would have been in substantial agreement: that puritanism had had a disastrous effect on Canadian art and life. That judgment should be made whatever moral or national sensibilities were offended was urged by both Hope and Smith, and justified by the appeal to 'neutral' aesthetic criteria. The trenchancy of Smith's conclusion is reminiscent of Hope's characteristic style: 'Sensibility is

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<sup>13</sup> A. J. M. Smith, 'Wanted Canadian Criticism,' The Canadian Forum, 8 (1928), 600-01. The essay has been frequently reprinted.

no longer enough, intelligence is also required. Even in Canada.'

The call for Australian criticism was a common one at the very time that Hope was beginning to write publicly. In 1938, for instance, the Melbourne Herald had editorialised about the need for Australia to develop a 'flourishing native literature' and observed that 'in literary criticism this country is still notably deficient'.<sup>14</sup> The paucity of Australian criticism is a prevailing theme in the lectures, talks and writing of Vance Palmer; it is a point made, too, by Katharine Susannah Prichard in an address to the Melbourne branch of the Fellowship of Australian Writers in 1953.

We have, and have had, critics of sound judgement. What we, and they, lack are opportunities for sound criticism. Critics can only earn money in Australia from the press, controlled by interests which do not allow the free discussion of politics, religion, or sex -- all matters of fundamental importance to the people. . . . Meanjin is the only literary review I know that gives Australian critics the chance to review literary work on its merits no matter what the political tendencies of that work may be.<sup>15</sup>

With, of course, the notable exception of the question of ideological censorship, these are all sentiments which Hope himself uttered often; though he, too, held strongly the anti-ideological view that literary work should be judged (unproblematically) 'on its merits'. It was the phrase, 'on its merits' that always concealed the unexamined assumptions in all the debates about values and standards in the decade that desired the end of ideology. (After his Canadian visit in 1957-58 Hope frequently regretted \_\_\_\_\_)

<sup>14</sup> Melbourne Herald, 4 June 1938, p. 2. The editorial was occasioned by the Fellowship of Australian Writers' proposal to the Federal Government for the encouragement of Australian Literature, a proposal that led to the augmentation of the Commonwealth Literary Fund in 1939. See Chapters Four and Five, below.

<sup>15</sup> Katharine Susannah Prichard, 'Critics and Criticism.' Address to the Fellowship of Australian Writers, Melbourne, 5 March 1953. Typescript. Uncatalogued Palmer papers received from Aileen Palmer, 25 April 1982. National Library of Australia.

the absence in Australia of journals like the University of Toronto Quarterly, The Dalhousie Review, and Queen's Quarterly 'where one can develop a considered assessment of up to twenty pages'<sup>16</sup>.) But these points of agreement with Prichard are significant because they describe and, more importantly, 'represent' the very conditions out of which he wrote, the social and cultural context that enabled him to be the sort of authoritative critic he became.

Hope's power, then, depended upon the congruence of his magisterial rhetoric with the publicly perceived need for criticism that was mature, sophisticated, serious, discriminating, a criticism that, to echo Wilkes' (and thus Hadgraft's) description of Hope's poetry, 'was intent to expose fake and sham wherever they are found'.<sup>17</sup> His continuing insistence on the need for rigorous criticism had as its corollary that the maturity of Australian society was measured by its ability to produce such critics and to accept them: he was thus the harbinger of post-medieval light. It culminated in his major article of the nineteen fifties, 'Standards in Australian Literature', in which the role of the critic (or at least the critic like him) was absolutely central. In that essay, to which I will return, he asserted that

Literary standards are established by two things: the existence of undoubted and enduring works of genius and the existence of a body of critical opinion which can only be vaguely defined as the 'judgment of the best minds' which

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<sup>16</sup> 'Literary Criticism in Australia,' p. 5. Typescript. A. D. Hope. Papers. Menzies Library, Australian National Univ. Series of Lectures on general aspects of Australian Literature, folder 8. This lecture is identified by Hope's bibliographer, Joy Hooton, as being given during his Canadian tour in 1957-58. There are, however, drafts of this lecture (as there are for most others) made at quite different periods, some several years later. One refers to 'speaking with Grattan here in Australia two days ago' and to Canada 'which I visited the year before last' both of which would place it in 1960 rather than 1957.

<sup>17</sup> Wilkes, p. 118.

in turn constitutes something equally hard to define, called the 'level of taste'. In order that this body of critical opinion shall be effective it needs to command respect, have standing and prestige; and for this there needs to be an educated class or body of readers -- people who not only read books but read criticism and discuss the opinions of critics.

A literature which has these three can be said to have an established literary tradition and is likely to have a high standard of literary achievement. It will have universities where scholars devote themselves to the continual reassessment and discussion of the classics of native literature and keep the traditions alive by forming the taste of the reading class who come to them to study the masterpieces.<sup>18</sup>

Hope's career as a latter-day Antipodean Rhadamanthus (the title had originally 'belonged' to A. G. Stephens) took particular character from his long campaign against the false claims of localism and nationalism; the 'parochial' approach to Australian Literature was a species of 'fake and sham' that Hope, like Smith in Canada, was at pains to expose. 'Fallacy' was one of his favorite pejoratives; among his favourite targets were the Jindyworobak poets and he began a review of several Jindyworobak publications in Southerly in 1941<sup>19</sup> by memorably describing them as the 'Boy Scout School of Poetry'. And in this there is, I think, a clue to the effect of Hope's reviewing -- his predilection for the memorable phrase. Long after his account of the merits of these books has been forgotten, the phrase continues to be quoted, just as his description of Patrick White's prose style as 'pretentious and illiterate verbal sludge' has a secure place in the Australian cultural record, quoted by people who have never seen a copy of The Sydney Morning Herald of June 16, 1956 in which his \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>18</sup> A. D. Hope, 'Standards in Australian Literature,' in Australian Literary Criticism, ed. Grahame Johnston (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 1-2. Subsequent references to this essay, hereafter cited as 'Standards', will be given in parentheses in the text.

<sup>19</sup> A. D. Hope, 'Culture Corroboree,' rev. of Cultural Cross-Section, ed. John Ingamells, Flaunted Banners, by Victor Kennedy, At A Boundary, by Rex and John Ingamells, and This is Australia, by Ian Mudie, Southerly, 2 (1941), 28-31; rpt. in his Native Companions, pp. 43-48.

review of The Tree of Man appeared. In a sense, Hope as reviewer is quite continuous with Hope as poet; his is the mind in search of the memorable phrase rather than the telling word. His review of David Martin's Selected Poems contains another such 'quotable quote' exposing the sham of yet another of his contemporary targets, socialist realism -- 'the heir to the Victorian Sunday-school novel is the novel of social purpose' (Native Companions, p. 63). Perhaps the most notorious of all his attacks is the review of Max Harris' experimental novel, The Vegetative Eye. It is difficult to exemplify this review in a short excerpt, but this passage is fairly typical.

The Vegetative Eye reminds me of a one-man band. It is about Mr Max Harris, the well-known manager of the Educated Womb, written by Mr Max Harris, published by Mr Max Harris, and advertised with fearless praise by Mr Max Harris in Mr Max Harris's journal Angry Penguins. Nearly all the characters in the book turn out to be Mr Max Harris, too. Apart from that the book owes very little to Mr Max Harris. (Native Companions, p. 49)

But if the Harris review has the greatest anecdotal attraction, the review of The Tree of Man was the most pernicious culturally. Despite the fact that, as I have written elsewhere,<sup>20</sup> the review is for much of its length one of the most perceptively sympathetic the novel received and described it in terms remarkably close to those White himself used two years later, it did, with its extraordinarily intolerant, tactless and unforgettable last line ('pretentious and illiterate verbal sludge') provide a generation with the justification for the belief that White was indeed a prophet without honour in his own country and that Australia was, therefore, still populated by Philistines and Barbarians, a country still at the frontier of civilisation. Hope was unrepentant, reprinting the

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<sup>20</sup> Alan Lawson, 'Unmerciful Dingoes? The Critical Reception of Patrick White,' Meanjin, 32 (1973), 383.



review in Native Companions, and repeating the judgment in his survey Australian Literature 1950-1962. In a talk on 'Literary Criticism in Australia', Hope explained that the critic 'attacks with malice but the malice is based on intellectual conviction and a desire to promote and preserve literary standards.'<sup>21</sup>

Hope's targets then, in the nineteen forties and nineteen fifties included the more radical or progressive movements in Australian writing on all sides of literary politics: the radical nationalists, the experimental internationalists, the social realists, the metaphysical nationalists. All of these failed to subscribe to the 'highest standards'. Hope's quarrel with the Jindyworobaks was a quite fundamental one. Their insistence on the necessity of acknowledging a native culture was at inevitable odds with Hope's belief that even national maturity was a mere phase preceding the 're-integration of the culture' of a single (European, English) literary and linguistic tradition. Indeed, then, as much later, Hope held the common axiom that Aboriginal culture was fit for little other than the elegiac mode: 'the aboriginal view of the world is passing away. It cannot be grafted onto our own civilization' (Native Companions, p. 86). Hope's demolition of the Jindyworobak reputation was so successful that years later, when he (rather favourably) reviewed Roland Robinson's collection of Aboriginal 'legends', he was able to refute and dismiss the introductory remarks of the famous anthropologist and linguist, T. G. H. Strehlow by saying 'This is a false note. This is Jindyworobak talk.' (Native Companions, p. 86). The ex-cathedra tone guaranteed that Hope's opinions passed from anecdote to legend and into axiom; they became, in this case as in others, part of the unofficial knowledge of those in the culture for which he judged and spoke. (As an undergraduate and young graduate student

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<sup>21</sup> A. D. Hope, 'Literary Criticism in Australia,' Typescript, p. 4.

it was Hope's views of the Jindies, the social realists, and the more extreme nationalists that I assimilated -- without at the time having read either Hope's words or the works he was referring to.)

As a consequence of his belief that national literature was a stage preceding the re-assimilation into the single 'parent' tradition, Hope, at every opportunity, attacked excessive Australianism as a retardant to 'real' achievement. A central articulation of this belief is in another of his notorious reviews, of the collection of Australian Bush Ballads edited by Douglas Stewart and Nancy Keesing. Titled 'Prolonging our Literary Adolescence', it subscribed to the evolutionary theory of literary development by which Hope, and many of his contemporaries, were reassured that greatness was at hand. It restated, with a wit that was aimed at the newly-sophisticated audience that it thus constructed, a series of principles that Hope had held and advanced in many places for some time.

It would be a delusion to think Australia needs more nationalist sentiment than it has. On the contrary our literature already suffers from too much of it. It is riddled and rotted with the obsession of being more and more Australian . . . great literature is never directly concerned with catching and revealing the national ethos. This attitude of mind leads only to tedious parochialism.<sup>22</sup>

The attack on the balladists was encouraged by one of Hope's 'patrons', the editor of The Sydney Morning Herald, John Douglas Pringle. Pringle was an expatriate Scot from Fleet Street who spent two periods in Australia as editor of the Herald and it was during his first tour of duty, 1952-1957, that he engaged Hope as a fairly regular reviewer of (mainly) Australian books. It is clear from correspondence that Pringle was delighted by the savagery of Hope's reviewing style and enthusiastically

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<sup>22</sup> A. D. Hope, 'Prolonging Our Literary Adolescence,' Sydney Morning Herald, 19 Nov. 1955, p. 12.

encouraged him in it. In several of his letters commissioning reviews from Hope he deprecates the books he is sending. Of A. N. Jeffares' Seven Centuries of Poetry, he wrote: 'If you think it is bad enough perhaps we should attack it in the Herald, and clearly you would be the man to do it. If not, I shall ignore it completely.'<sup>23</sup> Of Australian Bush Ballads he says, 'It is obviously quite an important work and it might give you the opportunity of dealing with Bush Ballads once and for all.'<sup>24</sup> His acknowledgement of the review is even clearer in its indication to Hope of the preferred reviewing style: 'Thank you for the really brilliant piece on the Bush Ballads -- if that doesn't make them lie down, I don't know what will. It is really a superb piece of writing.'<sup>25</sup> The same terms of praise are applied to the Tree of Man review.<sup>26</sup>

As the Herald's mainline reviewer, Hope was also in a position to refer work to others. In quite persistently recommending a small group of substitute reviewers when he was unable or unwilling to review, he effectively established a cadre of like-minded reviewers. The names that he consistently offered, not only to the Herald but also to the Australian Broadcasting Commission and others commissioning articles and reviews, were Leonie Kramer, James McAuley and, for some time, Vincent Buckley. When the matter is less contentious, such as an encyclopedia entry, other names were sometimes mentioned. Hope's project during the fifties then, was not only to establish a literary canon but to establish a critical one as well.

This is, in essence, an observation that Brian Kiernan quite

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<sup>23</sup> J. D. Pringle to A. D. Hope, 10 June 1955. A. D. Hope Papers, Australian National Univ. Library.

<sup>24</sup> J. D. Pringle to A. D. Hope, 29 Sept. 1955.

<sup>25</sup> J. D. Pringle to A. D. Hope, 15 Nov. 1955.

<sup>26</sup> J. D. Pringle to A. D. Hope, 6 June 1956.

accurately makes about that most canonical of critical anthologies, Grahame Johnston's Australian Literary Criticism.<sup>27</sup> The critics represented in Johnston's collection include Buckley (four essays), McAuley, and Hope himself; three essays are by G. A. Wilkes (whom Hope had also recommended); and the editor, as well as R. F. Brissenden (another of the essayists), was a member of Hope's Australian National University English Department. John Docker locates the source<sup>28</sup> of this influential anthology in a 1959 article of Buckley's called 'Towards an Australian Literature'. It is a persuasive suggestion. Johnston takes Buckley's call for 'genuine criticism' and for 'some provisional canon of our writers . . . [and] at least some agreement about their relative value'<sup>29</sup> as the intellectual justification for the anthology but the essay itself is, rather curiously, omitted from it. Its place and function in the book are clearly filled by Hope's 'Standards in Australian Literature'. If Buckley's essay is the anthology's immediate cause, Hope is its spiritual godfather. The filial allegiances of the critics are to him; and Buckley's arguments about the need for 'genuine criticism', for a canon, and for considering the literature of Australia alongside that of the other dominions, were all anticipated by Hope.

Producing an intellectual chronology for Hope's major arguments and positions is especially difficult. As mentioned above, much of his most influential work was disseminated in the form of addresses, talks, lectures including numerous radio broadcasts for the ABC. Fortunately several of these survive in typescript in the Hope Papers at the Australian National

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<sup>27</sup> Brian Kiernan, Criticism, Australian Writers and their Work (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), p. 43.

<sup>28</sup> John Docker, Australian Cultural Elites: Intellectual Traditions in Sydney and Melbourne (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1974), pp. 116-17.

<sup>29</sup> Vincent Buckley, 'Towards an Australian Literature,' Meanjin, 18 (1959), 63-64.

University Library. However, an examination of those papers makes it clear that Hope characteristically used the same material in many forms and on many occasions; it is also clear that Hope's unit of argument is generally quite short--most of the essays are aggregations of paragraphs. Not surprisingly there are internal contradictions and important elisions.

The preoccupation with standards was a long-held one. For his Inaugural Lecture in 1952 after being appointed to the Foundation Chair of English at (the then) Canberra University College Hope spoke of the value of the study of English and hence of the values required for the study of English. Throughout the lecture we recognise the characteristic rhetoric of Rhadamanthus, the magisterial tone, the exposure of 'fake and sham'. 'I cannot feel', he said, 'that the study of English today is in good health. Some essential values seem to me to have been lost.'<sup>30</sup> Among the values that have been lost is the commitment to judgment which has given way to the tendency of critics to explain and elucidate. In a lecture called 'The Australian Scene: Literature and Drama' given at Sydney University early in 1953 and (in a slightly different version) broadcast on the ABC in May of that year, recycled for his 1957-58 tour of Canada, raided for his 'Standards' article, and re-used for a survey printed in the University of Toronto Quarterly in 1957, Hope returned to the theme: 'our critics still feel that they have to boost rather than to appraise and judge.'<sup>31</sup>

Hope's own fullest statement of his critical position is not really in the well-known 'Standards' essay but in one evidently written in 1959 or

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<sup>30</sup> A. D. Hope, The Study of English, Inaugural Lecture delivered at the Canberra Univ. College on 7 May 1952 (Canberra: Canberra Univ. College, 1952), p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> A. D. Hope, 'The Australian Scene: Literature and Drama,' Radio broadcast, 'Search for Values' series, ABC, 25 May 1953. Typescript, p. 2.

1960, 'Literary Criticism in Australia'. This is really an ultimate summation of the views he was working out and acting out throughout the nineteen-fifties. He distinguishes reviewing ('a branch of journalism') from assessment, the consideration of areas, forms and periods, the development and application of theories ('which is perhaps best practised at universities'), and presents a vision of constant improvement in Australian literary life, a steady progress towards maturity. The critic's 'work is no longer parochial and no longer mere journalism' (p. 4), though it is deficient in not providing opportunities for extended assessments (the comparison with Toronto Quarterly [sic] is used again). He is modestly 'pleased to think [he] had a part in this'. He notes the absence of the critical histories 'written from different points of view necessary to establish the canon', and of scholarly apparatus (apparently overlooking Miller's Bibliography, 1940) and makes his customary comparison with American Literature. Just as he was, in other essays, attacking modern movements in poetry, here he asserts that American criticism has gone too far and that Shakespearean criticism has got out of hand, a view he returned to on several later occasions (in his address to the Academy of the Humanities in 1970, he called for 'some form of critical birth control--the Pill for Critics'). That Australian Literature had almost reached maturity implicitly valorised the role of the critic who had been so carefully watching over it, and simultaneously emphasised the urgency of continued vigilance. Since the writers are seen, in the judgments of successive generations of critics to approach this magical line of maturity asymptotically, the duty of criticism is clear:

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It should establish a canon which is the basis of a literary tradition, and it should continue to revise the canon and to reassess the writers in it in the light of new critical views; and lastly in the case of a young literature it should counter parochial views and standards by continually treating the local literature in its context of the whole literature of the English speaking world. To do this its scholars should be concerned with the whole literary tradition. (p. 7, emphasis added)

If judgment and evaluation were, for Hope, the central (and centralising) critical function, the central critical purpose was the establishment of a canon. Curiously, the idea of a canon does not explicitly arise in the essay on 'Standards in Australian Literature'. Several cognate terms are used but they do not coalesce into the notion of 'canon'. In that essay, as in some earlier ones, he speaks of the need for masterpieces, of the first and second rank of writers, of works of genius and of 'the tradition' -- which seems, not altogether consistently, to mean either the broad tradition of European literature or the specifically Australian tradition. However, in one called 'Nationalism in Australian Criticism' there is not only a clear early formulation of the need for a canon but a clear indication of the source of the idea. There he approvingly quotes the American scholar of Australian Literature, C. Hartley Grattan, writing in the Preface to Tom Inglis Moore's Six Australian Poets (1942), 'that we need to sort out "a canon which will include only those writers with whom one must make one's peace before proceeding to consider minor figures"'.<sup>32</sup> But the clearest statement of the importance and function of the canon is in that slightly later talk, 'Literary Criticism in Australia', quoted above. It is significant that it was almost certainly written after Hope's visit to the United States in 1958 to study the ramifications and relevance of the programmes for the study of American Literature to the growing interest in establishing either Australian Literature or Australian Studies courses in Australia. During

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<sup>32</sup> A. D. Hope, 'Nationalism in Australian Criticism', Typescript, p. 3. Joy Hooton claims this as another of the lectures 'delivered on 1958 visit to Canada': some internal evidence suggests an earlier date, though it was quite likely recycled for the Canadian visit. The most recent examples of Australian criticism it gives are Palmer's Legend of the Nineties (1954),

Wilkes' New Perceptives [sic] on Brennan's Poetry (1953). The error is not uncharacteristic: the same essay dates Moore's Six Australian Poets in 1938 (instead of 1942), gives Ewers' Creative Writing in Australia (1945) as an example of post-World War One 'truculence', and Angry Penguins (1940-46) and The Triad (1915-27) as examples of nineteen-thirties modishness.

that visit, Hope visited Grattan and received from him an even stronger injunction to concentrate on the definition of the canon. Indeed, a very large number of his American contacts stressed the need to establish and maintain standards, in pedagogy and in criticism. His notes from the discussion with Grattan contain some extraordinarily forthright judgments from Grattan on the regrettably low standard of all of the academics working in Australian Literature (with the possible exception of G. A. Wilkes), Hope's eager agreement, and Grattan's opinion that 'there is not enough Australian Literature for more than a semester. The greatest risk is inflation . . . of classics by default.'<sup>33</sup> Before leaving Australia, Hope wrote to Grattan (18 June 1957) referring the question of the canon to him.

One problem I have particularly in mind was raised by yourself when you were in Australia; this was the establishment of a canon, the sorting out of those writers who were worth considering in themselves and some work towards establishing a scale of relative merit. I gather that this has, to some extent, been done in America for American writers and that in consequence there is something that can be called 'the body of literature' to be studied.<sup>34</sup>

The chronology that I am able to reconstruct (with reservations) is that after being chosen as the Canadian and Australian Humanities Research Councils' visitor to Canada for 1957, Hope applied (at the suggestion of one of its officers, Alan Pifer) to the Carnegie Corporation who funded the Research Councils' scheme (and who had funded many of the American Studies Programs), for additional money to enable him to spend three months in the United States. While preparing lectures for the Canadian tour and making contacts for the American one he became interested in Grattan's notion of

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<sup>33</sup> A. D. Hope, Papers. Bundle VA, Folder 2. Correspondence and Notes, Visit to U. S.

<sup>34</sup> A. D. Hope to C. Hartley Grattan, 18 June 1957, Papers. Bundle VA, folder 2. Correspondence and Notes, Visit to U.S.



the canon, followed it up during his visit to Grattan in late 1958 and used it in a couple of articles and addresses in Canada in early 1958 and back in Australia in 1959, about the same time as Buckley was putting it forward in his influential article, 'Towards an Australian Literature' which was itself addressed to Hope's own 'Australian Literature in the Universities' instigated by Christesen to initiate a short series of discussions of that topic in Meanjin in 1954.

For Hope, the idea's appeal grew, especially during his American visit, as he began to consider the implications of the teaching of Australian Literature/Australian Studies. The idea does not surface in any of the notes of his discussions with Canadian academics. But two considerations pressed upon him by several of the American scholars who were skeptical about some of the claims of American Studies programmes seem to have weighed heavily. One was the domination of the study of literature by other disciplines; the other was the paucity of sufficiently good Australian Literature to support a 'purely' literary course. The establishment of a canon solved both of these problems, to Hope's satisfaction. It gave substance to the literature taught in a Studies programme, and it protected the literary credentials of the teacher taking an Australian Literature course (Hope in a 1944 letter to Clem Christesen had written that 'a certain time each year is devoted to Australian writers of whom I know so little and by whom for the most part I am profoundly bored or irritated.')

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Hope's advocacy of the study of Australian Literature was memorialised in his opening address to the Inaugural Conference of the

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<sup>35</sup> A. D. Hope to C. B. Christesen, 1 Jan. 1944, quoted in Snow on the Saltbush: The Australian Literary Experience, by Geoffrey Dutton (Ringwood: Viking, 1984), p. 158.

Association for the Study of Australian Literature at Monash University in May 1978.<sup>36</sup> In that account, he figures as the permanent champion of Australian Literature fighting the scornful Melbourne professors and tending the newly-planted vineyard. However, it would seem that his support for the Australian Literature course at Canberra University College was a little less enthusiastic than he had us believe, although he grew to cherish it in time. Moreover, his claim in that lecture that he had decided against recommending an Australia Studies programme after his American trip casts interesting light on the product of that investigation.

It was one of his duties and one of his promises to provide and circulate a public report on his trips to the United States and Canada. All that can be found is a draft of his report to the Carnegie Corporation on the findings of his American tour; the proposals that he brought with him from discussions he had in Canada about fostering an exchange of graduate students through the Humanities Research Councils seem to have been allowed to wither. The 'draft report' is tentative and indecisive but it does note (again) 'the small amount of Australian writing of real literary merit' and tenders the opinion that

In Australia, the Australian Studies approach might be best, leaving English Departments able to include a few really worthwhile Australian works.

I also wonder whether it is really in the interests of local writers to be the subject of academic study.<sup>37</sup>

His confidential report to the Humanities Research Council on his Canadian

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<sup>36</sup> A. D. Hope. 'Opening address to the Conference for Founding the Association for the Study of Australian Literature at Monash University May 1978. Typescript. Some of the same material is contained in his 'Teaching Australian Literature: Notes and Recollections,' in Introduction to Australian Literature, ed. C. D. Narasimhaiah (Milton, Q.: John Wiley, 1982), pp. 157-65.

<sup>37</sup> A. D. Hope. Report to Carnegie Corporation of New York on visits to American Universities to study methods of teaching American Literature. Typescript. Hope Papers. p. 7.

trip also (apparently) recommended an Australian Studies approach with overseas affiliations and contacts. The Council's Secretary, Archie Grenfell Price, was enthusiastic about the idea and keen to press it in the context of the Murray Report into Education but Hope seems to have been diverted and, if his recollection of twenty years later is accurate, actually opposed the idea he seems to have been responsible for introducing, and certainly giving some currency to, in Australia. Indeed the 'Studies' approach was endorsed not only in his 1958 draft report but also in his 1954 essay 'Australian Literature in the Universities'.

The most pernicious part of Hope's argument about standards was that it coupled itself with a rigidly evolutionary reading of Australian (and, incidentally, of all colonial) Literature. One of the assumptions underpinning the discussion of 'the canon' (rather than one of the deductions from it) was that Australian Literature (like Australian culture) was inadequate. Because it was still growing, and because it was 'prolonging its adolescence'<sup>38</sup> through its preoccupation with nationalism, it could obviously not have produced works of the first rank, these only being possible in a mature culture. Now this was not an idiosyncratic assessment; A. G. Stephens, Percival Serle, and Vance Palmer had all said as much. But the significant step in Hope's argument was that without a masterpiece a literature could hardly be said to exist:

in a great deal of verse, a fair number of novels and short stories . . . a literature that is genuinely and typically Australian. It has only failed to do one thing -- but that one thing is what gives a literature standing and

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<sup>38</sup> This phrase was used as the title of his review of the Stewart-Keesing collection of Ballads; it was re-used in the service of a similar argument in his 'The Literary Pattern in Australia,' University of Toronto Quarterly, 26 (1957), 123: 'Australian writing seems to me to have deliberately prolonged its adolescence. In essentials the job was done fifty years ago, yet Australian poets and novelists are still busy pioneering.' The argument appears again in the text of an unnamed, undated radio talk that Hope reproduces in Native Companions, pp. 73-75.

independence. It has failed to produce any masterpieces. .  
. . this is not a reproach. It is a characteristic shared  
by colonial literatures in general.<sup>39</sup>

It is an argument that gained a great deal of currency (in both senses of the word) and influenced those writing literary history and criticism as well as giving ammunition to the conservative forces among those trying to keep Australian Literature out of educational curricula. If its respectable friends like Professor Hope thought that very little of it was up to standard, then others less sympathetic were justified in continuing to hold it in unread contempt. The damning with slight praise that was something of a characteristic of the nervous criticism of the period -- nobody wanted to be the one who announced the masterpiece too soon -- was the concomitant of this view of literary progress: 'Australia has not done brilliantly but neither has she done badly' ('Standards', p. 11).

In the 'Standards' essay, he explains how literary maturity is achieved. A Literature cannot be respectable until it meets the highest standards and it cannot have the 'standards on which a fully formed literary tradition is based' ('Standards', p. 14) until it has produced that 'final requirement' (p. 14), 'a work of undoubted and recognisable genius' (p. 12, my emphasis). 'The change', he says, using nineteenth-century American Literature as an analogy for all colonial literatures, 'from colonialism to an independent and autonomous tradition was sudden, brilliant and permanent' ('Standards', p. 12). That point about autonomy is just one of the puzzles that this essay presents. The larger theme of the essay, the universalist/internationalist one that 'the European literary tradition, in spite of national variations, is still one

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<sup>39</sup> A. D. Hope, 'The Australian Scene: Literature and Drama,' typescript of an ABC Radio talk, 'Search for Values' Series, 25 May 1953, a shorter version of a talk given previously at the University of Sydney. The text quoted here seems to have been an even later revision, possibly as late as 1955.

tradition' ('Standards', p. 14, original emphasis) seems to contradict it as does the variant form of the argument, that these literatures become independent when they outgrow their adolescent obsession with their national navels and 'mov[e] towards a single re-integrated literary tradition'<sup>40</sup>.

The difficulty is that Hope actually wants to accept some of the claims of the nationalist critics. This becomes clear in the review, from which I have just quoted, of Matthews' Tradition in Exile, in 'Nationalism in Australian Criticism', in 'Australian Literature in the Universities', and in 'Standards' itself. On several of these occasions he cites Miles Franklin's argument that each culture produces its own language, forms and techniques and can therefore be judged only by its own standards, and acknowledges that 'there is something in this' before retreating in the face of this threatening relativism and individualism into the more secure and customary universalism, especially secure as one of the dominant discursive formations of the time.

But the fallacy of this argument is first, that even when this is admitted, there are common standards for the whole European literary tradition of which Australian literature forms a part; and secondly, that it is easy to over-estimate the differences between the English way of life and that of other parts of the English-speaking world ('Standards', p. 6).

Having admitted the argument for cultural specificity and the relativity of literary production, he rushes to assert its converse; the second 'proof', then, is a psychological, not a logical, necessity. The universalist position requires an elision of difference which establishes, as in this formulation, a concealed order or hierarchy. It is a characteristic \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>40</sup> A. D. Hope, 'Australian and Canadian Poetry,' Rev. of Tradition in Exile, by J. P. Matthews, Dalhousie Review, 43 (1963), 99-102; rpt. (without title) in his Native Companions, pp. 86-91: the phrase quoted is from p. 91.

position for a cold-war intellectual, seeking in indifference to difference a reassurance that there is an end to ideology. The world literature movement (terranglia in Joseph Jones' neologism) and even, it would seem for some Anglophiles, the early attraction to the study of Commonwealth Literature each enabled a belief in the lasting quality of English, in the general pattern, in the differences that do not divide.<sup>41</sup> It was certainly the attitude that prevailed in H. M. Green's 1961 Introduction to the History of Australian Literature, and in the TLS' late summer supplements on the literatures of the Commonwealth, all designed to prove the 'continuity of 'English'. Hope's confusion neatly deconstructs itself in one passage in 'Standards'.

It looks, therefore, as though there is a general pattern in these things and we may expect, perhaps in the near future, that Australian literature, after a period of uncertainty and experiment, will produce a first crop of writers of international reputation and thus stand firmly on its own feet (p. 12).

The meliorist belief in the certainty of improvement underwrites the evolutionary view of literary history, the universalist-rationalist world-view confidently presupposes the existence of 'a general pattern', while the nationalist looks with anxiety and excitement for the imminent advent of the national annunciation by some foreign angel: only with an international reputation can the culture be independent.

The amplifications of the position on the necessity of the masterpiece, of the instantaneous achievement of maturity come, it is interesting to note, in a long section of the 'Standards' essay that Hope added at the very last moment. The Current Affairs Bulletin was published fortnightly to a tight schedule; the issue was (as discussed in Chapter Five, below) a timely, though not an urgent one. Hope was asked for an

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<sup>41</sup> A. D. Hope, rev. of Tradition in Exile, pp. 89.

article of about 6,500 words but miscalculated his submission by 1,500 words and had to make up this deficit in a few days. The added portion is the final eight paragraphs<sup>42</sup> explaining why Australia has not produced a masterpiece; it is where he appeals to the 'general pattern' of development of colonial literatures.

Hope's commitment to the notion of a general pattern has an especial interest for a comparative Australian-Canadian study for it committed Hope to a belief in the comparability of the two literatures and even more particularly of their literary cultures, a belief he held some time before he went to Canada. Canada, South Africa, New Zealand (and the late nineteenth-century United States, which seems to validate the paradigm) are frequent comparisons. In his review of Tradition in Exile he develops the notion that the 'New English Literatures' were the "'frontier literature" . . . of a single literary tradition', a tradition to which the writers of Canada, Australia and South Africa will contribute 'tomorrow. It is only the second-rate writers who remain purely regional'.<sup>43</sup>

Woodcock subscribed, especially in the nineteen fifties, to many of the same views as Hope but his is a more complex position and one of greater range. Like Hope, he had ambivalent attitudes to place. Although both men took some pains to try to correct what they each saw as an excessive preoccupation with place at the expense of time, Woodcock's attitude contained latitude more easily.

George Woodcock, though born in Winnipeg on 8th May 1912, grew up in his parents' native England and his education, his early literary career

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<sup>42</sup> E. M. Higgins to A. D. Hope, 10 Oct. 1956; A. D. Hope to E. M. Higgins, 12 Oct. 1956; rev. draft. A. D. Hope Papers, Series of Lectures on General Aspects of Australian Literature, folder 1, 'Standards in Australian Literature': Notes, Drafts, and Correspondence.

<sup>43</sup> A. D. Hope, rev. of Tradition in Exile, pp. 89, 90.

and many of his most persistent beliefs were firmly rooted in a particular class and political milieu of the thirties and forties.<sup>44</sup> As a writer in London, Woodcock's friends included George Orwell, Julian Symons, Muriel Spark, Kathleen Raine, Sir Herbert Read, Aldous Huxley, Mulk Raj Anand, Roy Connolly, and Dylan Thomas; he edited the radical libertarian magazine Now during the forties; wrote books on Oscar Wilde, Aphra Behn, Prince Kropotkin, William Godwin, five volumes of poetry, and numerous pamphlets; was a conscientious objector; and he developed a commitment to, as well as a deep knowledge of, anarchism, about which he was to write a standard historical text. Woodcock's anarchism is the key to an understanding of his view of literature, of culture, and of nationalism: it is, in short, the cornerstone of all his thinking. In his classic study of the philosophy and the movement (about which he adopts his characteristically elegiac tone) he provides the following summation of it in a manner that emphasises the values of individual dignity, freedom, the distrust of centralising imperialist forces of any kind, the radical concern for the present, and thus a commitment to a critique of the circumstances of one's time and place. This stands not only as a historical interpretation of a movement but also as a personal manifesto.

It was a protest, a dedicated resistance to the worldwide trend since the middle of the eighteenth century toward political and economic centralization, with all it implies in terms of the replacement of personal values by collective values, of the subordination of the individual to the state. The real social revolution of the modern age

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<sup>44</sup> For his own extended account of this period, see George Woodcock, Letter to the Past: An Autobiography (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1982); a shorter and more anecdotal recollection of the world of writing of the period is his 'Poetry Magazines of the Thirties: A Personal Note', Tamarack Review, No. 59 (Oct. 1973), pp. 68-74, rpt. in Reader, pp. 18-24; also illuminating about Woodcock's role in that circle is a memoir by Julian Symons, 'George Woodcock: A Portrait', in A Political Art: Essays and Images in Honour of George Woodcock, ed. William H. New (Vancouver: Univ. of British Columbia Press, 1978), pp. 173-80.



has in fact been this process of centralization, toward which every development of scientific and technological progress has contributed, which has welded nations out of regions and which today is creating a single world where the fundamental differences between regions and peoples and classes are being levelled in uniformity.

The anarchists protested against this revolution in the name of human dignity and individuality . . . . They stood outside to criticize, and their criticism was given power and edge by their disappointed idealism. They defied the materialism of modern society, its regimentation, its drive toward conformity, and, while they looked toward an idyllic future, they also stood for the better aspects of a dying past.

Their ruthless criticism of the present was always the great strength of the anarchists.<sup>45</sup>

Those beliefs, then, were prominent among the intellectual luggage that Woodcock brought with him when he returned to Canada in April 1949, a departure from post-war England (and a substantial association with writers and anarchist thinkers and a growing reputation as a writer) that cannot really have been an easy one. The decision, he records in the first volume of his autobiography, Letter to the Past, was made early in 1948 and was provoked by a sort of atavistic longing for the unremembered birthplace ('the personal myth that told me that Canada was the real home to which I must one day return') and a loss of faith in the continuing possibilities of life in Britain ('a feeling akin to claustrophobia that by the end of the war had made even Britain an island too small to be endured'<sup>46</sup>). The similarity between Woodcock's account and the reasons given by Patrick White for his return from a similarly-literary life in London to Australia just a few months earlier is perhaps incidental but

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<sup>45</sup> George Woodcock, Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), p. 444.

<sup>46</sup> George Woodcock, Letter to the Past, p. 310.

quite remarkable.<sup>47</sup>

That anxious and uncertain 'return' to Canada in 1949 a few weeks before his thirty-seventh birthday has been a moment that has continually reinscribed itself as a way of problematising his relation to Canada and its culture. The title of the best-known collection of his essays, Odysseus Ever Returning, is his metaphor for this uncertain re-engagement, the need for a continual re-assessment of the relation; his nationality is not a problem to be solved, but a problematic to be addressed. The image of Odysseus' return was, intriguingly, employed by Hope in the poem chosen by him to begin his volumes of collected poems, 'The End of a Journey', but Hope's Odysseus is dejected by his return to 'the petty kingdom he called home', nostalgic for the journey, and resentfully regards himself as 'a castaway upon so cruel a shore'.<sup>48</sup> Begun, according to Hope's bibliographer Joy Hooton, about the time of Hope's return to Australia after his two years in Oxford, it predicates an attitude to colonial place that many were to attribute to Hope himself and an attitude to which many responded: in the nineteen fifties in particular the image of Australia as a cultural desert took some of its direction from readings of Hope's poetry and criticism.

On the other hand, in the critical toponymy of George Woodcock, the

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<sup>47</sup> Patrick White, 'The Prodigal Son', Australian Letters, 1, No. 3 (April 1958), 37-40. White speaks of 'the alternative of remaining in what I then felt to be an actual and spiritual graveyard, . . . or of returning home, to the stimulus of time remembered'. There are other serendipitous connections: the two men were born weeks apart and taken at a young age back to their parents' homelands; they each returned in their late thirties with a 'foreign' companion (the Bavarian Inge and the Greek Manoli) and have reputations for holding ambivalent attitudes towards Canada and Australia. A more remarkable coincidence (or 'synchronicity' as Woodcock would say) is that they had poems published literally side by side in the Summer 1938 issue of Geoffrey Grigson's magazine, New Verse (pp. 9, 10)

<sup>48</sup> A. D. Hope, 'The End of a Journey', in his Collected Poems 1930-1970 (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1972), pp. 1-2.

local, or more specifically the regional, is one of the stronger terms of approval. While Hope may indeed have believed (and there were many in Canada who agreed with him) that 'it is only the second-rate writers who remain purely regional', (Native Companions, p. 90) Woodcock saw the acknowledgement of, and engagement with, the region as a cultural imperative: the alternative was for the true individuality of creativity to be swallowed by the imperialising nation-state. In a letter to Roderick Haig-Brown he declares himself (and 'his' journal, Canadian Literature) to be 'unpolitically regionalist (but passionately the latter)'.<sup>49</sup> Although he presents a view of the development of the 'minor' English literatures very similar to that of Hope, Woodcock, instead of regarding them as frontiers and therefore (as in Frederick Jackson Turner's paradigm) as being a stage of primitive evolution, a 'zone of transition', prefers to see them as regional and thus potentially deconstituting the monolithic nation-state. Nevertheless, like Hope, he subscribes to the discursive formations of his time and he too insists, in several places, on the indivisibility of literature in English.

In an essay, characteristically an occasional piece, written as an Introduction to an anthology of Canadian criticism in 1966,<sup>50</sup> he deftly attempted to wend his way between the Scylla of nationalism and the Charybdis of neo-imperialism in a manner reminiscent of some of Hope's writing. Acknowledging the cultural threat of continentalism and the

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<sup>49</sup> George Woodcock to Roderick Haig-Brown, 12 Sept. 1972, in his Taking It to the Letter (Dunvegan, Ont.: Quadrant, 1981), p. 32. Subsequent references to this collection will be given in parentheses in the text.

<sup>50</sup> George Woodcock, Introduction to A Choice of Critics, ed. George Woodcock (Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966); rpt. as 'Views of Canadian Criticism: 2/ In 1966', in his Odysseus Ever Returning: Essays on Canadian Writers and Writing (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1970), pp. 137-43. Subsequent references to essays in this collection, hereafter cited as Odysseus, will be given in parentheses in the text.

historic realities of the Canadian situation, he glances at those features which differentiate Canadian culture, rather than Canadian life and economics, from American. Culture, or rather art (and especially literature), can, in Woodcock's view of the world, be analytically separated, though perhaps not practically excised, from the political and economic dimensions of society. So Canada has its distinctive intellectual modus operandi but, as he points out more than once,

Canadian literature . . . still retains a provincial relationship to the literatures of both Britain and the United States . . . Canadian writers still belong within the greater tradition of Anglo-Saxon literature and have to establish a place there as individuals. (Odysseus, pp. 140-41)

This argument contains (or attempts to contain) the characteristic Woodcock mix of high-art elitism, intellectual cosmopolitanism, and anti-national regionalism -- all, in various ways, reflections of his deeply-held anarchism. A parallel passage elsewhere in the same essay articulates it quite concisely:

Canadian writers of course belong in one way to the broad general tradition of writing in English, and this they recognize by feeling unfulfilled if they have not published their works in the metropolitan centres of London and New York, and have thus failed to enter into full and equal competition with their British and American peers. (Odysseus, pp. 138-39)

Colonial writing space is inscribed as deficiency, a void to be filled, its coming of age always represented as a short/coming.

For Woodcock, the assent to regionalism is a strategy of some potency. It is, for him, a way of avoiding nationalism which is distasteful to his high-art proclivities and anathematic to his anarchist philosophy. It also allows him to retain the idea of a metropolitan, European centre to his circumference. It gives the local a distinct identity but also a place in the larger scheme of things which he has no interest in surrendering to an ultimately atomistic regionalist relativity. The notable difference between this view and Hope's paradigm of the frontier is that the one is geographically-constructed and the other historically; and since both are essentially meliorists this ties Hope into a model of growth-to-maturity and therefore a mimicking of the metropolis while leaving Woodcock free to watch for the signs of distinctiveness and difference. His strong belief in the necessity of freedom from overarching rule, in individualism in a community context, prevents his model from ever entirely inscribing the subordinacy of the regional to the metropolitan culture.

But, like Hope's confusion in 'Standards in Australian Literature', Woodcock's 'regional' solution is clearly, as Paul Cappon points out,<sup>51</sup> flawed also. It is the internationalist idealism that sees Canadian Literature as a region of the 'greater English literatures' that reinscribes the inevitable hierarchy, a hierarchy that in Canadian terms is especially potent, given the great attractiveness of the 'metropolis-hinterland' model of Canadian history, a model applied to political, economic, social and cultural relations as well as development. Just as in the metropolitan-nationalist model the most powerful culture centripetally<sup>52</sup> takes to itself the description of national (the Laurentian and Sydney-Melbourne axes) so in the idealist-internationalist one the dominant culture names itself universal and appropriates standards and values. So, even for Woodcock, regional remains a dual inscription, naming in an essentialist way the ultimate attainment of the cultural identity of a community and its defeat of the centrist forces of the nation-state while \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>51</sup> Paul Cappon, Introduction, in In Our Own House: Social Perspectives on Canadian Literature (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1978), p. 60-61.

<sup>52</sup> 'Centripetal' is a term Woodcock likes to use when describing the operations of power and influence in what he calls 'the centralizing and Jacobinical interpretation of Canadian political structures posed by Pierre Elliot Trudeau and his ruling Liberal Party'. This passage is from his 1980 NeWest Lecture, The Meeting of Time and Space: Regionalism in Canadian Literature (Edmonton: NeWest Institute for Western Canadian Studies, 1981), p. 11. Among these structures of power and influence, the Canada Council is one of Woodcock's most frequent targets.

at the same time 'putting it in its place' in a model in which the values are created elsewhere. 'Regional' is an ambivalent term in Canadian critical discourse.<sup>53</sup>

For different reasons then, Woodcock, like Hope, remains an enemy to nationalism.<sup>54</sup> Throughout his career, and especially in those essays written for Canadian readership, he uses phrases quite distinctly reminiscent of A. D. Hope. "A Canadian literary tradition" -- the phrase has an ominous suggestion of nationalist feeling which I think it is necessary to dispel' (1955, Odysseus, p. 130); or the following from 1965:

in Canada during the 1940s, the last stage of differentiation appears, when writers no longer think it necessary to insist on their nationality, and when writing, as it does in Canada today, shows variety, originality, sophistication, self-awareness, the characteristics of a literature reaching maturity.<sup>55</sup>

The teleology that is deeply embedded in the arguments of these mid-century meliorists reflected a sort of confidence that arose in the generation that believed in its historic roles as overseers of the advent of national maturity, that took from that belief a confidence that the change in consciousness in which they participated was absolute and from that a licensed optimism in cultural change as an historical necessity. Like most teleological arguments, I suggest, it also commits one to a corollary

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<sup>53</sup> John Moss, Patterns of Isolation in English Canadian Fiction (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974), p. 8 writes, 'Regionalism is an ambivalent term in Canadian literary circles: more often than not it is used in a pejorative sense.'

<sup>54</sup> See, for instance, his essay 'Up the Anti-Nation' (Canadian Forum, 1972) rpt. in A George Woodcock Reader, ed. Doug Fetherling (n.pl.: Deneau & Greenberg, 1980), pp. 54-62. Subsequent references to items in this collection, hereafter cited as Reader, will be given in parentheses in the text.

<sup>55</sup> George Woodcock, 'Editorial Balance Sheet: Six Years of Canadian Literature,' rpt. in Reader, p. 220.

belief in the darkness that precedes the light whose coming is heralded. In post-colonial cultures this characteristically manifests itself (and in Canada more than in most) in a conviction that the work of earlier writers is merely a deficient attempt to approach or mimic this talismanic maturity.

It is in expressing this belief that Woodcock makes an effective explanation of the tenacity of this view in Canada and, in doing so, contextualises the Canadian reluctance to make use of the notion of 'tradition'. The essay is one of several over the years in which Woodcock assayed the Canadian literary scene from the Canadian Literature editorial chair, in which the editorial chair becomes (quite properly) part of the literary history surveyed. Woodcock explains that 'more than half of the space is usually devoted to writing within the past ten or twenty years and very little indeed to writing from before 1920' (Reader, p. 218). This preoccupation with the present and therefore with product rather than the past (and process)

does not arise from any undue preoccupation with novelty. It comes from the fact that in so far as we have something which can be clearly identified as a Canadian literature, this is a phenomenon of the past forty years, and in so far as there is anything that can be called a Canadian criticism, it belongs at most to the past fifteen years. (Reader, p. 218; my emphasis)

The editorial function evidently includes constructing the subject. Elsewhere, Woodcock accurately observes that 'a good anthologist is -- objectively considered [a favourite phrase of the fifties, marking the 'scientific' neutrality of the speaker above ideology] -- both a critic and a literary historian' (Odysseus, p. 116) and that is an awareness that he must have brought to his candidly interactive ('creative') role as editor of Canadian Literature for its first eighteen years. In the particular instance quoted, that obsession with the 'presence' of Canadian Literature has been an extremely strong influence on the kind of criticism written and the kind of reading done in Canada. That concern with presence has an effect, too, on the placing of the critical enterprise. It makes the crucial critical activity that of the present generation, its crucial subject the work of its immediate ancestors, the tribal elders: it establishes therefore, and perhaps thereby, vectors of filiation, lines of descent, but ones which unambiguously privilege the present. Richard White argues that demonstrations of a culture's maturity often reflexively refer to the intellectuals' own coming of age,<sup>56</sup> of their moving, that is, towards the centre. Significantly, then, the 'histories' that both Hope and Woodcock give emphasise the necessity of criticism for the attainment of cultural maturity at the same time as they aver that only with the present generation has criticism begun to be practised with any degree of 'sophistication' (and therefore maturity) or objectivity. The assumption of objectivity declares the speaker to be free of the non-literary considerations that stained earlier criticism: it is an argument that is utterly congruent with the (often accompanying) claim that the earlier literature can only be valued for non-literary reasons. The purely literary is thus equated with the notion of a single ('universal') standard and the primacy of the aesthetic which is thus established confirms the status of the critic.

As a 'creative' editor (the phrase echoes throughout his correspondence and essays on Canadian Literature) Woodcock's model of Canadian Literature and of the appropriate kinds of criticism are singularly important for, in many ways, that journal has had a hegemonic position of considerably greater effect than any single Australian journal

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<sup>56</sup> Richard White, Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980 (North Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), p. 151.



has had. At its inception in 1959 there were only two strictly literary periodicals in Canada (The Fiddlehead, 1945, which had begun publishing criticism in about 1955 and which Woodcock often omits to mention in his survey-articles, was the principal one, Tamarack Review, 1956, being the other), though it is true that a great deal of literary commentary, review and criticism has always appeared in the pages of Queen's Quarterly (1893), Canadian Forum (1920), Dalhousie Review (1921), and University of Toronto Quarterly (1931). Nevertheless, only the last of these (principally with its annual reviews, 'Letters in Canada') had a significant direct impact on the perception and practice of Canadian Literature. But none demonstrated the polemic or scholarly concern with Australian literary culture of Southerly (1939), Meanjin (1940), Overland (1954), Quadrant (1956), Westerly (1956), and Australian Literary Studies (1963). So the claim that George Woodcock 'invented Canadian literature in 1959'<sup>57</sup> reflects a kind of truth, albeit an exaggerated one.

But George Woodcock did not invent Canadian Literature and he did not entirely invent Canadian Literature either. The period of his editorship of that journal (1959-1977), though, was crucial in establishing Canadian Literature as a field and in that process George Woodcock did take a critical role. One of his singular contributions to the tone of Canadian criticism was a fervent opposition to the Romantic notion of the mutually antagonistic relation of critic to writer, a notion that has been more persistent in Australia than in Canada where the interactive and even interchangeable roles of critic, writer, and academic are more securely institutionalised. Indeed W. H. New, in his editorial for the one hundredth issue of the journal observes that 'it has been one of the

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<sup>57</sup> Quoted by Peter Hughes, George Woodcock (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974), p. 53; the reference is missing.

characteristics of Canadian Literature since its beginning that writers and critics have shared the pages, repeatedly integrating the twin processes of reading and writing'.<sup>58</sup> It was a 'policy' about which Woodcock himself frequently boasted. On one level it reflects, of course, Woodcock's principles and his autobiography. A non-graduate with a part-time University appointment he saw himself as a professional writer, a critic and a writer. To have established a tradition of that kind of criticism, a tradition he wrote about and fostered, is, of course, as it usually is, a way of providing a legitimising ancestry and present company for himself. He saw the critic's 'creative function' as a 'unifying and defining element in the emergent tradition'.<sup>59</sup>

His focus on the contemporary as an article of faith (referred to above) has continued to characterise not only Canadian Literature but Canadian literary criticism in general. Woodcock's other projected editorial policy, another outcome of that rhetorical combination of biography and principle, was the encouragement of international reviewers.

It might be axiomatic that when a cultural product comes to be seen as important by people abroad its value to the native community correspondingly increases. Nevertheless, whether as a matter of policy or principle, Woodcock was successful in consistently attracting a number of 'overseas' critics and reviewers to the journal, tying it into an international network of interest that was to become significant when the Canadian Studies programmes abroad began to take effect in the mid-seventies. For some of these projects it earned the abuse of Robin Mathews and the Canadian radical-nationalists, the proponents of Canadian

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<sup>58</sup> W. H. New, 'Rhythms of Discovery', Canadian Literature, No. 100 (1984), p. 9.

<sup>59</sup> George Woodcock, 'A View of Canadian Criticism', Dalhousie Review, 35 (Autumn 1955), 221; rpt. Odysseus, p. 135.

exclusivism. Woodcock and Mathews seem to have sparred at each other for years; Mathews was scandalised that an avowed internationalist should be allowed to edit a magazine on Canadian literature, that a 'militantly anti-nationalist, a self-proclaimed anarchist, and a regional secessionist' should be respected as a cultural commentator in a Canada under threat.<sup>60</sup>

Woodcock was offended by the collectivist values, the xenophobic nationalism, the censorship implied in most of Robin Mathews' pronouncements: in one letter he refers to Mathews as the 'totalitarian wing of Canadian nationalism' (Taking It to the Letter, p. 32) and in others to his delight in publicly refuting Mathews' arguments (pp. 62, 125).

The critical context of the founding of Canadian Literature is important. As Woodcock has rightly said, 'it always seemed to me that Canadian Literature was as much the creation of its period as it was my creation'.<sup>61</sup> It was, it is true, an idea whose time had come. The circumstances that obtained at the moment of its creation have been mentioned above and are part of the legend. The call for Canadian criticism, made by Smith in 1928, was being repeated by Pacey, Weaver, and others. The need for serious attention, and for what Woodcock himself calls 'practical criticism', were part of the contemporary rhetoric, an axiom whose fulfilment was inevitable.

After his return to Canada in 1949, Woodcock initially had very little

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<sup>60</sup> R. D. Mathews, 'Region and Nation: Authors and Critics as ideologues and political Spokespeople,' Canadian Issues, 5 (1983), p. 97 (Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Assoc. for Canadian Studies . . . Univ. of Ottawa, June 8-10, 1982, ed. William Westfall).

<sup>61</sup> George Woodcock, 'On Editing Canadian Literature: Recollections in 1977,' in his The World of Canadian Writing: Critiques and Recollections (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1980), p. 10.

contact with the world of Canadian writing, preoccupied as he was with subsistence at Sooke on the south-west coast of Vancouver Island. But he did begin to take commissions for radio talks for the CBC, and he continued to write reviews for English magazines and, increasingly, for Canadian ones as well; he also began to write articles and books on travel, a genre in which he has a considerable reputation. One of the consistent themes of that travel writing is the destruction of the essential community integrity of pre-European societies; it is a theme that also motivates a great deal of his writing on contemporary Canadian culture, a matter to which I shall return.

But the single piece of writing that marks the genesis of Canadian Literature is in fact a much more Eurocentric production. 'A View of Canadian Criticism' was published in the Dalhousie Review in 1956.<sup>62</sup> It does make a concluding remark that announced the need for 'a Canadian Journal devoted specifically to the critical consideration of native and world literature' (an announcement that may have been designed to prefigure his interest in editing such a journal; certainly that is how he has subsequently interpreted it).

It is a document that evokes many comparisons with Hope's essay on 'Standards', so many that one wonders whether Hope saw the article. Be that as it may, it presents an epitome of the mid-fifties internationalist position on national literatures and an excellent example of its characteristic rhetoric. The rhetoric is declarative and direct, emphasising an ex-cathedra confidence and an eagerness to sift the chaff from the grain, the general truth from the particular fallacy; it prefers

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<sup>62</sup> 'A View of Canadian Criticism,' Dalhousie Review, 35 (Autumn 1955), 216-23; rpt. Odysseus, pp. 130-37. Subsequent references to this essay, referred to as 'A View', will be cited from the Dalhousie Review and given in parentheses in the text.

the axiom to the demonstration; and it deals in the imperative mood. It begins by, in a sense, deconstructing its own title.

It seems to me necessary to decide first of all whether there is in fact anything that can reasonably be described as a Canadian literary tradition.

"A Canadian literary tradition" -- the phrase has an ominous suggestion of nationalist feeling which I think it is necessary to dispel. Political nationalism has little positively to do with the cultural traditions of peoples. . . . Nationalist movements, indeed, can often frustrate and paralyse cultural traditions. (p. 216, my emphasis)

Hope had begun in the same way, restoring what has, he assures us, been a confused (and even controversial) discussion to first principles:

If we want to form any clear idea of Australian literature and its importance to ourselves or anyone else, we ought to begin with as clear an idea as possible of what we demand of it and why. ('Standards', p. 1)

The argument then parallels the logical manoeuvring in Hope's essay quite precisely. The second step is to acknowledge, with sweet reasonableness, some of the claims of the nationalists while implicitly dismissing their more extreme (called 'fallacious', 'absurd', 'pseudo-mythology') ideas in an aside. Hope's move was to admit that 'there is at least something in this point of view' ('Standards', p. 6); Woodcock's is similar.

Yet, even when we have put aside the pseudo-mythology of nationalism, it remains true that peoples and regions have their own distinctive literary and cultural traditions and attitudes, conditioned by shared language and habitat and historical experience. (p. 216)

Both then rush, alarmed at the relativity that such an admission implies, back to their universalist positions. Here is Woodcock: 'it is axiomatic that, at its highest level, literature is also universal' (p. 216, my emphasis). That hierarchy, of course, demands judgment and that is why the critic is so important. In a later article pre-viewing Canadian Literature, and which drew on 'A View of Canadian Criticism', he made it

clear that in editing such a magazine I have no intention of promoting the kind of cultural nationalism which suggests that being Canadian is an initial value in a piece of writing; critical standards, to be of any use, have to

be universal.<sup>63</sup>

The attitude to hierarchy is historical; the present is a stage on the path to maturity; history is the record of improvement. And, once again, the example of nineteenth century American Literature is reassuringly paraded as a proof that twentieth century Canadian Literature will produce 'a valid separate tradition'<sup>64</sup>. As The Canadian Forum responded, 'If there's anything duller than parochialism, it's the application of universal standards to Canadian literature.'<sup>65</sup>

Just as Hope's argument was designed to prove principally that Australian Literature needed a rigorous critic, so Woodcock's culminates in discovering a similar necessity for Canada. And the American model clinches it, for 'the coming of American literature to independent maturity in fact coincides historically with the rise of American criticism' (p. 219). The historical coincidence soon slips into an historical imperative; in a couple of paragraphs it has become 'that sine qua non of a self-conscious literary tradition, a developed critical movement' (p. 219).

With the introduction of the American comparison, the similarities between these two articles become intriguingly close. The strategic comparison is educed at a similar stage in the argument; they mention the same writers; and, even more remarkably (for the period), they precede the United States comparison with the Latin American one. The sources of this complex of historiographical explanatory devices would be very interesting

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<sup>63</sup> 'A Canadian Literary Review,' Canadian Forum, 39 (Sept. 1959), 125.

<sup>64</sup> George Woodcock, 'Tentative Confessions of a Prospective Editor,' British Columbia Library Quarterly, 23 (July 1959), 18.

<sup>65</sup> This phrase comes from a later re-working of the same argument in 'Editorial Balance Sheet: Six Years of Canadian Literature, rpt. in Reader, p. 219.

to trace. R. T. Robertson made some interesting suggestions in a paper in 1975,<sup>66</sup> pointing to the attractiveness of the organic model of national literary development popularised by Parrington and others and promulgated by American Fulbright/Carnegie/Rockefeller scholars on their international visits. (Indeed, the significance to national cultures of the ideas that came with the grants from these American foundations, and even the extent of their direct assistance to cultural institutions and individuals needs to be documented.) Henry Seidel Canby visited Australia in 1945 under the principal sponsorship of Melbourne University, where Hope had just taken up an appointment, and an interesting little book (A New Land Speaking: An Essay on the Importance of a National Literature)<sup>67</sup> was published as a result of the interest his programme of lectures aroused. It is likely that this was, along with the influence of Hartley Grattan (who visited Australia in 1927, 1937-38, 1940,, 1960, and 1970)<sup>68</sup> and Richard Chase's The American Novel and its Tradition (1958), the principal conduit of American historiographical models for Australian critics. Certainly, many of the elements of the model Hope (and Woodcock) adopts are to be found in Canby's Essay, the organic model which requires maturity before independence, the suddenness of the transition, the focus on the one great individual (Hope's 'masterpiece'?), periodisation, the frontier thesis; though he is more of a Romantic-nationalist than Hope (and certainly Woodcock) could ever be.

Woodcock's 'A View' engages other arguments that are also to be found in Hope's 'Standards'. He also, for instance, laments the preoccupation in \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>66</sup> R. T. Robertson, 'The Greater and Lesser American Literatures,' Paper presented at AULLA/FILLM Congress, Univ. of Sydney, 27 Aug. 1975.

<sup>67</sup> Henry Seidel Canby, A New Land Speaking: An Essay on the Importance of a National Literature (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1946).

<sup>68</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Laurie Hergenhan for these dates.

the national literature 'with external nature at the expense of a proper consideration of human character and destiny' ('A View', p. 220), and assures his readers that there have been 'no major achievements as yet' (p. 220). The governing image of both of the essays is the dynamic, inevitable, but incomplete movement towards maturity. To achieve it, Woodcock reiterates, 'we should foster that critical spirit which can bring Canadian writing out of the hesitations of adolescence and into the self-consciousness of maturity' (p. 223, my emphasis).

But in two fundamental matters Woodcock's differs from Hope's position quite markedly. He quotes, with approval, a passage from a BBC talk on 'Creative Criticism' by an English friend of his, Derek Savage. It emphasises the social dimension and function of criticism. One of Woodcock's reputations stresses that interest in standards that was so strong in the essay under discussion and sees him as a precursor of the new strand of evaluative criticism in Canada.<sup>69</sup> But in fact, historical and social and political realities are always close to the forefront of Woodcock's considerations. He stresses, on several occasions, having 'participated in the infrastructure'<sup>70</sup> and for him the social structures are not easily separated from the literature they produce, either at the level of personal experience or that of analysis. The remarks about Hugh MacLennan that Cude misrepresents are an interesting case in point. Acknowledging 'the vastly more subtle and complete . . . fictional

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<sup>69</sup> See, for example, Wilfred Cude, 'A Return to Judgement: Woodcock's Proustian Insight,' Journal of Canadian Fiction, No. 31/32 (1981), pp. 218-22. Cude sees him as proof that the 'strengths of Johnson, of Coleridge, of Arnold can occur again, even in a region far removed from the British Isles' (p. 222, my emphasis) though the proof depends on some quotations taken rather a long way from their contexts.

<sup>70</sup> George Woodcock, Introduction, The World of Canadian Writing: Critiques and Recollections (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1980), p. ix.



artistry' of Sinclair Ross, and Ethel Wilson he continues 'Yet anyone with an ear for history -- literary or other -- must acknowledge the overwhelming importance of MacLennan'<sup>71</sup>. And Woodcock certainly had an ear for history. Elsewhere he explicitly refutes the canonical impulse that Cude attributes to him, and he does so in characteristically Woodcockian terms: 'the claim to include all major poets would have been a manifestation of critical authority I had no desire to perpetrate'.<sup>72</sup>

The second important difference between Hope's seminal essay and Woodcock's is a faintly dualistic strain that begins here and becomes more important in Woodcock's critical position and world-view later. In the prospect offered just before the first issue of Canadian Literature he articulated it in an interesting and productive form. In announcing his intention of using critics and reviewers from outside Canada, he justifies it as 'another means of obtaining the multiple point of view and of dissolving the "double standard" of criticism'.<sup>73</sup> And it is his attempt to find the multiple point of view while holding a few pretty strong values of his own that enables his dualism to flourish as a sort of perpetual return, whereas Hope's seems, as in the 'Standards' essay to vitiate itself.

This dualism is an especially strong element of Woodcock as polemicist in the debates about Canadian culture. His book, Strange Bedfellows: The State and the Arts in Canada is only the most recent and lengthy of his interventions. It becomes clear in that work that Woodcock is engaged in

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<sup>71</sup> George Woodcock, 'Possessing the Land: Notes on Canadian Fiction,' in The Canadian Imagination, ed. David Staines (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1977), p. 88.

<sup>72</sup> Introduction, Poets and Critics: Essays From Canadian Literature 1966-1974, ed. by George Woodcock (Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), viii.

<sup>73</sup> George Woodcock, 'Tentative Confessions of a Prospective Editor,' British Columbia Library Quarterly, 23 (July 1959), 20.

an attempt to save 'art' from 'culture'<sup>74</sup> and it becomes equally clear that this dualism is a metaphor for others. Firstly, art/culture is a way of representing mind/marketplace and, more or less therefore, individual/collective and thus individual/state. We are firmly back in the presence of the anarchist position as set out in the long passage from Anarchism quoted at the beginning of my discussion of Woodcock. But it also inscribes the other dualism inherent in the positions articulated by Hope and Woodcock in the two seminal essays discussed at length above as well. For it seems that art is universal while culture is national: the hierarchy is clear. The 'narrow' definition of culture he confutes is the materialist-anthropological one he derives from one of his principal targets, Susan Crean.

A culture, seen in this narrow way, is limited to the community that has developed it, though it embraces all its activities; it is, in several senses, a national culture, as much attached to a particular people and place as to their spoken and written language.

Art defies these limitations of a culture; it traverses boundaries of time and space . . . (Bedfellows, p. 14)

But it is his attempt at a synthesis of this duality that is perhaps most revealing. Taking confidence from Northrop Frye's pronouncement that 'cultural movements tend to decentralise and regionalise' he asserts that 'no art can in fact spring from other than personal and local experience' (Bedfellows, p. 14). The credo that expresses his view of the relations of art, culture and community is a complete statement of the Woodcock position.

. . . art begins with the individual insight and proceeds to the universally understood truth, but it can only do so through the community to which the artist belongs. (p. 15)

But if artists of all kinds give expression to the identity of a community as well as satisfy those individual aesthetic needs . . . then the community owes the artist

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<sup>74</sup> George Woodcock, Strange Bedfellows: The State and the Arts in Canada (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1985), p. 14.

its support. (p. 19)

He then writes admiringly of those pre-modern communities in which 'community arrangements came into being without the emergence of an organized state structure' (p. 19).

The key, I believe, to this sequence of dualisms lies deep within George Woodcock's conception of the relation of art to his essentially dualist conception of the relation of the individual to society. Valuing the community (Gemeinschaft)<sup>75</sup> orientation of both individuals ('place in community') and art (as expressing the community mind') in pre-modern societies -- he mentions specifically the Doukhobors and the Kwakiutl Indians of the North West Coast -- he sees and values the possibility of art expressing community consciousness in an organic functional way that appeals to the anarchist. But the anarchist rebels when Gemeinschaft turns into Gesellschaft, when, that is, the community becomes a series of institutions. Then the artist must, under Woodcock's model of history, retreat into individuality or be owned by the state. Woodcock's essays tend to be polemic moments on the arc of that pendulum.

That each of these universalist critics should fall into such radical dualisms is, I think, one of the disabling paradoxes of the operation of universalism in a post-colonial culture. The desire to be aware of difference while representing a single set of values and a single indivisible tradition is at the root of the disjunction that is engendered by universalism's imperialising role in such cultures. For the post-

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<sup>75</sup> Gemeinschaft ('community') and Gesellschaft ('society') were analytical constructs introduced by the German social philosopher, Ferdinand Tonnies in 1887 to distinguish between two fundamental kinds of social organisation. In Gesellschaft, relations are characterised by contractual arrangements between unassociated individuals acting in their own interests. It describes the relations existing under capitalism and within institutions affected by new technologies.

colonial culture's orientation towards the tradition, for instance, is a different one. It is characterised by forms of doubleness, as I have argued elsewhere,<sup>76</sup> that cannot allow the gaze to settle in the way that the universalist position demands. The post-colonial culture, like the post-colonial text, knows its otherness, is licensed to speak by the tradition whose authority it must ever attempt to deconstruct. The dilemma of the universalist critic in a post-colonial society is that he (as, to demonstrate the phallogocentrism of the system, he must be) is doomed to speak always on behalf of the tradition that makes him other and on whose behalf he attempts to name post-colonial space. And as the Margaret Atwood poem that provides this Chapter's epigraph reminds us, post-colonial space is remarkably resistant to such systematising.

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<sup>76</sup> Alan Lawson, '"There is Another World but it is in this One": A Cultural Paradigm for the Second World,' Paper presented at the Badlands Conference on Canadian and Australian Literatures, Univ. of Calgary, 29 Aug. 1986.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Institutionalisation of Culture: Appropriating Professional Interests

There are manoeuvres in all these fields.

David Malouf<sup>1</sup>

The period since 1939 is the one in which the cultural products called Canadian and Australian Literature were created. The literature already existed, but in this period it became recognised as an object/ive phenomenon of cultural value. The institutions servicing it were established and the competition to become custodians, judges, describers and definers of it grew. It was a competition in and for the discourse but, as these three final chapters seek to describe, that discourse intersects with many others -- with the discursive and material histories of cultural and professional formations, with the range of public discourses of their times and places and the power relations inscribed in them, as well as with the political economy of all of those discourses.

As a necessary ground for that competition, the national literatures were problematised, made 'subjects' of discussion and controversy and thus

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<sup>1</sup> David Malouf, 'Report from the Champagne Country,' in his Neighbours in a Thicket, 2nd ed. (St. Lucia: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1980), p. 43.

'objects' of attention. The 'problem' of the national literatures was often announced, and many solutions offered, by those who had chosen to speak on behalf of the subject thus constituted. Many suggestions were made for advancing the 'cause' of Australian Literature/Canadian Literature: most of the solutions to the problem depended upon advancing the financial or institutional status of the speaker. Academics saw the solution as a 'subject' (for which they spoke) with more courses and more research (to enlarge the subject); publishers spoke up for more objects of attention, more books to be published/printed 'here'; writers, claiming the 'natural' authority of the speaking subject, required more access to the cultural capital of the nation. It was from about the late nineteen thirties that the literary world in Canada and Australia became a continuing, recognisable community, acquiring and appropriating what Stephen Gray called 'status':

the coming into its own of a literature, . . . in terms of the whole nexus that supports a literature -- its own publishing industry, including newspapers, magazines and journals, its own self-referring use of language, its mutual understanding of a set of infolded norms and values, . . . its theoretical wing of evaluators like ourselves, its sense of settling in to do a job that has to be continually done, and -- most important of all -- its own community of readership or audience, which receives the work and feeds back into it reciprocally.<sup>2</sup> (emphasis added)

It is important to stress Gray's idea of this as a nexus, to see, that is, the acts of writers, critics, publishers, and teachers as interconnected in important ways as not only constituent but also constituting parts of a process, the meaning of which is never entirely concealed even though the rhetoric of those acts may function to elide it. As Margery Fee has observed,

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen Gray, 'A Sense of Place in New Literatures, particularly South African English,' WLWE, 24 (Autumn 1984), 228.

literary criticism is not only, perhaps not even mainly, a body of texts, but also, along with the literature it studies, a cultural institution. A critical commentary is often as concerned with striking a blow in an institutional battle as it is with analysing a piece of literature.<sup>3</sup>

In documenting the process of the establishment of a national literature in Canada up to 1950, Fee distinguishes two kinds of 'literary promotion':

. . . one type concerned mostly with short-term publicity, the other with long-term survival. Publicity tends to promote something already in existence, to aim at financial gain, and to see quantity as just as important as quality. The type that aims at survival attempts to set up an institution, a lasting structure that will encourage literary development, such as a course, a periodical, a society, a press, a series of literary works. These structures are more expensive and more difficult to set up, more permanent once established, allow some control over quality, and tend to be oriented towards the institution's own permanence and the future excellence of the literature it promotes. An institution devotes itself to a broad ideal like a great literature, rather than to more specific goals.<sup>4</sup>

Fee's rhetoric makes it clear that she subscribes to the liberal sociology that is the cousin of the romantic nationalist approach to culture which she deconstructs throughout Canadian culture. That liberal sociology treats culture as absolutely autonomous from the economic base, and sees academic institutions as concerned only with excellence, with lasting matters of quality, in short as being non-ideological and free of class interests. A couple of pages later, she asserts that 'institutions are supposed to defend ideals, not to become the advertising arm of a financial interest like publishing' (my emphasis).<sup>5</sup> This ignores the ideological situation of ideals, their complicity in the discourses of their culture,

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<sup>3</sup> Margery Fee, 'English-Canadian Literary Criticism, 1890-1950: Defining and Establishing a National Literature'. Ph.D. Thesis, Univ. of Toronto, 1981, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Fee, p. 135.

<sup>5</sup> Fee, p. 137.



and their vital intersections with the principal trajectories of those financial interests.

The view of the relations between institutions and 'society' taken in this thesis is not the structural-functionalist one of empirico-positivist sociologies. It is rather concerned to see the institutions and cultural formations in an historical way as responding to, and in varying ways and to varying degrees, effecting social change. It accepts that institutions participate in and intersect with fundamental social forces but assumes that they are not determined by them. It views critics, writers, publishers as different fractions of a class interest in culture that is 'relatively autonomous'<sup>6</sup> from the economic base and it sees them as 'actors [who] have some degree of discursive penetration of the social systems to whose constitution they contribute'<sup>7</sup> and, therefore, of the ideologies of those social systems. It does, nevertheless, see those actors as acting essentially in and through those ideologies in Althusser's sense.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> 'Relative autonomy' is a term that Althusser has developed out of Marx to express the ambivalence of the relation (which is what 'relative' here indicates -- not degree) of the political, the ideological, and the economic, and (logically) the aesthetic and the cultural. In cultural analysis in particular it is difficult to balance the specificity of the particular histories of cultural formations against the degree of their determination in and by the history of the whole. There are useful discussions of this issue in the Canadian and Australian contexts in 'General Introduction,' in In Our Own House: Social Perspectives on Canadian Literature, ed. Paul Cappon (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1978), especially pp. 37-43 and 'Introduction,' Susan Dermody, John Docker and Drusilla Modjeska, eds, Nellie Melba, Ginger Meggs and Friends: Essays in Australian Cultural History (Malmesbury, Vic.: Kibble, 1982), especially pp. 3-8.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony Giddens, Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> For Althusser, ideology was 'indispensable in every society, in order to shape men, to transform them and enable them to respond to the exigencies of existence' (For Marx [London: Allen Lane, 1969, p. 235] as quoted by Giddens, p. 179. It is, then, a functional component of societies as systems rather than a programme of belief or prejudice, or a distortion of reality.

Writers, scholars, cultural polemicists, librarians, or arts administrators have particular interests by virtue of their membership of particular groups or institutions. Within groups or institutions and in the modes of relation between institutions and the social system/s in which they participate, 'structures of signification are mobilised to legitimate the sectional interests of hegemonic groups'.<sup>9</sup>

Institutions do not determine actors' choices but they do situate the discourses within which those choices are articulated. The discursive practices and strategies of professionals acting as members of those institutions constitute a 'signifying system through which necessarily (though among other means) a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored' (my emphasis)<sup>10</sup>. These are analogues of the 'explanatory metaphors' and cultural codes that were discussed in Chapter Two. It is the function of those discursive practices as a kind of grammar of choices that can be explored here.

The prevailing wisdom in both Canada and Australia has been that the frontier societies in each country in the nineteenth century could have produced little literature and no literary society. In Canada, as constructed in the discourse of literary and cultural commentary, the Dark Ages of the Frontier seem to have lasted well into the nineteen fifties or even later. As late as 1958, the influential Toronto literary journalist, William Arthur Deacon was writing

Canadians are a practical, level-headed people. We have spent those 125 busy years clearing the forests, making farms, building railways, using planes to get at our northern riches. We have turned out great doctors, jurists, industrialists and bankers. We have made life

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<sup>9</sup> Giddens, p. 188.

<sup>10</sup> Raymond Williams, Culture (Glasgow: Fontana, 1981), p. 13.

comfortable in a harsh climate. There has been no time for reflection, little for the arts.<sup>11</sup>

The facts are, of course, different. There were, in both Canada and Australia, numerous active literary societies in earlier periods. Some of the work of describing the activities of these groups has been undertaken in Australia -- by Elizabeth Webby, Ken Stewart and others<sup>12</sup>. In Canada, much less of the basic historical research has been done and the present- and future-oriented paradigm so deeply-embedded in much Canadian literary discourse seems to guarantee that the old post tenebris lux clichés about the barrenness of earlier periods will be harder to dislodge.

<sup>11</sup> William Arthur Deacon, 'Our Emergent Literature,' Globe and Mail, 4 Jan. 1958.

<sup>12</sup> Ken Stewart, 'The Support of Literature in Colonial Australia,' Australian Literary Studies, 9 (1980), 476-87; 'The Colonial Literati in Sydney and Melbourne,' New Literature Review, No. 6 (1979), pp. 8-19, rpt. in Nellie Melba, Ginger Meggs and Friends, ed. Susan Dermody, John Docker and Drusilla Modjeska (Melbourne: Kibble, 1982); Frances Devlin Glass, 'Daniel Henry Deniehy (1828-1865): A Study of an Australian Man of Letters,' Ph.D. Thesis, Australian National University, 1973; 'Botany Bay Litterateur': D. H. Deniehy's Literary Criticism,' Australian Literary Studies, 9 (1979), 214-24; 'D. H. Deniehy as a Critic of Colonial Literature,' Australian Literary Studies, 9 (1980), 328-36; 'Checklist,' 388-98; Ann-Mari Jordens, The Stenhouse Circle: Literary Life in Mid-Nineteenth Century Sydney (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1979); Pauline Kirk, 'Colonial Literature for Colonial Readers,' Australian Literary Studies, 5 (1971), 133-45. Elizabeth Webby, 'English Literature in Early Australia: 1820-1829,' Southerly, 27 (1967), 266-85; 'Australian Literature and the Reading Public in the Eighteen-Twenties,' Southerly, 29 (1969), 17-42; 'Literature and the Reading Public in Australia 1800-1850,' Ph.D. Thesis, Univ. of Sydney, 1972; 'English Literature in Early Australia' Part I Southerly, 36 (1976), 200-22, Part II, 297-317; 'Bibliography of Original Poetry in Australian Newspapers and Magazines: 1836-1840,' The Push From the Bush, No. 1 (1978), pp. 32-81; 'Literary Lectures in early Australia,' Southerly, 40 (1980), 268-83; Early Australian Poetry: An Annotated Bibliography of Original Poems Published in Australian Newspapers, Magazines & Almanacs before 1850 (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1982). Mimi Colligan, 'Culture in the "Embryo Kingdom": Poetry in the Port Phillip Newspapers 1838-39,' The Push From the Bush, No. 10 (1981), pp. 58-71. The work of Eric Irvin, Veronica Kelly, and Harold Love -- especially The Australian Stage: A Documentary History (Kensington: Univ. of New South Wales Press, 1984) -- on early Australian theatre history is also noteworthy. The popular interest did not wait on the academic: Cyril Pearl's Always Morning (1960) and Brilliant Dan Deniehy (1972).

Nevertheless, as Edward McCourt observed as long ago as 1949, there were literary, historical and scientific societies in every hamlet;<sup>13</sup> Canada's Royal Society was founded in 1882; The Canadian Society of Authors operated from 1899 until about 1908: its interests were revived in The Canadian Authors' Association which began in 1921 (its French arm, formed in the following year, was replaced in 1936 by Societe des ecrivains); there were various more or less informal gatherings of Quebec writers throughout the nineteenth century<sup>14</sup>; the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec has been in existence since 1824; and The Literary Club of Halifax began about the same time.<sup>15</sup> Toronto's Pen and Pencil Club was founded in 1890 and an Arts and Letters Club in 1908.<sup>16</sup>

Of the professional organisations of writers that still exist and exert an influence, the oldest is the Canadian Authors' Association (CAA).

The Association was founded at a meeting of some sixty writers on 12 March 1921.<sup>17</sup> It began some two years after the magazine, The Canadian Bookman, whose very existence had highlighted the need for Canadian writers to take \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>13</sup> Edward McCourt, The Canadian West in Fiction (Toronto: Ryerson, 1949), pp. 4-5. McCourt draws a sharp distinction between the settlement of the US and the Canadian West. The 'frontier' paradigm applied to Canada and Australia, once again shows itself to be deficient in producing an erroneous model of cultural absence and deficiency.

<sup>14</sup> Some of these are referred to in Camille Roy, 'French-Canadian Literature' (1913); rpt. in Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness, . . ., ed. Clara Thomas (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1973), pp. 435-89.

<sup>15</sup> J. Paul Grayson and L. M. Grayson. 'Canadian Literary and Other Elites: the Historical and Institutional Bases of Shared Realities'. Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 17 (1980), 349, 351.

<sup>16</sup> The history and function of several of these kinds of societies is discussed in Margery Fee, 'English-Canadian Literary Criticism, 1890-1950: Defining and Establishing a National Literature'. Ph.D. Thesis, Univ. of Toronto, 1981, Chapter Three, 'Establishing Canadian Literature,' especially pp. 152ff.

<sup>17</sup> Lyn Harrington, Syllables of Recorded Time: The Story of the Canadian Authors' Association, 1921-1981 (Toronto: Simon & Pierre, 1981), p. 15.

the professional ramifications of their craft seriously and collectively. Initial support for the association was strong but, although it required of applicants 'a sufficient body of work', it gradually declined as an organisation commanding the respect of those with whom it negotiated as well as some of those whom it existed to represent. In its earlier years it agitated for copyright protection for Canadian authors who were, at the time (and for a long while afterwards), disadvantaged particularly with respect to the copyright of their works in the United States because of the Canadian Government's unwillingness to sign the Universal Copyright Convention, and earlier because of the British Government's persistent vetoing of Canadian Copyright legislation.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from its short-lived attempt at establishing a peak-council of bodies concerned with Canadian books<sup>19</sup>, the more lasting achievement of the Canadian Authors' Association was the institution of the Governor General's Literary Awards. The idea of the awards apparently arose in conversations between William Arthur Deacon and Albert Robson, then President of the Toronto Branch of the CAA, in late 1935. The granting of the awards was begun in 1936 after the then Governor General, Lord Tweedsmuir (the novelist, John Buchan) offered the Association the name of his office in perpetuity provided the Association took full responsibility for both the judging and the financing of the Awards.<sup>20</sup> The Awards were administered by the Executive of the Association until 1944 when an independent Awards \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>18</sup> This is discussed below, Chapter Six.

<sup>19</sup> For a further discussion of this, see Chapter Five, below.

<sup>20</sup> This account is derived from a Transcript of a Hearing before the Massey Commission at which the Canadian Authors' Association was represented by William Arthur Deacon, Dr. Lingard, Professor Child, and Mrs White. Canada. Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Science. Briefs and Transcripts, Reel 5, Transcript of Hearing in Toronto, 15 Nov. 1949, Canadian Authors' Association, p. 10.

Board was established; in 1959, the Canada Council took over the administration and added awards for writing in French in each of the categories. The Awards have been controversial on a number of occasions.<sup>21</sup>

The Canadian Authors' Association and its Australian counterpart, The Fellowship of Australian Writers (FAW) are both highly decentralised federal bodies; their branches conduct their affairs largely independently. Consequently, the degree and effectiveness of activity varies considerably from region to region -- the Victorian body, for instance, exceeding the others in the extent of its continued vitality. By contrast, the newer, more professional associations, the Australian Society of Authors (ASA) and The Writers' Union of Canada are both quite centralised, maintaining professional national secretariats in Sydney and Toronto respectively, close to and enhancing the centres of publishing and funding power. They each reflect the centralising impetus of the epochs of their formation and a recognition of the nature of corporate culture. The ASA attempted to work with a semi-independent sub-Committee in Victoria from 1967 until 1976, reflecting the debates on cultural funding, arts access and intellectual traditions in Australia that continue to presume that Australian regionalism can be articulated in terms of a Sydney-Melbourne contest. In describing the national Committee's relief at the ultimate dissolution of the Victorian Committee, the Society's historian, Deirdre Hill (the Society's Executive Secretary from 1971 until 1981) reflects that

it had been a 'learning' period. Members of the Committee of Management and activists among the Society's members in Melbourne learned that the only practical way for the Society to manage its business was through the strong central office working for a common cause, without the

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<sup>21</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this, see Chapter Five, below.

distractions of centres of authority in other cities.<sup>22</sup>

This was occurring during a period of stress in Australian federal relations under the Governments of Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser both dedicated, in their own ways, to strong central control. It is noteworthy that, in a paper on the subject, one of the Victorian activists Don Charlwood seemed to accept the political analogue when he wrote that 'Regional Vice-Presidents tend to have their place as watchful state governors rather than as politically-embroiled state premiers'.<sup>23</sup> As the decentralising, democratic-nationalist ideology was replaced by the centralising, monolithic one of national unity, the writers' organisations mirrored that dominant ideology. The FAW and the CAA, which continued to reflect the 'archaic' paradigm focussing on dispersed individuals and the regionalised mosaic, faded in influence.

By the nineteen fifties and sixties, the Canadian Authors' Association had lost most of its early initiative and professional reputation. Like The Fellowship of Australian Writers, the Canadian body found that its relatively egalitarian membership requirements meant that the average age of its members increased and their average output declined to the point where the organization no longer represented the working writers of Canada. Attempts were made, most particularly at the Association's National Convention in Halifax in 1964, to introduce a separate category of Associate Membership for non-producing members but these attempts were defeated and not only was the Association doomed to

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<sup>22</sup> Deirdre Hill, A Writer's Rights: The Story of the Australian Society of Authors, 1963 - 1983 (Sydney: Australian and New Zealand Book Company, 1983), p. 83.

<sup>23</sup> Hill, p. 81.

reflect the interests of amateurs, former and would-be writers<sup>24</sup> but it deprived itself of once again representing the professional interests of writers at the very moment when Canadian literature was in the process of becoming a very public business, and attaining a very public reputation, as national cultural issues were being inscribed in a remarkably sharpened public discourse about Canada, and as the Canada Council was beginning to feel its way out of its initial reactive phase into a mode of systematic funding and policy-making.

It was not surprising that some members of the Association were relieved and enthusiastic when The Writers' Union of Canada was formed by a group of sixty writers at a well-organised meeting in Ottawa on the weekend of 3-4 November 1973, after an earlier exploratory meeting in Toronto on the weekend of 15-16 June had, somewhat controversially, established the guidelines for its structure and membership. That Ottawa meeting was partly funded by the Canada Council and the Union has continued to receive support from the Council. This was a much more professional organization and, as a child of its time, much more militant and nationalistic.<sup>25</sup> It was born out of a feeling held by some writers that while the new nationalism of the late-nineteen sixties had produced an increase in Canadian content in many fields it had failed to produce tangible results for writers. The writers who were associated with the Union from the \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>24</sup> Hugh Garner gives a wickedly witty account of a Toronto meeting of the Association in his literary autobiography, One Damn Thing After Another (Markham, Ont.: Pocket Books, 1975), pp. 248-49. It is an account which sounds all too credible to one who has attended a meeting of one of the regional branches of the Fellowship of Australian Writers in its decline. It appears that, on the evidence of one of his dialect-poems, 'Strine Authors Meet,' Earle Birney had a similar experience. The best-known, and best, literary account of such a meeting is F. R. Scott's poem, 'The Canadian Authors Meet'.

<sup>25</sup> See William French, 'Writers Take a Fighting Stance,' The Globe & Mail, 5 Nov. 1973, p. 14.



beginning were 'high-profile' writers of fiction (there was a short-lived attempt to limit the membership to fiction writers), writers who were relatively familiar with the corridors of cultural politics. They forced a new seriousness into the perception of writers and of Canadian writing. The notion of writers as amateurs willingly and selflessly subsidising the cultural life of their country as documented in both the Massey and Applebaum-Hebert Reports was no longer tenable.

In the historical process of professionalisation a notable index of difference between the earlier and later bodies is the nature of their relations with other literary institutions. In its submission to the Massey Commission, the Canadian Authors' Association articulated the isolationist purity of the artist, a belief in the separation of the writer from the means of production and distribution:

the Association is vitally concerned that the Commission should recognise the needs of creative artists as basic in the development of a Canadian culture and the means of mass distribution as secondary.<sup>26</sup>

Just as the academic bodies which addressed the Commission had anxiously stressed their desire to remain 'above politics' so the writers stressed their desire to remain 'above economics', each thus preserving their mysteries. Although the Fellowship of Australian Writers paid some direct attention to both economics and politics, this was opposed by some members as being outside the artistic concerns of writers, and in the continual polemic about Communist influence this was an inhibiting factor in the FAW's attempts to further the interests of writers. To speak of either politics or economics was to risk being called a communist. Both the Writers' Union and the ASA quickly developed active working relationships

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<sup>26</sup> Canada. Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, 1949-1951. Briefs and Transcripts, Reel 5, Brief 103, 31 October 1949, Canadian Authors' Association, p. 1.

(while recognising the often adversarial nature of them) with other cultural institutions. Once it was recognised that the 'needs of creative artists' and 'the means of mass distribution' were inseparable, it became possible for Canadian writers, for instance, to petition the Ontario Government for financial assistance for McClelland and Stewart or for Australian writers to make joint representations with publishers to the Commonwealth Government for the expansion of the activities of the Commonwealth Literary Fund, for the introduction of a book bounty, and for the provision of Public Lending Right. It also led to tense and litigious negotiations with libraries over photocopying and later manuscript ownership. Raymond Williams notes that the 'new type of "professional society" was founded primarily to regulate the new economic arrangements' that developed with the emergence of what he calls 'the market professional'.<sup>27</sup> Certainly, the most active periods for both of the national professional writers' societies were during times of national economic stress (particularly in Canada) and the stress of new technologies and market arrangements (particularly in Australia).

It is important to see the development of these writers' organisations in an historical context that can be traced back to the literary societies of the early nineteenth century. Viewed as a succession of ways of articulating sectional interests subject to historical change and changes in the dominant discourses of their societies, these literary formations can be seen genealogically, each in its time articulating the emergent and then dominant discourse. Indeed, J. P. and L. M. Grayson in a study of Canadian literary elites see them in just this way, suggesting that 'among the English elite, the Royal Society, the Canadian Authors' Association, the League of Canadian Poets and the Writers' Union of Canada have had, in

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<sup>27</sup> Raymond Williams, Culture (Glasgow: Fontana, 1981), p. 62.

turn, their period of dominance'.<sup>28</sup> In support of their argument, they show that 'none of the elite born after 1935 are currently CAA members', although for those born between 1870 and 1899 over 40% were. While there is in Australia a more significant overlap of membership between the two historically and socially distinct bodies (the FAW and the ASA) the pattern of succession would, I believe, also be apparent.

The inception of the Australian Society of Authors was less a reaction against the existing bodies (The Fellowship of Australian Writers, and PEN) than a specialisation of their activities, an increasing professionalism. Like the Canadian Authors' Association, the Fellowship (which was founded in 1928) had been accused in the thirties of jingoistic chauvinism but it retained the broad support of major writers until the mid-fifties. At this time the autonomous state branches were federated in an attempt to strengthen the organisation, but the history of the national relations of the body were marked by the political polarisation that has been such a notable feature of Australian literary culture. In 1950, the South Australian branch had withdrawn its affiliation from the group in protest at the left-wing bias of the other branches and the attempt to federate the branches at that time failed.<sup>29</sup> A proposal in 1945 to a Tariff Board Inquiry into Book Publication for the introduction of a tariff on imported books was greeted with derision in some quarters. The insulation that this protectionist measure implied was, in fact, to become something of a feature of the Fellowship's style in the following decade. But it was the \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>28</sup> J. Paul and L. M. Grayson, 'Canadian Literary and Other Elites: the Historical and Institutional Bases of Shared Realities,' Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 17 (1980), 353.

<sup>29</sup> Vance Palmer, 'President's Report' to Victorian Fellowship of Australian Writers. typescript, Palmer Papers. National Library of Australia, NLA MS 1174/30/110.

opposite view, that Australian Literature should be encouraged by subsidising production rather than by protecting against competition, that had been the body's historical position. It was an FAW paper that had led to the expansion of the Commonwealth Literary Fund support for Australian writing in 1939 -- and subsidy rather than protection was the view, largely lost by the Fellowship after the War, that was taken up by the new Australian Society of Authors from its foundation in 1963.

The Society's founding was an extraordinary example of consensus. As New South Wales President of the Fellowship of Australian Writers, Walter Stone called a meeting of delegates from a number of other organisations.

The meeting (on 24 October 1962) was chaired by Stone, attended by delegates from from the Fellowship, PEN, the Poetry Society, Realist Writers Group, Actor's Equity, and the Radio, Television and Screen Writers' Guild and addressed by the prime-mover, Dal Stivens, whose enthusiasm for the work of the Authors' Society in England had led to the revival of the idea of an Australian writers' trade union.<sup>30</sup> The trade union description was one that was implied often and avoided even more often in the history of the Society and its foundation. Resolutions and publicity usually preferred to speak of professional interests, by which was generally meant 'economic advancement', though it was seldom acknowledged just how varied the professional interests of writers were. To these 'professional interests' was usually annexed the 'national interest'. At the meeting of almost one hundred writers which formally established the Society on 15 May 1963, Dal Stivens asserted that 'only when writers become more professional would Australian literature fully develop'<sup>31</sup>: literature and the rise of capitalism, indeed. The Bulletin (which by 1963 had become \_\_\_\_\_)

<sup>30</sup> Hill, p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> Hill, p. 13

a conservative news magazine under the control of Australian Consolidated Press) contextualised its reaction to the new body (with which it would have to deal as an employer) by describing the initial meeting as taking place 'under faded portraits of Henry Lawson and Joseph Furphy',<sup>32</sup> thus ironically implying a decline in standards from the glories of the great emblematic individualists of the nineties.

This increased professionalism occurred as other groups such as the Universities, teachers and 'other' writers, began to exercise their professional interest in the subject. The League of Canadian Poets was founded in 1966 to lobby specifically for the improvement of the interests of poets in Canada and had considerable success in developing the almost-ubiquitous poetry reading-tours, just as the Poets' Union of Australia was to do on a slightly more limited scale a few years later; the Association of Canadian Television and Recording Artists (ACTRA) had, since 1963, represented some writers who derived income from writing for the CBC; and there were specialist associations representing Playwrights, Children's Authors, and Periodical Writers.<sup>33</sup> In Australia, too, there was an increasing impetus towards the protective collectivisation of creative workers, a move away from the fragile individuality so prized in the historical record. The Australian Writers' Guild (1961)<sup>34</sup> was formed shortly before the Australian Society of Authors to work in the interests of scriptwriters in the theatre, as well as in the electronic media, while the Australian Journalists' Association had conducted similar activities on

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<sup>32</sup> 'National Notebook -- Organisation,' Bulletin, 3 Nov. 1962, pp. 3-4.

<sup>33</sup> Harrington, Syllables of Recorded Time, pp. 296-97.

<sup>34</sup> Other professional organisations concerned with writers' interests include PEN, The Poets' Union of Australia, and The Society of Women Writers (which, founded in 1925, is the oldest).

behalf of journalists since 1910; it was the only organisation of writers which declined to participate in the formation of the Australian Society of Authors, although (in a country of which Patrick White has said, 'the schoolteacher and the journalist rule the intellectual roost'<sup>35</sup>) many writers have been, of course, members of both.

In both Canada and Australia, there were attempts to bring together the class interests of all concerned with the production, evaluation and consumption of books. In each case the moment was not timely. In 1935, the Canadian Authors' Association brought together representatives of various organisations to form the Association of Canadian Bookmen but, in an era of the domination of the mass market by paperbacks from the United States and the growing affirmation of the sectional interests of the contributory organisations, the new body disbanded in 1938.

In Australia, a similar but even more effectively nationalist body was assembled after the war. In October 1947, the Federation of Australian Literature and Art (FALA) was formed to fight against the dumping of syndicated foreign literary material into the Australian market;<sup>36</sup> this was an especially acute problem in the radio, magazine and newspaper fields but it was also of concern to writers and book-publishers and it was an issue taken up two decades later by workers in the television industry as well, with considerable effect on the policies of the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal. FALA was an extremely broad body that drew together representatives from education as well as publishing and a wide range of artistic performers and producers, illustrating the breadth of the nexus

<sup>35</sup> Patrick White, 'The Prodigal Son,' Australian Letters, 1, No. 3 (April 1958), p. 38.

<sup>36</sup> Reported in Fellowship, April 1948, clipping in Palmer Papers, National Library of Australia, MSS 1147/30/126.

Stephen Gray referred to. The Amalgamated Printing Trades Union, the Fellowship of Australian Writers, the Australian Journalists' Association, the Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations, The Teachers' Federation, The Contemporary Art Society, Allied Authors and Artists, and the Society of Radio Announcers; it grew out of the Tariff Board Inquiry into Book Production in 1945 to which the Fellowship of Australian Writers had made such a controversial submission on dumping.

In the nineteen fifties there was another attempt to join the diverse interests of the 'book class' when, in 1955, an Australian Book Fair was held at Melbourne Town Hall.<sup>37</sup> According to the organisers a copy of 'every Australian book in print' was on display. This was largely a colloquium of readers and writers rather than producers and consumers: no book-trade representatives were involved in the organisation, although they certainly co-operated. This council was emblematic of many similar bodies in both countries in the period from about 1920 to about 1960. It was composed of groups of 'amateurs' in both senses of the word, groups professing no 'interest' except the disinterested kind -- the Poetry Lovers' Society, the Bread and Cheese Club (an all-male nationalistic literary society, founded in 1938), and the Australian Literature Society (founded in 1899 to encourage the study and writing of Australian Literature). Plans to keep the council together for a series of annual events, beginning with a Festival of Australian Books during the Olympic Games in the following year were not notably fruitful.

The development of radio as a professional outlet for writers in Canada and Australia needs to be seen in an historical context. In many ways radio had a function, in the nineteen thirties, forties, and the early

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<sup>37</sup> Reported in Overland, No. 4 (1955), p. 13.

fifties in particular, analogous to that of the periodicals in the nineteenth century. It provided fairly rapid and often quite wide dissemination and also enabled successive re-production through re-broadcasting, syndication and so on. It provided, for many writers, an opportunity for piece-work that supplemented more substantial or (occasionally) regular income.

Numerous Canadian writers have testified to the vital support that Robert Weaver gave to their careers as a producer with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation after 1948. Hugh Garner speaks of him as 'a man who has . . . done me so many favors and saved me from so many disasters that I shall always be in his debt'.<sup>38</sup> The impact of Weaver's support through his position at the CBC not only revived the conception of the short story as a distinctive and dominant Canadian mode of writing (Desmond Pacey, in his Introduction to A Book of Canadian Stories, could speak of it as 'a literary tradition of value'<sup>39</sup>) but centralised it at a time when the study of Canadian Literature and its enmeshing in the other institutions of national culture (such as publishing, public funding bodies, libraries) were being constituted (or, in some cases, reconstituted) to take special cognisance of it. This re-centralising of short fiction came at a time when poetry had been dominant for a decade or more, but, more importantly, it came at the moment when national literature entered into the hegemonic discourse. Coast to Coast, an annual short story anthology (1941-73, 1986) played an almost identical role, helping thus to 'sustain' the notion not only of the short story as central to the Australian literary tradition but also the idea of a particular tradition of the short story memorialised in

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<sup>38</sup> Hugh Garner, One Damn Thing After Another! (Markham, Ont.: Simon & Schuster, 1975), p. 132.

<sup>39</sup> Desmond Pacey, A Book of Canadian Stories, rev. ed. (Toronto: Ryerson, 1962), p. xxxvii.



the volumes. Weaver's interest in the short story at a time when the periodical outlets for it in Canada were diminishing was of profound importance. The literary magazines that flourished (if that is the word) in Canada in the nineteen forties and fifties were predominantly, if not exclusively, interested in verse. The Canadian Forum and Queen's Quarterly occasionally published short fiction; Preview, and Northern Review were primarily committed to particular movements in poetry but did publish some stories by writers who were part of, or sympathetic to, their principally poetic manifestoes. In 1954, Weaver formalised the CBC's commitment to the form by instituting the weekly programme, 'Anthology', which continued until 1985, and in 1956 he was one of the leading members of a group which founded Tamarack Review, a journal that has been particularly influential in the development of the modern Canadian short story. To observe the specific contributions of particular individuals and institutions is to dis/cover the discontinuous history of a form that has been seen to have been distinctively important in the Canadian (as in the Australian) literary tradition.

The relation between national broadcasting and national writing is certainly not limited to its distinctive impact on the development of the short story. Throughout the nineteen forties and the fifties in particular both the CBC and the ABC were major and sometimes the pre-eminent book-reviewing forums in the two countries. Both had extensive 'Talks' programmes which often provided the opportunity for extended cultural discussion and literary debate. Significant contributions to the debate about the national literatures were often made in the form of radio talks or reviews. As noted in Chapter Three above, much of A. D. Hope's considerable influence and authority descended from his extensive access to the reviewing and talks programmes of the ABC -- sources of authority that are, to an extent, now concealed, since most of the material was never printed and since it also depended upon the authoritative medium which it shared with the news and current affairs and the formal appurtenances of high culture.

Radio reviewing was of vast significance until the development of national reviewing journals. In 1946, The Australasian Book News and Library Journal attempted to fill the gap it perceived as having existed since the demise of A. G. Stephens' Bookfellow in 1925<sup>40</sup> but it survived only until 1948. Systematic printed (rather than spoken) reviewing of Australian books began with the inception of Australian Book Review in 1961 (and more securely in its second avatar in 1978) and of Canadian books with Books in Canada since 1972.

Despite its great importance only some of the broadcast material is recoverable. Walter Murdoch's radio talks were, unfortunately, not collected but some of H. M. Green's are in Fourteen Minutes (1944), and a few of Vance Palmer's and A. D. Hope's have appeared in altered forms in printed essays<sup>41</sup>. It is noteworthy that Murdoch, Palmer, and Green all gave talks on ABC radio during its very first year of operation, 1932-33<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> In his desire to authenticate his journal's ancestry and hence authority, George Farwell makes the not-uncommon Australian literary mistake of stretching the antiquity of the past, claiming 'it is more than 25 years since The Bookfellow ceased publication' (Australasian Book News and Library Journal, 1, No. 1, [1946], 1) although it was, in fact, just twenty one years.

<sup>41</sup> A few are reprinted in his Native Companions: Essays and Comments on Australian Literature 1934-1966 (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1974), and some on non-Australian subjects are in The Cave and the Spring: Essays on Poetry (Adelaide: Rigby, 1965). Hope's bibliographer, Joy Hooton, records about seventy others, though some curiosities in her manner of listing items

preclude an accurate count. Moreover, as noted in Chapter Three, Hope's own custom of extensively re-using material and his affiliations with other reviewers makes it especially difficult to disentangle the specific history of his activities as a reviewer and a literary commentator.

<sup>42</sup> This is noted in Richard Connolly, 'ABC Radio: Culture and the Spoken Word,' Quadrant, 27, No. 3 (March 1983), 32.

(as did 'Banjo' Paterson). Many of the reviews broadcast in the programmes, Current Books Worth Reading (1941-1955) and Today's Books (1956-1963), Today's Writing (1963-1964) and Books for Comment (1963-1969) were printed in periodicals of the same names but their impact and authority came from the broadcast version. This is yet another manifestation of the importance of the orality of Australian culture; it is invisible when only the conventional printed record is investigated. More permanent records of the broadcast medium include such collections as Canadian Literature Today (1938) and Australian Writers Speak (1943), both containing a series of radio talks on the national literatures which help to remind one that radio's role was not confined to reviewing but was (and indeed still is) in both countries one of the most important venues for sustained and continuous cultural debate and commentary.<sup>43</sup> Its place in the history of culture needs to be examined much more closely and the influence on those debates of the particular rhetorical and formal modes of the technology needs to be investigated. Certainly, the history of the relationship between these institutions and the national literatures needs to take account of the changing construction of the role of national broadcasting.

Like other national cultural institutions, the national radio networks were conceived as part of the national project. R. B. Bennett, the

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<sup>43</sup> The role of the national radio systems in culture is considered by Connolly, 'ABC Radio: Culture and the Spoken Word,' Quadrant, 27, No. 3 (March 1983), 30-40, and by Robert Weaver, 'Broadcasting,' in Writing in Canada: Proceedings of the Canadian Writers' Conference, Queen's University, 28-31 July 1955, ed. George Whalley (Toronto: Macmillan, 1956), 103-14. See also Ken Inglis, This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932-1983 (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1983), especially pp. 1-43; Alan Thomas, Broadcast and be Damned (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1980), especially pp. 6-19; and Clement Semmler, The ABC: Aunt Sally and Sacred Cow (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1981), especially pp. 10-15.

Conservative Prime Minister, gave the nationalist position its characteristic articulation in a speech to the House of Commons in May 1932.

This country must be assured of complete control of broadcasting from Canadian sources, free from foreign interference or influence. Without such control, radio broadcasting can never become a great agency for communication of matters of national concern and for the diffusion of national thought and ideals, and without such control, it can never be the agency by which national consciousness may be fostered and sustained and national unity still further strengthened . . .<sup>44</sup>

In the same year, the Australian rhetoric on the subject was significantly different. Richard Connolly quotes both the Post-Master General introducing the Australian Broadcasting Commission Bill and the first Chairman, Charles Lloyd Jones (echoing the Prime Minister) as asserting the necessity of following the British example ('to walk in the footsteps of the BBC and fall in behind Britain'). The words of the Post-Master General, J. E. Fenton, were even more colourful:

under the Empire broadcasting system, it will be possible for naked blacks to listen-in in the jungle to the world's best operas. We may also reach the period when brown-skinned Indians will be able to dance to one of England's best orchestras, and when fur-clad Canadians in distant snow-bound outposts may listen to a description of the running of the English Derby.<sup>45</sup>

The rhetoric was that of excellence concealed in the mimicking of an unquestionably superior and apparently undifferentiated English culture. When the bodies were established in the nineteen thirties, it was possible to speak unreflectingly of national unity and to construct excellence unproblematically; in 1985 both of these institutions are engaged in

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<sup>44</sup> R. B. Bennett, House of Commons Debates, 18 May 1932, quoted in Paul Audley, Canada's Cultural Industries: Broadcasting, Publishing, Records and Film (Toronto: James Lorimer, in association with the Canadian Institute for Economic Policy, 1983), p. 184.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Richard Connolly, 'ABC Radio: Culture and the Spoken Word,' Quadrant, 27, No. 3 (March 1983), 30. It is also quoted in each of the three books on the ABC cited in note 43.

fundamental restructuring (and consequent financial constraints) that will not enable such speaking. The conception of a single national audience was never embodied in programming, as Robert Weaver observed in a talk to the Canadian Writers' Conference at Queen's University in 1955:

The words 'mass media' suggest a search for a mass audience. Yet the same mass media are apparently beginning to create their own specialized publics, and this has been happening quite noticeably in the past ten years or so.<sup>46</sup>

In the straitened economic circumstances of the nineteen eighties (which has had large and direct effects on the size of national broadcasting systems in the United Kingdom as well as in Canada and Australia), it seems likely that a new nationalism will emerge -- as it has in both countries in similar periods during the past century. However, as the idea of a national broadcaster serving the interests of national unity has disappeared from the polemic strategies of public discourse it is likely that any re-emergent literary nationalism that is reflected in programming will be articulated in terms of either populist access or multicultural diversity and, therefore, probably outside the national system.

In both Canada and Australia, radio drama was of extraordinary importance. Given the practical difficulties of theatre in large and relatively thinly-populated countries in which the ownership of commercial theatres was highly concentrated (often in foreign hands), radio drama offered vital outlets for the work of dramatic writers. But the technology actually incorporated a new form. Radio, or even television, does not merely reproduce a theatrical performance: it has its own aesthetic and institutional parameters that not only challenge the working writers but also, of course, those who define the category, 'literature', as written

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<sup>46</sup> Robert Weaver, 'Broadcasting,' in Writing in Canada, ed. George Whalley (Toronto: Macmillan, 1956), p. 106.

rather than verbal texts. Recently critics and theatre historians have begun to document and note the importance of this genre.<sup>47</sup> However, it is an importance that has clearly been diminishing since the nineteen sixties. The rapid revival of Australian and Canadian theatre in the later sixties and seventies was partly a cause and partly a result of this. Certainly, it is possible to document the careers of playwrights and actors whose work was encouraged or sustained by radio; it is also necessary to acknowledge the influence of radio on the development of an audience reception for an Australian or Canadian 'voice' in drama or poetry or fiction. But as Australian radio-programming tends further towards the spontaneous and brief interview, and the unconsidered 'talk-back', the proportion (and authority) of formal talk on cultural matters as well as the performance of drama, poetry or short fiction demonstrably diminishes; the fragmentation and discontinuity is increased.<sup>48</sup>

But the involvement of writers in the new media is not only of practical historical significance: radio (and subsequently television and film) was a new technology and therefore the social relations were to be different from those of the marketplaces for traditional writing practices. The new relations experienced by writers in both Canada and Australia

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<sup>47</sup> For a discussion of the significance of Australian radio drama and the ABC's role in its development, see Introduction, Five Plays for Radio: Nightmares of the Old Obscenity Master and Other Plays, ed. Alrene Sykes (Sydney: Currency Methuen, 1975); and also Robert Holden, 'The ABC and the Sponsorship of Australian Radio Drama: 1932-1951,' Australian Literary Studies, 10 (1982), 478-94.

<sup>48</sup> Richard Connolly, 'ABC Radio: Culture and the Spoken Word,' Quadrant, 27, No. 3 (March 1983), especially 39-40, documents this decline quite conclusively. It is a trend that has continued since he wrote. Connolly compares ABC programming with that of the BBC for a recent period:

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|--|---|---|
| <u>Short stories (new unpublished)</u> | BBC, 1 each day,                              | ABC, nil;                                     |
| <u>short stories (published)</u>       | BBC, 2 a day,                                 | ABC nil;                                      |
| <u>Serialised book readings</u>        | BBC 1 . . . each week-day (total 15 minutes), | ABC 2 . . . each week-day (total 27 minutes); |
| . . . ; <u>One-off plays</u>           | BBC 10 hours 30 minutes a week,               | ABC three hours a week . . .                  |

confirm the generalisations made by Raymond Williams that in the new technologies the social relations tend to mirror first the market professional mode and finally the corporate professional one.<sup>49</sup> That is, writers and other creative professionals will be commissioned, or otherwise employed, to carry out an appointed task, the impetus for instigating the work having passed from the writer to a commissioning editor or producer. It is apparent from such historical records as the diaries of theatrical manager Philip Henslowe that such was also the situation of writers in the new technologies of the later Elizabethan stage. The role of the artist as producer demystifies the role of the artist as creator. It is this single issue that is at the (often unacknowledged) centre of many of the debates between the proponents of Culture and those of the cultural industries. The issue devolves to one of power in differently constituted marketplaces. And the project of many of the new critical theories is complicit with the function of the new technologies: that is, to distance the 'author' from the 'text'.

This new signifying system of social relations is also to be observed in many other aspects of writers' work, and it is probably appropriate to consider many of the 'new' practices as new technologies of distribution or even production. In both Canada and Australia a significant amount of professional income is earned from non-writing activities, activities in which the writer becomes promoter and performer and even living cultural artifact. The reading, the interview, the promotional tour, the writer-in-

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<sup>49</sup> Raymond Williams, Culture (Glasgow: Fontana, 1981), pp. 51-53.

residency, the conference reading/performance<sup>50</sup> are all now significant parts of a writers' professional life.<sup>51</sup> In these activities they may be 'employed' by a University, a publisher, a radio station, or a learned or professional society; or they may not be 'employed' at all, but merely carrying out one of the unpaid prerequisites of authorship. In each of these activities writers become reified, identified with their 'products', extending the concept of authorship but also extending their own 'authority'. These are not only modes of production but modes of re-production, their ephemerality and their sometimes unpaid status representing one of the asymmetries of the cultural market.

Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron usefully observe that one can distinguish between short-term cultural commerce, in items of limited symbolic value, and longer-term operations in which major symbolic value is dependent on the slow building of authority.<sup>52</sup> Bourdieu expresses here a theorised account of the observation made by Margery Fee and quoted at the beginning of this Chapter, that literary promotion can be divided into

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<sup>50</sup> In Canada, writers sometimes joke about being passengers on 'Canada Council Airlines': in Australia, the new phenomena have been pressed into fictional service by Frank Moorhouse and Michael Wilding. Moorhouse discusses the writer's role in Conferences in Conferenceville, in 'The Year of the White Knight' (where the writer is also entrepreneur with a product to sell, a market professional, mendicant, scriptwriter, writer-in-residence, and just a little paranoid). Wilding investigates the new and possible technologies in The Short Story Embassy, where his character speculates about 'novel' forms of distribution which include broadcasting stories on taxi radios; and in his Introduction to The Tabloid Story Pocket Book where he discusses his own practical involvement in some new forms and technologies.

<sup>51</sup> This was confirmed for me in discussions with Canadian novelists, Aritha van Herk (29 October 1985) and Timothy Findley (22 March 1986), each of whom had learned to view the promotional tour, readings and interviews as part of the process of writing a book and to programme their work accordingly. Though the promotional tour is not so highly developed in Australia, a number of Australian writers have commented informally to me that they too see these as parts of being a writer.

<sup>52</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture (London: Sage, 1977), pp. 31-33.



one type concerned mostly with short-term publicity, the other with long-term survival. Publicity tends to promote something already in existence, to aim at financial gain, and to see quantity as just as important as quality. The type that aims at survival attempts to set up an institution, a lasting structure . . . These structures are more expensive and more difficult to set up, more permanent once established, allow some control over quality, and tend to be oriented towards the institutions own permanence . . .<sup>53</sup>

Clearly, in the kinds of supernumerary activities just described and in the activities of members of other cultural formations and institutions examined in this Chapter it is not always possible to disentangle the short-term commerce in modes of reproduction from the longer-term institution-building augmentation of authority. Indeed, it is the contention of this discussion that, while it is important and useful to distinguish theoretically between the two, it is equally important to affirm the nexus between them in most of the cultural practices through which the national culture is constituted and signified, and to suggest that this is especially so throughout the period under discussion.

One of the principal activities in the establishment of a culture is the process of definition and selection. This contest is not only, as it would often appear, about the nature of the 'subject' but also about its function. The debates about literary nationalism, the advancing polemic of romantic nationalism, each imply not only what is to be constituted as part of the national literature but also what should be done with it. So it might be that the national literature should be used to advance foreign policy, trade, or 'educational' objectives. In each case, its 'intrinsic' merit (a highly problematic construct, as this thesis often observes) serves to increase its effectiveness, to augment the authority that is

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<sup>53</sup> Margery Fee, 'English-Canadian Literary Criticism, 1890-1950: Defining and Establishing a National Literature'. Ph.D. Thesis, Univ. of Toronto, 1981, p. 135.

being appropriated.

The process of definition -- which is, of course, a process of selection -- takes place in many forums, and several of these are examined in the following pages. It is closely related to the boundary-marking aspect of literary history discussed in Chapter Two. There was no doubt that an enormous amount of literature had been written in Canada and Australia, about Canada and Australia, by Canadians and Australians. There was some doubt about how much of that constituted Canadian and Australian literature, how much of it should be retained and claimed; how much should be accorded 'heritage status'. Should the books of visitors who stayed a few years (such as Frances Brooke and Henry Kingsley, D. H. Lawrence and Wyndham Lewis) be included? What about those born elsewhere (Marcus Clarke and F. P. Grove, Adam Lindsay Gordon and Malcolm Lowry), or those who lived abroad (Mavis Gallant and Christina Stead, Henry Handel Richardson and Brian Moore)? At what point does the work of such a writer become, or cease to be, Canadian or Australian? The withdrawal of the Encyclopedia Britannica Award to the expatriate novelist, Christina Stead, in 1967 because she was no longer considered Australian and then the confused reaction in the following year when the same prize was awarded to the New Zealand-born writer, Douglas Stewart probably did much to lay this literary conundrum to rest. The issue was current in Canada as well. When the Irish-born Canadian-citizen US-resident, Brian Moore won the Governor-General's Award for Fiction in 1976 some of the disgruntled reaction expressed itself in similar terms. When does the early literature become 'recognisably' Canadian or Australian, and no longer 'imitatively' or 'derivatively' English? These arguments were about the 'Australian' and 'Canadian' part of the terms Canadian literature and Australian literature. Which books best represented Canadian or Australian literature? Which books were distinctively or typically Australian? These, of course, depended very much on arguments about the meaning of 'Australian'. In Australia they flourished much more vigorously and much earlier than in Canada, where the concern was more often whether they qualified as literature at all.

In his Inaugural Professorial Lecture, Hallvard Dahlie wittily and pointedly shows up the discursively-bound nature of these judgments by tackling the notion of 'modified Canadians', and the exclusivist attitude taken towards nationality by the leader of the Canadianisation movement, Professor Robin Mathews. But he too, like so many other commentators in Canada and Australia (and no doubt elsewhere), begins by presuming that the problem is unique to his culture.

. . . perhaps more than any other English speaking nation, Canada has amongst its ranks of novelists an unusually large proportion of what Robin Mathews might see as other than the real thing -- part-time Canadians, erstwhile Canadians, pseudo-Canadians, lapsed Canadians, born-again Canadians, and would-be Canadians . . .<sup>54</sup>

But the process of selection often manifested itself more specifically as a search for a masterpiece and a quest for a canon. At the beginning of this period, the non-existence of a masterpiece was regretfully repeated in a set of reassuring observations about the immaturity of the culture. The reassurance in this was that, while an immature culture could not be expected to have produced a masterpiece, a maturing one would certainly do so in the fullness of time. The professional activity that was thereby legitimised was that of the critic as judge, as arbiter of quality and taste. Considerable emphasis was placed on this activity in reviewing and in teaching. But because there was also a developmentalist assumption at the base of this reassuring historiography, historical scholarship or

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<sup>54</sup> Hallvard Dahlie, Strange Trafficking and Curious Merchandise: The State of Canadian Fiction. Inaugural Professorial Lecture, . . . Univ. of Calgary, 16 January 1979 (Calgary: Faculty of Humanities, 1979), p. 3.

antiquarian recovery (what T. D. Maclulich has called the 'archival or custodial function'<sup>55</sup>) was also justified. These tended, in both countries, to be sharply separated. In Australia, for reasons speculated on in Chapter Two, historical scholarship and critical recuperation put down stronger roots; in Canada the synchronic arbitration of quality or the demonstration of theme prevailed. This is reflected in the attention given in Australian criticism to the interrogation of tradition as a way of tying together the historic experience (though often practised in an ahistoric way) and in the historicist synchronicity of much of the thematic criticism practised in Canada post tenebris.

The establishment of a canon makes possible the repeated attention to the 'classic' works and therefore the slow accretion of cultural authority.<sup>56</sup> It is clearly an assertion that the embedding literature not only exists but is worth the attention of critics, scholars, teachers, students and of course, readers-as-consumers.<sup>57</sup> It serves a literary purpose (which may be aesthetic) but it is clearly congruent with an ideological purpose as well as with an economic one. John Docker explains how the search for a canon is related to a concern with representative and normative social and community values.<sup>58</sup> The predicament for those judges assessing the writing of the age of imminent maturity was to be sharply discriminating enough to justify their role as critics while concealing

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<sup>55</sup> T. D. Maclulich, 'What was Canadian Literature? Taking Stock of the Canlit Industry', ECW, No. 30 (Winter 1984-1985), p. 20.

<sup>56</sup> Bourdieu and Passeron speak of the way a 'habitus' is established when something seen to be worthy of reproduction and the authority needed to reproduce is delegated to an agency, p. 31.

<sup>57</sup> Anthony Dawson, 'Davies, His Critics and the Canadian Canon', Canadian Literature, No. 92 (Spring 1982), p. 158.

<sup>58</sup> John Docker, Australian Cultural Elites: Intellectual Traditions in Sydney and Melbourne (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1974), pp. 112-13.

their eagerness to actually discover the Great Australian/Canadian Novel and thereby extend their legitimate activities into teaching and research.

A. D. Hope's famous 1956 review of White's The Tree of Man<sup>59</sup> catches just this brinkmanship, I believe, as does Desmond Pacey's more candid acknowledgement a few years earlier in his Creative Writing in Canada, that 'Canadian writers . . . must produce in an atmosphere of tense expectancy which looks for each new publication to be the Great Canadian Novel, Poem, or Play'<sup>60</sup>.

Hope's reaction against The Tree of Man was, to some extent, on the grounds that it was too experimental. Robert Kroetsch, speaking at the Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel on the question of 'Contemporary Standards in the Canadian Novel', remarked that when he went back to Leavis to discover the sources of his confidence about canonical values, he found that 'his concern with art often became an uneasiness with either experiment in form or undue stress on style'<sup>61</sup>. For not only is the desire for a canon a conservative one but so will the objects of that desire, the canonical texts be conservative as well. The ideological pressures are linked to a conservative ethos.

The apparent paradox in all this was that, as shown in Chapter Three, Hope was also instrumental in making Australian Literature a full subject in his own department at Canberra University College.

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<sup>59</sup> A. D. Hope, 'The Bunyip Stages a Comeback', The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 June 1956, p. 15; rpt. in A. D. Hope, Native Companions: Essays and Comments on Australian Literature 1936-1966 (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1974), pp. 75-79.

<sup>60</sup> Desmond Pacey, Creative Writing in Canada (Toronto: Ryerson, 1952), p. 4.

<sup>61</sup> Robert Kroetsch, 'Contemporary Standards in the Canadian Novel', in Taking Stock: The Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel, ed. Charles Steele (Downsview, Ont.: ECW Press, 1982), p. 10.

This occurred in 1954 and it was opposed by the Faculty at Melbourne University which then controlled Canberra. It was the first full course in Australian literature at an Australian University. (The very first full course was established at the University of Pennsylvania in 1941, and Australian books as opposed to Australian literature had been part of courses at Adelaide, Sydney and Queensland for some time.) In setting up the Canberra course Hope only partly bypassed his own notion of standards.

The course was an historical survey of the development of Australian writing which emphasised the few classics. It thereby affirmed how little 'good' Australian writing there was.

Now, texts that lend themselves to a certain kind of analysis current at a given time, tend to be raised to a high level of value by the very fact that they can be studied, and their 'secrets' revealed, according to a particular methodology.<sup>62</sup>

It might be added, too, that the methodology is also thereby valorised by its association with the privileged objects of cultural value.

John Docker has, in numerous articles, essays, and papers attacked the hegemonic dominance of curricula by the favoured texts of a particular mode

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<sup>62</sup> Anthony Dawson, p. 155.

of critical practice.<sup>63</sup> The notion might be taken further. If it is the case that the dominant mode of critical practice in Australia was from the early nineteen sixties until the end of the nineteen seventies, very broadly speaking, that of either radical or romantic nationalism then one should not be surprised to discover a preference among writers of critical articles and books for works of fiction as objects of attention, as speaking subjects of the national project. As Margaret Atwood puts it:

I believe that poetry is the heart of the language, the activity through which language is renewed and kept alive. I believe that fiction writing is the guardian of the moral and ethical sense of the community. . . . fiction is one of the few forms left through which we may examine our society not in its particular but in its typical aspects.<sup>64</sup>

The Australian Literary Studies 'Annual Bibliographies of Studies in Australian Literature' for 1974 and 1984 list twice as many items on fiction as on poetry; the 'general' articles on themes, regions, subjects and so on also revealed a similar preference for fiction. In Canada, the balance is rather more even, though fiction is still privileged

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<sup>63</sup> John Docker, Papers given at Association for the Study of Australian Literature Conferences, May 1978 (later revised as Chapter 1, 'The Australian Background', In a Critical Condition), August 1985 (revised version of a paper given at the Australian Studies Centre, Univ. of Queensland, 28 September 1984), the Australian Studies Centre, 'Nationalism and Class Conference', 26 September 1981, the Conference of the South Pacific Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies, Univ. of Queensland, May 1976? ('The Neocolonial Assumption in University Teaching of English', in South Pacific Images, ed. Chris Tiffin [St. Lucia: SPACLALS, 1978], pp. 26-31) and 'Commonwealth Literature and the Universities', New Literature Review, No. 2 (1977), pp. 5-9 and 'University Teaching of Australian Literature', New Literature Review, No. 6 (1979), pp. 3-7. Some of these views are further summarised in 'Australian Literature of the 1890s', in An Introduction to Australian Literature, ed. C. D. Narasimhaiah (Milton, Q.: John Wiley, 1982), pp. 7-22 and in 'Introduction. Australian Cultural Studies: Problems and Dilemmas', in Nellie Melba, Ginger Meggs and Friends, ed Susan Dermody, John Docker and Drusilla Modjeska (Melbourne: Kibble, 1982), pp. 1-18 (especially pp. 8-13). The most complete version of Docker's arguments is in his collection, In a Critical Condition: Reading Australian Literature (Ringwood: Penguin, 1984).

<sup>64</sup> Margaret Atwood, 'An End to an Audience', Dalhousie Review, 60 (1980), 424.

and drama, until recently, almost ignored. The Literature Board has also been stressing its impact on the development of fiction.<sup>65</sup> The point that the Board's Director, Tom Shapcott, indirectly makes is worth stressing. What the system of literary grants does is to institutionalise an advantage (or rather to redress a disadvantage) to writers of longer works. Funding provides extended time for writers and therefore the opportunity to work on extended projects. In both countries, writers have used their grants to work on works of longer fiction while continuing to devote their 'spare' time to poetry. Barry Andrews notes that both the Literature Board and its predecessor, the Commonwealth Literary Fund, have consistently funded prose-writers in greater numbers than poets or dramatists.<sup>66</sup> The consequent valorising of the Board/Council-supported volumes meets the desire of the cultural/romantic-nationalist critics for works which, to borrow Atwood's words, allow them to 'examine our society not in its particular but in its typical aspects'.

Shapcott's account of the impact of the Literature Board displays the post tenebris lux phenomenon that I have noticed on a number of occasions in the discussions of these national literary cultures. Shapcott, for instance (in 1986!), rather curiously avers that 'twelve years ago many people thought the Australian novel to be something hardly to take seriously'<sup>67</sup>. But it is clear that any account of the activities of a national cultural funding body needs to justify, not only the existence of the body, but also its strategies in bidding for funds from Governments, and the professional activities of the members of the organisation itself.

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<sup>65</sup> Tom Shapcott, 'The Literature Board in Action', Notes & Furphies, No. 16 (April 1986), pp. 6-7.

<sup>66</sup> Barry Andrews, 'The Federal Government as Literary Patron', Meanjin, 41 (1982), 7.

<sup>67</sup> Tom Shapcott, 'The Literature Board in Action', p. 7.



The behaviour of the two institutions is intriguingly different. The Canada Council has continually asserted the imperative articulated in submissions to the Massey Commission, speeches in the House of Commons, and in the press, that it should operate at 'arm's length', 'objectively', and with due regard to Canada's regional impulses. The pre-history or archeology of the Literature Board (as distinct from the Australia Council) is as an instrument of Government patronage with (since 1939) an entrepreneurial mandate and, since the major expansion of the Commonwealth Literary Fund at the instance of the Fellowship of Australian Writers in 1939, a tradition of direct involvement with and by writers.<sup>68</sup>

The distinction that may be made, then, is between the bureaucratisation of the Canada Council and the quite high-profile market-interventionism of the Literature Board's operatives. The Canada Council has a 'Writing Section' but no permanent or semi-permanent Board to advise it on continuing or changing policy; as a further guarantee of its neutrality the Council has very few members with experience in the arts. Its decisions are made by a highly-diversified system of juries whose role is to judge the quality of applications but not to formulate policy or suggest new initiatives. In the operations of the Literature Board, the activities of the Board are clearly associated with the visible work of the

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<sup>68</sup> For much of the period since 1939 (ie, between 1939 and 1973), too, the Fund operated in interaction with a Committee of senior politicians. The effects of this, as Andrews notes, was to place it under the scrutiny of Parliament, often with appalling results as in the early 1950s but also to give it 'a crucial point of contact between writers and politicians'. While the acrimonious debates in Parliament and in the Press about the politics of the CLF in the 1950s were an effect of the Cold War polemics of the public discourse (see Chapter Five), they are also a particular effect of the organisation of the Fund with its (literary) Advisory Board and its Parliamentary Committee. The irony for a comparative history is that, the Canada Council having been established after numerous representations pointing to the model of the Commonwealth Literary Fund, the Fund was re-organised more or less along the 'arms-length' lines borrowed from the Canada Council.

Project Officers and Director who travel widely, and are frequently seen at the public events connected with the Board's funding or areas of interest.

A proposed reorganisation of the Boards and the Council in 1981 was determined to pool the professional staff of the formerly separate Boards and to alter the chain of responsibility between Boards, their Directors, and the Executive Chairman of the Council. The significant protests from literary groups at this announcement were principally concerned to recognise the considerable professional expertise that the Board's staff had developed from their direct and specialised involvement in literary activities; there were also protests from those professional staff themselves, declaring clearly their own professional/class interests. The corporate model re-structuring plans of the new Executive Chairman were ultimately resisted and the model of individual enterprise and professional expertise was reasserted over arm's-length bureaucratisation.

In many ways, this was more significant for the Literature Board than for many of the other Boards since it had consistently preferred to direct a large proportion of its (shrinking) budget to the support of individual writers. The individual/professional model of its structure is then a reflection of (is reflected in?) its preferred mode of patronage. The dominant model of social relations is to be discovered both within the organisation and in its dealings with its clients. But against this history has been an equally strong preference, by Dr. Timothy Pascoe and by the Fraser Government, for funds to be directed to the so-called 'Flagship Companies'. These preferences can be seen as manifestations of a recurrent cycle of discursive synonyms for equity and excellence (access/elite, popular/high, democratic/genteel), but they also precipitate themselves into other discursive patterns -- of devolution and centralisation, artistic freedom and accountability.

This is not the place for a history of the Board. The Commonwealth Literary Fund produced its own in 1967,<sup>69</sup> and Barry Andrews has written a detailed and exhaustively-documented analysis of literary patronage in Australia since 1906.<sup>70</sup> But some of the Board's activities are worth noting in the context of the changing professional relations of writers and the literary class interests with which they intersect. As Andrews notes, the Literature Board has been particularly innovative in its sponsorship of writers. I have already spoken of the 'new signifying system of social relations' reflected in the 'new' professional practices -- the reading, the interview, residency, conference, and so on. Most of these new activities, new modes of reproduction as I have suggested, are also instruments of public funding (in both countries) and are therefore, as relevant 'technologies', direct products of those public funding institutions. They do, of course, like all technologies, not only affect the system of social relations experienced by the writer as I have already noted above, but they also act selectively or rather they function as selectors. That is, only some writers read well, only some perform well at conferences, institutions and communities choosing a writer-in-residence have their own criteria in place. Reading tours, organised by State or Provincial Arts Councils or more latterly by the National Book Council in Australia or The Writers' Union of Canada, require not only certain kinds of personalities but also certain kinds of literary work. These institutional imperatives all have their impact on the defining of the national culture, on what is regarded as (or more accurately, what is noticed as) the national literature, and on who are regarded as the

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<sup>69</sup> Commonwealth Literary Fund, Helping Literature in Australia: The Work of the Commonwealth Literary Fund, 1908-1966 (Canberra: Government Printer, 1967).

<sup>70</sup> Barry Andrews, 'The Federal Government as Literary Patron', Meanjin, 41 (1982), 3-19; 'The Commonwealth Literary Fund and the Literature Board, 1908-1980', Australian Cultural History, No. 1 [1981], pp. 59-69.

authoritative writers. For while it is undoubtedly true that organisations see the presence of a writer as augmenting their own authority, those institutions (or formations) have their own validity in the social structure and their choice, like all judgments, confers a degree of valorisation upon the writers selected.

Between about 1954 and the early nineteen sixties, then, there were several strands of debate about Canadian and Australian literatures.<sup>71</sup> They were subjects for discussion as well as objects of study. By the nineteen sixties they had extended opportunities as subjects for subsidy as successive governments of all parties dramatically increased the funding of the Canada Council, CLF and its successors, the Literature Board of the Australian Council for the Arts (1973-1975) and then of the Australia Council (1975- ). One obvious consequence of both of these developments was that it was now also a career-path as well. Clearly the contest to become associated with the dominant paradigm intensified. In the mechanics of that subsidisation of the interests of those interested in the national culture, Canada and Australia differ in important respects.

When the Canada Council was set up in 1957, it not only funded artists and arts organizations but academic research as well. The Massey Commission, given the provincial rights arguments that were so firmly stated to it, rather boldly took the view that education and culture were interrelated and were therefore Federal responsibilities. It accepted, in large measure, the arguments about national funding of the humanities that had been put forward so clearly by the influential report by Woodhouse and Kirkconnell, The Humanities in Canada, published by the Humanities Research

<sup>71</sup> The Humanities Research Council of Canada/ The Canadian Federation for the Humanities, 1943-1983: A Short History . . . (Ottawa: Canadian Federation for the Humanities, 1983), p. 4.

Council in 1947. The Council itself was the product of an institution under pressure. An influential committee of academics had recommended in 1942 that programmes in Arts, Commerce, Law, and Education be suspended for the duration of the War. The Woodhouse and Kirkconnell report saw the preservation of a liberal humanist education as a necessity for the survival of Canadian democracy. In this sense, they showed themselves to be part of the ideology that inspired the establishment of the Massey Commission and its writing. The nexus between education, culture, and the 'national interest' was enshrined in each of these documents. The Council's Short History rather disingenuously speculates about the effect that this free-world commitment had on its applications for funding to the American philanthropic foundations.<sup>72</sup> One should note the very extensive dependence on American funding for cultural and institutional activities in both Canada and Australia, especially between about 1930 and 1960.

The association of research and artistic funding in Canada was not entirely satisfactory. As early as 1965 there were calls for the separation of the two functions; the Humanities Research Council, which acted as principal adjudicator for grant applications, supported this change (which guaranteed a great increase in its authority and power), a Royal Commission and a Senate Special Committee recommended it. It was accepted by the Canadian Government in 1972 and, finally, in 1978 it was enacted with the establishment of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. The Canadian Federation for the Humanities (as the Humanities Research Council became in 1979) immediately exercised a further centralising role when, in 1979, it began funding some of the

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<sup>72</sup> See Chapter One for an account of the historical developments that signalled productive watersheds in the construction of the national literatures in Canada (after 1945) and Australia (after 1954).

administrative costs of the Learned Societies which operated under its umbrella. The annual Learned Societies Meetings are an expression of this centralising impulse of the mosaic's artifacts. The Federation acts as a professional intermediary in the chain of funding.

In Australia, there has never been such a nexus between the values of art, research, and the national interest. Nor has there been a tradition of national commissions of enquiry of the scale or scope of those which have become a Canadian reflex. Certainly, there have been enquiries into matters of national concern such as education (the Murray Report, the Williams Committee) but these have not evoked the polemics of national unity or of continuing debate about an overarching national interest. They have proceeded as self-referential examinations of 'particular', contemporary 'problems' and have usually preferred the discourse of economic (rather than cultural) necessity.

In Canada, the argument about the national culture is also particularised by its connection to the institutionalised relations of the University system. Despite the genuine anxiety still sometimes encountered in Canada about the status of Canadian Literature in the Universities of that country, it is undeniably true that Canadian Literature has been part of Canadian University curricula for much longer than Australian Literature has been in Australian Universities.<sup>73</sup> But there are more interesting connections. The other nexus between research and the arts reflected in the operations of a common funding body, the Canada Council between 1957 and 1978, was significant in relating the activities of scholars and of writers. It also provided a climate in which writers could more easily settle in University Departments as academics or

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<sup>73</sup> See Chapter One, footnote 79.

as long-term writers-in-residence: certainly, the more direct influence on this was the example of United States Universities in which, of course, significant numbers of Canadian academics were trained or from which they came as part of the Americanisation of Canadian Universities of which Robin Mathews and James Steele speak.<sup>74</sup> But the institutionalisation of Canadian writers within the system and the institutionalising of Australian writers outside of it have had important effects on the kind of work that is subsidised, the kind of work that is written, the kind of work that is studied and, probably, the kind of work that is read.

With a greater proportion of its writers outside of the University system (and, for a time, feeling antagonistic towards it<sup>75</sup>) the burden of funding falls more heavily on the Literature Board, a fact that has implications not only for funding but also on the professional role of the writer. The centralising role of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (with that most regrettable of acronyms, SSHRC, i.e. 'shirk') includes large forms of direct and indirect subsidy to the publication of academic/critical/scholarly books. Indeed, in a system that places greater emphasis on publication as a career pre-requisite this is an institutional necessity. That does not occur in Australia, although the Literature Board, like its predecessors, has always provided various forms of publication subsidy to 'creative' books.

But the Literature Board does (again continuing the policy of its

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<sup>74</sup> See especially The Struggle for Canadian Universities: A Dossier, ed. Robin Mathews and James Steele (Toronto: New Press, 1969).

<sup>75</sup> The paradigm of antagonism between writers and critics (and academics are sometimes an extra category) is something of a chestnut in Australian commentary. As late as 1985 Judith Wright drew an unbreakable line between the two groups at the ASAL Conference at Armidale but her view was opposed by many of the other delegates, including writers. Max Harris was long one of the consistent proponents of this view.

ancestors) subsidise the costs of periodicals. Most of the Australian 'literary' magazines contain a mixture of both 'creative writing' and 'critical writing' and both are effectively subsidised by the Board in this way. Now, the models for these Australian periodicals are variously said to be the broad liberal-humanist magazines, like The Partisan Review, or the University Quarterlies (Hope regretted that Australia had nothing to compare with the University of Toronto Quarterly),<sup>76</sup> but the funding realities institutionalised this formation in Australia in a conclusive way. To brutally simplify, then, the differences between the publishing situation for commentary on the two national literatures: in Canada, the production of academic books is favoured; in Australia, the production of essays and articles.

It might also be observed here that the compartmentalisation of Canadian life effected by the extremity of the seasonal cycle also has its impact on the organisation of academic activity and, of course, on the products of it as well. The highly concentrated teaching period -- typically from early September until late April -- provides Canadian academics with a summer of at least four months for uninterrupted research and writing. The Australian academic calendar, based on the assumption of more temperate climate, typically breaks up the teaching into smaller blocks -- three terms at most Universities and numerous public holidays -- and allows a maximum of two and a half months of summer for uninterrupted (except by Christmas!) research and writing. One of the major modes of reproduction, in a sense a new technology in its penetration of the institution, is now the conference paper; and even (as informality is

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<sup>76</sup> A. D. Hope, 'Literary Criticism in Australia', Typescript, p. 5. A. D. Hope Papers, Australian National Univ. Library, Bundle 1, folder 8. Joy Hooton (A. D. Hope, 1979) suggests this was a lecture given in Canada in 1958; internal evidence points to a talk in Australia in about 1960: it may have been revised and updated.



formalised as a sign of allegiance to the national culture in the main Australian forums) the question-time comment and the coffee-break chat. The Association for the Study of Australian Literature (ASAL) holds separate annual conferences with four days of papers with a mid-week excursion day; its Canadian 'counterpart', the Association for Canadian and Quebec Literatures (ACQL) meets at the Learned's (in conjunction with over one hundred other societies) for about two days. A very large number of the papers given at ASAL conferences are not published: a proposal to publish the Proceedings of the first Conference (Monash, 1978) fell through and has never been seriously revived. As in other aspects of Australian culture, the spoken word has great authority. Textuality has lost its privileged, reified place at the centre of the discourse along with its decoder, the critic. But the continuity of the logic of cultural debate has been diminished in this process. Fragmentation of debate and commentary is thus embedded in the structures of academic discourse in Australia, in the institutions of its production, and in the modes of its reproduction.

This part of my discussion has concentrated on the newer and more marginal professional organisations and practices, but a discussion of the institutionalisation of Australian and Canadian Literature would not be complete without an examination of the role of the most prestigious bodies of that kind, the Royal Society of Canada, the Australian Academy for the Humanities and its predecessor, the Australian Humanities Research Council.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> The role of the Canadian Humanities Research Council (later the Canadian Federation for the Humanities) in the development of crucial research-funding patterns and the concomitant social relations reflected in them has been mentioned above. The collaboration between the Canadian and Australian Councils is discussed in Chapter One.

The Royal Society of Canada was formed by the Marquis of Lorne (son-in-law of Queen Victoria) in 1882 (following the earlier Royal Canadian Academy of the Arts).<sup>78</sup> In his Inaugural Address, the Foundation President, Dr. J. W. Dawson said 'We meet today to inaugurate a new era in the progress of Australian literature and science'.<sup>79</sup> But the encouragement that the Society gave to Canadian Literature largely took the form of 'many excellent papers on writers of other countries . . . [which] have reminded Canadian writers of the high standards they must ever seek to meet'.<sup>80</sup> Direct attention to Canadian Literature was scanty and late in coming.<sup>81</sup> A paper on Canadian poets of the Great War by William Lighthall in 1918 was a product of contemporary concern rather than an announcement of interest in the national literature and it was twenty two years before anybody spoke to the Society about it again -- not surprisingly once more during wartime, a paper on the Canadian Ballad by J. M. Gibbon in 1940. At the time when discussions of the subject were becoming much more common, the nineteen fifties, the Society was more active and indeed quite influential. There were individual papers on Canadian literary topics in 1952, 1953, 1955, and 1957 but most important was a symposium in 1956.

The General Session on Canadian Literature at the Society's meeting in June 1956 (one year after the Canadian Writers Conference at Queen's University) contained three papers, Roy Daniells on 'The Religious

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<sup>78</sup> George Woodcock, Strange Bedfellows: The State and the Arts in Canada (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1985), p. 32.

<sup>79</sup> Quoted in Desmond Pacey, 'The Canadian Writer and his Public 1882-1952', in his Essays in Canadian Criticism 1938-1968 (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1969), p. 122.

<sup>80</sup> Pacey, 'The Canadian Writer and his Public 1882-1952', p. 131.

<sup>81</sup> This account is based on an examination of the Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 1938-1980 and the Subject Index to the Proceedings and Transactions . . . , Third Series, 1907-1937.

Sensibility in Canadian Fiction', Desmond Pacey's historical account affirming the stages of development of Canadian Literature, 'The Canadian Writer and His Public, 1882-1953'<sup>82</sup> and the most influential, Northrop Frye's much-reprinted piece, 'Preface to an Uncollected Anthology'. The Society's interest then waned and it was not until 1970-1976 that more papers on Canadian Literature were given. But the legitimising effect of that 1956 Symposium should not be underestimated; it was a kind of annointing.

The activities of the Humanities Research Council were more practical and contributed to the establishment of an infrastructure for Canadian Literature. It supported Watters' Bibliography, and Klinck's History as well as largely funding the Australian-Canadian exchange. In Australia, the Humanities Research Council was founded by two men who had strong interests in Australian (and Commonwealth) Literature, Brian Elliott and Norman Jeffares, and as a direct result of a Jeffares-inspired, Carnegie Foundation-funded, Humanities Research Council of Canada-organised tour of Canada by Elliott. As has been documented in Chapter One, its interest in the Australian-Canadian Exchange gradually diminished and so did its interest in Australian culture. While a number of academics with considerable prestige in the field of Australian literary studies have been elected to the AHRC (Hope, Morris Miller, J. A. Ferguson; and, since its transformation into the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 1969, Judith Wright, James McAuley, R. F. Brissenden, Jack Lindsay, and C. B. Christesen), the study of Australian Literature has not been a notable feature of its meetings or its Occasional Papers and Monographs; Professor G. A. Wilkes gave an address to the Council in the year of his appointment

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<sup>82</sup> Rpt. in his Essays in Canadian Criticism 1938-1968 (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1969), pp. 122-34.

to the Foundation Chair of Australian Literature at the University of Sydney, but his chosen topic was 'The Thesis of Paradise Lost'. The Council's first project, a Rockefeller Foundation-sponsored 'Survey of the State of the Humanities in Australia', was to have contained a chapter on 'Australian Culture' but this was later dropped. A survey, by Brian Elliott, of the study and teaching of Australian Literature in the mid-nineteen seventies collected a lot of information and submissions but was never completed; Brian Matthews' survey, 'Australian Literary Studies' appeared in the Proceedings of the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 1982. A. D. Hope and Vincent Buckley introduced a symposium on 'The State of Criticism in Australia' at the Council's meeting in 1960, and A. D. Hope's The Literary Influence of Academies was the first lecture given to the Humanities research Council's successor, the Australian Academy of the Humanities, in 1970. Indeed, it is during the period since the formation of the Academy that more interest has been taken of Australian culture, culminating in the founding of the journal, Australian Cultural History in 1981. Apart from its participation in the Australian-Canadian Exchange it has never initiated any activity of importance to Australian literary studies comparable to the support for the Dominions Project (which sponsored the Exchange), The Literary History, and Bibliography by the Canadian Humanities Research Council or the 1956 Meeting of the Royal Society of Canada. Like the Humanities Research Centre at the Australian National University (with which it has close links), the Australian Academy and its predecessor prefer the humanities and culture in Australia to Australian culture and humanities. The apparent dismissal or marginalising of Australian studies by the Council/Academy and by the principal professional society, the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association (1950- ), was linked by many to their intensely formal, hierarchical modes of organisation and practice. Undoubtedly, the tone and organisation of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature (ASAL) is a sharp institutional reaction to this. Institutionally, ASAL embodies an aggressive casualness, a resistance to hierarchies and judgments, a committed co-operativeness that occludes disagreement and, ultimately, a discursive code that mitigates just as effectively against an engagement in cultural analysis as does the formalised politeness of traditional academic discourse. Nevertheless, these discursive codes function within a larger public discourse which has not so effectively contained its dissonance.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Institutionalising the National Literature: Literary Culture and Public Discourse

'where is the voice coming from?'

Rudy Wiebe<sup>1</sup>

In 1939 the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia made a major decision about literature. It had long been the practice for governments to provide pensions for a few writers in poor circumstances, and the Commonwealth Literary Fund had done this since 1908, just as the Canadian Authors' Foundation had done so privately since 1931. But in 1939 Australian Literature became an industry to be subsidised and not just an object of social welfare, though it took another twenty nine years for the

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<sup>1</sup> Rudy Wiebe, title of an essay and his first collection of stories (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974).

implications of that metaphor to take root.<sup>2</sup> The Fund's budget of 1400 was raised to 4500. Its new tasks included sponsoring the publication of books of quality and the reprinting of important books that were out of print. Publishers of quality books not likely to be commercially viable could apply to the Fund for a subsidy. Writers could also apply for small grants to assist in research, typing and so on. Assistance to writers and subsidies for selected books continue, in various forms, through the work of the Literature Board of the Australia Council. The Council, at first called The Australian Council for the Arts, was set up in 1968, but it was only in 1973 though, when it became a statutory body enjoined to balance the curiously-entwined Australian values of excellence and equity, that it established its Literature Board to replace the Commonwealth Literary Fund.<sup>3</sup> That particular dual focus was inscribed in the 1939 expansion of the Fund which provided sponsorship for 'meritorious works' (thus ensuring

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<sup>2</sup> The Australian Industries Assistance Commission finally subjected Publishing to its free-market scrutiny in 1978. In Canada the 'cultural industries' tag has been part of the language for discussing the arts for slightly longer. It is implicit in the approach taken by the Disney Report, the considerations of the Applebaum-Hebert Committee and of the Ontario Royal Commission on Publishing (each of these is discussed below), and in the rhetoric of the foundation of the Writers' Union of Canada (see above, Chapter Four). The view is most fully articulated in Susan Crean, Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture? (Don Mills: General Publishing, 1976) and in Paul Audley, Canada's Cultural Industries: Broadcasting, Publishing, Records and Film (Toronto: James Lorimer in association with the Canadian Institute for Economic Policy, 1983): it is most vigorously refuted by George Woodcock, Strange Bedfellows: The State and the Arts in Canada (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1985). The debate in Australia is less developed, but see Tim Rowse, Arguing the Arts: The Funding of the Arts in Australia (Ringwood: Penguin, 1985), Chapter 7, 'Arts as Industry,' pp. 80-96; and John Frow, 'Class and Culture: Funding the Arts,' Meanjin, 45 (1986), 118-29.

<sup>3</sup> This account of the development of the Commonwealth Literary Fund is indebted to Barry Andrews, 'The Federal Government as Literary Patron,' Meanjin, 41 (1982), 3-19; Barry Andrews, 'The Commonwealth Literary Fund and the Literature Board, 1908 - 1980,' Australian Cultural History, No. 1 (1982), pp. 59-69; to Memoranda and Minutes of Commonwealth Literary Fund Meetings and associated press clippings in the Palmer Papers, National Library of Australia, NLA. MS 1174, Box 30; and to Commonwealth Literary Fund Memoranda, 28 March 1944 and June 1952, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

a continual problematic about standards) and also funding for schemes designed to give wider access to literary culture.

The third major initiative taken by the Fund in 1939 was a vital and unusual one: a first step in broadening both the knowledge-base and the participation-base. It provided 100 per year to subsidise lectures on Australian literature at the (then seven) universities. The lectures, often a short series, were usually open to the public and given by literary figures of note (often writers). The main purpose of the lectures, the Fund said, was to 'encourage students to study the literature of their country'. At some places these lectures were made an integral part of the English course, as the Fund had originally intended: Sydney, Adelaide and Queensland Universities and Canberra University College.<sup>4</sup> These places were, significantly, where the teaching of Australian literature later became established soonest and most securely. From 1956 until 1968 similar lectures were also given in major country towns beginning in those States where access was felt to be most limited, Tasmania and Queensland, and later in schools as well.

The Commonwealth Literary Fund lectures helped to dispel the ignorance that had allowed the old 'Australian literature: Is there any?' joke to persist. They helped provide a context in which Australian literature could be considered seriously and at length. As public lectures they stimulated general interest and wider reading of Australian literature of both the present and the past. Above all they changed that joke to a serious question: 'Australian literature: what is it?' This fostered arguments about definition and description; about what constitutes

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<sup>4</sup> Commonwealth Literary Fund Memorandum, 4 January 1946, copy in Palmer Papers, National Library of Australia, NLA MS 1174; also Memoranda of 28 March 1944, June 1952.

Australian literature, and what it is like. Many of them found their way into print and so became part of the process of critical self-definition. These developments did not come about because of the appearance of great works. It occurred because a number of individuals and institutions became convinced that the national literature had status. It was worth subsidising, arguing about, pursuing as a career. There was seen to be something important about the production of literature in this country. There could still be arguments about what it should do. There were; and there continue to be. They are the most effective demonstration that the literature continues to exist.

While there had been, in Canada, numerous activities of an important developmental kind throughout the nineteen-forties and, indeed, in earlier periods as well<sup>5</sup> the real focus for the creation of an audience for Canadian Literature also flowed from an official act of national political will. In April 1949, the Government of Canada, under Louis St. Laurent, created by an Order-in-Council, the Royal Commission On National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences under the Chairmanship of the Right Honourable Vincent Massey.

The other members of the Commission were Arthur Surveyer (a civil engineer), Dr Hilda Neatby (an historian from the University of Saskatchewan), Father Georges-Henri Levesque (Dean of the School of Social Sciences at Universite de Laval), and Norman Mackenzie (President of the University of British Columbia). Over four hundred and sixty submissions (or 'Briefs') were received and a considerable number of Special Studies were prepared at the request of the Commission and of its four sub-

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<sup>5</sup> Margery Fee, 'English-Canadian Literary Criticism, 1890-1950: Defining and Establishing a National Literature'. Ph.D. Thesis, Univ. of Toronto, 1981, Chapter One.



committees; some of these Studies were published in a somewhat condensed version in a volume that was, itself, an important part of the public discussion that the Royal Commission recognized as being one of its most important functions. Indeed, the Commission made a point of travelling widely and publicly, and made itself part of contemporary affairs; more than one hundred Public Hearings were held in the principal cities of Canada between August 1949 and July 1950. The Report was published in June of 1951: it was reviewed widely, and its recommendations were the subject of considerable public lobbying when the Government showed itself to be reluctant to act -- as in the case of the Canada Council. Eventually, the Government was prompted to move on this matter when the Humanities Research Council invited St. Laurent to speak at its National Conference on 'Humanities and Government' in 1954. The characteristic Canadian response to such issues, organising a conference, was once again effective.<sup>6</sup>

The brief that the Commission was given contained very general terms of reference but it also included specific requests to recommend on a number of particular 'cultural' agencies; broadcasting (the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), the National Film Board, the National Gallery, the Public Archives, the National Museum, the National War Museum, and the Library of Parliament. The mandate also included, and this became one of the Commission's most prominent areas of consideration, the relationship between the agencies of government and the various bodies constituted to represent and/or promote 'the arts'. The terms of reference also expressed the view that it was 'in the national interest to give encouragement to institutions which express national feeling, promote common understanding

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<sup>6</sup> Though George Woodcock, Strange Bedfellows: The State and the Arts in Canada (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1985), pp. 55-56, gives a useful account of the less public lobbying to which the Prime Minister had been subjected.

and add to the variety and richness of Canadian life, rural as well as urban' and more significantly, 'that it is desirable that the Canadian people know as much as possible about their country, its history and traditions; and about their national life and common achievements'.<sup>7</sup> It is clearly one of the functions of cultural policy to promote a sense of nationhood in the nation-state.<sup>8</sup>

This was certainly a leitmotif of a great many of the submissions to the Commission and of so much of the very considerable public reaction to it and, incidentally, prefigures the philosophical basis for the enquiries of the Symons Commission on Canadian Studies (1972-76). Clearly the dominant belief informing the undertaking was in the role of culture as a central instrument for the reproduction of this conception of national unity. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Canada turning to the same remedy for stressed national unity in undertaking the Symons Commission during the 'Quebec crisis'. That Commission's motto, 'To know ourselves' is, perhaps, a way of acknowledging the role of education as a mediator of social relations and, thus, as a potential mechanism for unity. Of the briefs submitted to Massey and his fellow commissioners a few observe the practical opportunities for assimilation to the dominant social patterns: the Canadian Authors' Association, for instance, speaks of the 'more rapid and effective assimilation of New Canadians'.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Order in Council, P.C. 1786, Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, 1949-1951, Report (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1951), pp. xi, xii.

<sup>8</sup> This paraphrases Tim Rowse, Arguing the Arts, p. 67, preceding his discussion of the ramifications and manifestations of essentialist views of national culture in Australian cultural policy.

<sup>9</sup> Canada. Royal Commission . . . Briefs and Transcripts, Reel 5, Brief 103, p. 2.

The Massey Report acknowledges the interdependent place of 'culture' (though it does not use the term) in the social and political community. Its epigraph, from St. Augustine, inscribed the notion of the nation as central to the consideration of culture.

A nation is an association of reasonable beings united in a peaceful sharing of the things they cherish; therefore, to determine the quality of a nation, you must consider what those things are.<sup>10</sup>

The view contained in the very articulate Brief presented by the Canadian Authors' Association was remarkably congruent with this.

A national literature is not only an encyclopedia for the information of people inside and outside the country; it is also the coherent expression of a people's traditions and aspirations. Writers make a people conscious of their significance as a nation.<sup>11</sup>

Many of the briefs and the informal amplifications of them that took place at the Hearings at which they were presented developed the theme of the need for national co-ordinating bodies in the arts. The Social Science Research Council, for instance, stated that it was considering the possibility of a Research Centre in Ottawa for the use of graduate students and professors<sup>12</sup> and the new Carleton University Senate urged the same thing. A National War Memorial, along the lines of the one established in Canberra, to serve as a central base for collections, archives and a memorial was also recommended. Indeed, comparisons with other countries were frequently made and were usually designed to show that while individuals and organisations in Canada were doing sterling work they were given less support than elsewhere. Australian examples served on several

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<sup>10</sup> Royal Commission . . . Report, p. xxiii

<sup>11</sup> Canada. Royal Commission . . . Briefs and Transcripts, Reel 5, Brief 103, 31 October 1949.

<sup>12</sup> Canada. Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts Letters and Sciences. 1949-1951. Briefs and Transcripts. Reel 9, Social Science Research Council. Brief, p. 9. The ANU was a potential model.

occasions. For instance, Dr Gustav Lanctot, President and Chairman of the Canadian Writers' Foundation, when asked by one of the Commissioners what other countries were doing to help writers, observed that 'The Government of Australia is doing something. It is contributing very largely and almost putting us to shame'<sup>13</sup> though, in fact, the actual amounts were not so very different. The Canada Foundation<sup>14</sup> made many recommendations including an 'eventual' National Theatre, a special division of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics to collect and classify 'cultural information'. Like the Canadian Arts Council<sup>15</sup> it was one of many organisations which endorsed the proposal for a National Arts Council.

Another theme that emerges in the briefs and the transcripts of the public hearings is that there had been a very great reliance on U. S. money for Canadian cultural and academic development. Professor T. F. McIlwraith of the Social Science Research Council acknowledged in discussion that one hundred percent of the Council's funding had come from American foundations, Rockefeller and Carnegie principally. For McIlwraith this was not a sorry situation. He expressed a number of times the Council's strong desire to be free of Government support and 'supervision'. The Humanities Research Council, on the other hand, faced with the same phenomenon, regarded it rather differently.

It is a significant commentary on the maturity of our culture that such an organisation as the Humanities Research Council of Canada should have been financed almost entirely by grants from the United States. The irony of this situation has not been lost on the members of the

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<sup>13</sup> Canada. Royal Commission . . . Briefs and Transcripts, Reel 12, Brief 145, Canadian Writers' Foundation. Transcript, p. 29

<sup>14</sup> Canada. Royal Commission . . . Briefs and Transcripts, Reel 5, Brief 99.

<sup>15</sup> Canada. Royal Commission . . . Reel 5, Brief 100.

Council ... <sup>16</sup>

National pride and prestige was a recurrent theme and one of the rhetorical targets of most of the comparisons that were adduced. Curiously, in a second Brief, tendered to the Commission in January 1950 in conjunction with the Humanities Research Council, the Social Science Research Council stated that it was 'especially desirable that this [further] support should come from Canadian sources'.<sup>17</sup> They then asked specifically for Government funding.

The explanation for this apparent overthrow of principle may be fairly simple. The Social Science Research Council must have recognised that its performance at the first hearing was a very poor one. McIlwraith had been subjected to some pretty severe questioning from Norman Mackenzie in particular and the Council's representative had clearly not been well-prepared. It must have become clear that they had misread the mood of the Commission and the second brief represents an attempt to find a place among the many organisations making a bid for the Governmental largesse that was beginning to appear to be a prospect. The second brief was written in conjunction with the Humanities Research Council which had, under its President, the historian Donald Creighton, maintained a much more sensible analysis of the Commission's outlook from the beginning. But the Social Science Research Council remained nervous and submitted a rare third brief to the Commission in March 1950 once it had become apparent to them that the Commission was indeed moving towards a recommendation for the funding of a National Council on Arts, Letters and Sciences. In the second and \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>16</sup> Canada. Royal Commission . . . Briefs and Transcripts. Reel 12, brief 228, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> Canada. Royal Commission . . . Briefs and Transcripts. Reel 9. Social Science Research Council, and Humanities Research Council second brief, p. 2.

third briefs the two Councils stressed that the Commission should acknowledge that there are two constituencies in the Arts, one concerned with 'research and application of methods of science and scholarship' and the second with 'creative arts'. The two supplementary briefs reiterate that 'the only concern of the Social Science Research Council and the Humanities Research Council is that the interests of research and scholarship in the humanities and social sciences should be effectively represented in any such national organizations and agencies'.<sup>18</sup>

One other notable theme in presentations to the Commission was the need for neutrality, objectivity, and freedom from the influence of political ideas, government supervision, or bureaucratic interference. It is a theme that has persisted even in the name commonly given to the Canadian Government's cultural policy, 'arm's length' but in the post-war/cold war period of the hearings it expressed a determination to be clear of the considerations of the discredited political arena and to embrace the status of scientific 'objectivity'. Indeed, the Social Science Research Council's first submission clearly annoyed the Commissioners with its unwillingness to discuss anything beyond their own particular projects. Mackenzie asked them whether they had considered their 'relationship to the cultural, social and economic life of Canada'. McIlwraith, their spokesman, continually backed away from such questions, insisting that it was not the Council's role to offer advice, that it must remain neutral, must not seem political.<sup>19</sup>

The Massey Commission of Enquiry into the State of the Arts Letters

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<sup>18</sup> Canada. Royal Commission . . . Briefs and Transcripts, Reel 9, Social Science Research Council and Humanities Research Council second brief (January 1950), p. 2; and further brief (6 March 1950), p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Canada. Royal Commission . . . Briefs and Transcripts. 11th Session of the Royal Commission, August 17, 1949. Reel 9, p. 86-87.

and Sciences was established in April 1949, and reported in June 1951. As Margery Fee has argued, 'it sums up, and marks the end of, an era but it ensured the achievement of the romantic nationalists' goals'.<sup>20</sup> And it was very shrewdly observed by one of the Commissioners, Hilda Neatby, that

The appointment of the Commission came at a critical phase in national growth, a time when a people may make a conscious choice of destiny. The Report was, in a sense, a symptom which, in its turn became, no doubt, a contributory cause.'<sup>21</sup>

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the Massey Commission. It has been rightly observed that many of the Commission's recommendations were never followed, that others were diluted or, as in the case even of the Canada Council, postponed: but the achievement of the Massey Commission is that it inserted discussion of Canadian culture into the Canadian public discourse for the first time. This is clear from a comparison of the tentative, circumlocutory, cautious and defensive tone of the briefs and the early hearings and the subsequent assumption in public discussion that the term, Canadian culture, referred to an accepted 'reality': 'culture' was clearly one of the reticences in the national ideology.

The Commission's Chairman, Vincent Massey, scion of one of Ontario's establishment families, one-time history lecturer, Chancellor of the University of Toronto, a former Cabinet Minister in the Mackenzie King Government, and a noted cultural benefactor was made Canada's first native-born Governor-General in 1952, the year after the publication of his monumental Report. He died at the very end of Canada's Centennial Year, a

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<sup>20</sup> Margery Fee, 'English-Canadian Literary Criticism . . .', p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Hilda Neatby, 'The Massey Report: A Retrospect,' Tamarack Review, 1 (1956), 44.

man in almost every way identified with Canadian-nationalist hegemonic values and, in his fondness for the symbolic occasion and gesture, certainly aware of it. His book, On Being Canadian, published in 1948 shortly after his return from eleven years in England as Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom had inserted him firmly into the discussion of the romantic nationalist conception of 'the national type'; it was, in essence, an United Empire Loyalist position stressing Canadian distinctiveness from the Americans and the British but (diverging sharply from the Australian radical nationalists) reasserting the allegiance to (Canadian adaptations of) British institutions. In many respects this position also informs the Report which, while grateful for the enormous sums granted to Canada by the American philanthropic Foundations, regrets their effect: 'Granted that most of these American donations are good in themselves, it does not follow that they have always been good for Canadians'<sup>22</sup>. On Being Canadian articulated, two years before the creation of the Commission, the ideological role of culture and the pre-eminence of the value of national unity.

We shall talk of unity until it is achieved, but however we use the word, the idea to us must be supreme, for in Canada the pursuit of unity is like the quest of the Holy Grail.<sup>23</sup>

The ingenuous separation of word from idea is a potent ideological strategy.

Apart from Massey, the most influential members of the Commission were Levesque and Hilda Neatby. The absence of official Quebec representations to the Commission made Levesque's role crucial and he was a tireless and

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<sup>22</sup> Royal Commission . . . Report, 14. The Report notes the magnitude of the American financial input into Canadian cultural and scientific activities: the two largest foundations, Rockefeller and Carnegie, had between them contributed something more than nineteen million dollars in slightly less than forty years: see p. 13, and Appendix V, pp. 436-42.

<sup>23</sup> Vincent Massey, On Being Canadian (Toronto: Dent, 1948), 25.



well-informed interlocutor at the public hearings. Neatby was the commissioner most closely associated with the continuing effect of the Commission. It seems likely that she was largely responsible for the writing of the document, and it is one of the most remarkably literary public documents in Canadian history. As a text, the Report was, and continues to be impressive; it asserted its own cultural authority. As soon as Massey became Governor General, Neatby began writing his speeches for him under an arrangement that remained secret.<sup>24</sup> She was also persuaded by her work with the Commission of the inadequacy of the Canadian education system and wrote two very controversial books about it,<sup>25</sup> anticipating by a decade and a half the polemical attention given to it by the cultural nationalists of the late nineteen sixties.

The Canada Council was, for the cultural community, the most significant outcome of the Massey Commission. In its form it was, not surprisingly, a representation (in the Althusserian sense) of the organisation of the State. Like the Westminster parliamentary system it has a long and relatively clear chain of command and responsibility, preserving the illusion that the individual artist- or consumer-client has a place in the system. It is hierarchical, centralises power, and clearly represents the state and the coincident 'national interest': the implied metonymy in the names of the national cultural bodies is not accidental. Canada Council, Australia Council (felt to be more 'appropriate' -- 'more appropriating' would be accurate -- than the earlier title, Australian Council for the Arts). The Canada Council is Federal, bi-lingual, and \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>24</sup> So Much to Do, So Little Time, ed. Michael Hayden (Vancouver: Univ. of British Columbia Press, 1983), pp. 27, 30.

<sup>25</sup> So Little for the Mind (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1953) and A Temperate Dispute (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1954).

tends to institutionalise a subsidiary place for Quebec culture. As the editor of Saturday Night, B. K. Sandwell, wrote in his review of the Report, 'the Vice-Chairman will presumably be French'<sup>26</sup>. The Report's recommendations for the Council clearly envisaged it as an agency of Government (especially in its 'information' and 'foreign relations' responsibilities) while affirming its independence of it. That culture should serve the State ('the national interest') is further clarified when the Report firmly rejects the submissions of several arts organisations in insisting that each member of the Council 'should sit in his capacity as a distinguished and public-spirited Canadian citizen rather than as the representative of a particular organisation or institution, or of a specialised art' (p. 377). It also attempts to image the desired unity of national life and cultural activity by proposing a single body to oversee all the arts, letters and scholarship. In this aspect, it differs totally from the Australian situation in making academic and scholarly activity part of 'culture'.

The Australian development took place without a great deal of public involvement. J. H. Scullin had asked a few questions in the House of Representatives as early as 1936, the Fellowship of Australian Writers energetically put forward some specific proposals to the Government, the Melbourne Herald editorialised 'that no civilised community is complete without a flourishing native literature',<sup>27</sup> and the developments were given Parliamentary approval and funding. The expanded Fund consisted of an

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<sup>26</sup> B. K. Sandwell, 'The Council for Culture' Saturday Night, 66, (12 June 1951), 7.

<sup>27</sup> Melbourne Herald, 4 June 1938.

Advisory Board of (mainly) literary people<sup>28</sup> and the Fund Committee in whom the power to make disbursements was vested: this customarily consisted of the leaders of the major political parties, and regularly concerned itself with the details of applications and literary activity. Menzies and Scullin were particularly involved. It all began with remarkably little public debate (though there was a significant polemical involvement a few years later). Against the grain, Meanjin called for an Australian Massey Commission and commissioned an article on the results of the Massey Commission by the University of Toronto academic, Frank Watt. In 1961, a Committee for an Enquiry into the Arts unsuccessfully urged the Menzies Government to emulate the Massey Commission.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps the most significant cultural body to be established in the nineteen fifties was also brought into being in a pragmatic manner. The Chifley Government had responded to various proposals for a National Theatre soon after the War by supporting the British Council in bringing Tyrone Guthrie from England to report on theatre in Australia in 1949. Guthrie's Report confirmed, in terms more appropriate to the Chifley Government than to its successor, that private enterprise was not doing the job and that a National Theatre might be appropriate. However, when he went on to argue that since the only place where one could find enough properly-trained Australian actors was in London, the Theatre ought to commence there, a Committee under Dr. H. C. Coombs (then Governor of the Commonwealth Bank) reacted by drawing up a proposal for the Elizabethan

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<sup>28</sup> Vance Palmer, Flora Eldershaw, Douglas Stewart, Kenneth Slessor, Tom Inglis Moore, were among those who served in this capacity though it was only in the early period that writers' organisations were explicitly represented.

<sup>29</sup> See Geoffrey Serle, From the Deserts the Prophets Come (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1973), pp. 218-19, 259.

Theatre Trust and raised the 90,000 required by public donations,<sup>30</sup> hoping for an identification with the Golden Age of the (nationalist) English theatre. The English impulse was preserved in the title of the the Theatre which commemorated the visit of the monarch in 1954. While individuals and groups certainly sought to evoke and appropriate public interest there was, on no occasion in Australia in this period, a broad discussion of the principles upon which the identification of the nation and its cultural production was based.

The two Committees of Inquiry into education, The Murray Committee on Australian Universities, 1957<sup>31</sup> and the Martin Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia, 1965<sup>32</sup> were each narrowly purposeful and, though each produced dramatic effects upon tertiary education, neither took advantage of the looseness of their briefs to examine the relationship<sup>33</sup> of education to society or to its culture. Both, in fact, rather eschewed the humanities in general in favour of an enthusiastic espousal of the benefits (and hence the values) of science and technology. The Murray Committee, like the Theatre enquiry, headed by a visiting English expert, is candid about its unproblematical ideological assumptions and continues the figuring of the country as void and empty land.

Behind all this is the basic need to drive ahead with the development of a whole continent, vast areas of which, but for the benefit of science, must remain unproductive bush

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<sup>30</sup> 'Australian Drama and Theatre,' Current Affairs Bulletin, 22 (28 July 1958), 120-21.

<sup>31</sup> Report of the Committee on Australian Universities ([Canberra: Government Printer], September 1957).

<sup>32</sup> Tertiary Education in Australia. The Report of the Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia to the Australian Universities Commission Volume 1, Reprinted in Tertiary Education in Australia, ed. John Wilkes, Australian Institute of Political Science, Proceedings of 31st Summer School (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1965).

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and barren desert.<sup>34</sup>

Although as a creature of the nineteen sixties, the Martin Report contains some references to 'human values', it nevertheless stresses that 'education should be regarded as an investment which yields direct and significant economic benefits'.<sup>35</sup> It is not only a 'narrowly utilitarian, traditional view of education'<sup>36</sup> but a narrowly utilitarian practice of public discussion. The other cultural enquiries were also similarly utilitarian, pragmatic, and occasional: a 1945 Tariff Board Inquiry into Book Production, and the Industries Assistance Commission Reports on the Performing Arts (1976), and Publishing (1978). The 1945 Inquiry provoked some public debate in the familiar Australian dualist terms of national(protectionist)/international(free market) and slid off from these economic-cultural metaphors into the apology from the Fellowship of Australian Writers that it only intended to prevent the dumping of 'cheap fiction', thus constituting an alliance between high culture and economic nationalism.

In Canada the custom is a different one. There is a long tradition of self-examination, of scrutinising the national performance. Clearly, the establishment of Royal Commissions and Commissions of Enquiry may be devices for delaying action or for avoiding it altogether. The 1984 House of Commons Sub-Committee on the Taxation of Visual and Performing Artists and Writers acknowledged this somewhat plaintively in urging 'that its

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<sup>34</sup> Report of the Committee on Australian Universities, p. 27.

<sup>35</sup> Tertiary Education in Australia, p. 165.

<sup>36</sup> Lascelles Wilson, 'Adult Education -- The "Informal" System,' in Tertiary Education in Australia, ed. John Wilkes, pp. 119, 120 makes this observation when contrasting the social dynamics within which education operates in Australia with those of Canada, the USA, Britain, Germany and Scandinavia.

report shall not suffer the same fate as the Disney report'.<sup>37</sup> The Disney Report<sup>38</sup> into substantially the same issues had been commissioned and published seven years earlier. Having examined the situation in considerable detail and reported promptly and precisely, it was lost in a succession of interdepartmental committees and sub-committees. Many of the most important recommendations of the Massey Commission itself, the archetype and measure of all subsequent Canadian cultural commissions, had to wait many years for their implementation. The Canada Council, one of its principal recommendations was not instituted until 1956, five years after the Report had been tabled. Nevertheless, the tradition of gathering information and contemplating it has been, by and large, a noble one. Significant differences between the two cultures are marked in this area of activity. In Australia the action seems to be more direct -- Union pressure, business and interest-group lobbying -- and, therefore, disclosure of the facts and debate about the principles is pre-empted. In the Canadian situation the issues are seldom self-evident; the dominant culture does not disclose itself so overtly in hegemonic assumptions and unionisation is comparatively low and union power weak. Consensus is valorised in Canada (and more recently in Australia) and a Commission which gathers (and perhaps more importantly, disseminates) information and accepts submissions from large numbers of organisations and individuals is a comforting way to project the illusion of consensus. It is an 'official' version of the notion of community which, in Australia, is located 'un-officially', ex officio, in the individual expression of opinion and in

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<sup>37</sup> Quoted in George Woodcock, Strange Bedfellows: The State and the Arts in Canada (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1985, p. 155.

<sup>38</sup> Russell Disney, Federal Tax Issues of Concern to the Arts Community in Canada: An Analysis (Ottawa: Government Printer, 1977).

popular culture where true self-knowledge is believed to reside.<sup>39</sup>

Since 1949 there have been numerous enquiries into the state of Canada's cultural health, of which the Massey Report is only the best-known. The O'Leary Commission on Publications in 1960-61, examined 'the position of and prospects for magazine and periodical publishing'<sup>40</sup> and made a number of useful recommendations designed to prevent the absorption of the Canadian periodical 'industry' into the United States one: Canadian conservatism draws on its United Empire Loyalist roots to produce statements of economic and cultural nationalism 'against' American continentalism. It also provoked the Canadian Government into finally signing the Universal Copyright Convention. The Federal Policy Review Committee, chaired bi-lingually by Louis Applebaum and Jacques Hebert (popularly-known as the Applebert Committee) released its Report in December 1982 and while, in most cases, it endorsed the status quo it pertinently observed that 'we have built up structures without too much concern about what was being played, shown and brought to Canadian audiences'.<sup>41</sup> Like the Massey Commission, which it saw as its predecessor, the Applebaum-Hebert Committee articulated a nexus between education, research and culture. Despite its economic emphasis, the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee viewed culture as experience as well as product. 'The stimulation of Canadian creativity will require the knowledge base of

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<sup>39</sup> This takes many forms but it is inscribed in such (only apparently) diverse exemplars as Ian Mudie's 'They'll Tell You About Me,' Russel Ward's The Australian Legend, and the potency of radio talk-back programmes.

<sup>40</sup> M. Grattan O'Leary, Report of the Royal Commission on Publications ([Ottawa]: The Queen's Printer, May 1961), p. i.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Susan Walker, 'Applebert's verdict on the book trade,' Quill & Quire, (January 1983), p. 13.

culture and the arts to be firm'.<sup>42</sup> The economic base of Canadian culture was never far from view; the Applebaum-Hebert Committee reaffirmed the necessity of limiting publishing subsidies to Canadian-owned firms (a principle hardly ever canvassed in Australia); the Disney Commission, 1977 (referred to above) considered the special situation of artists and writers in respect of taxation.

Perhaps the most dramatic of all the Committees and Commissions was the Province of Ontario Royal Commission on Book Publishing (1970-71) which proceeded under the threatened sale of the emblematically-Canadian publishing house, McClelland and Stewart to United States interests. With a sense of urgency, the Commission brought down an Interim Report recommending a loan to enable McClelland and Stewart to avoid the fate that had already befallen Gage Publishing and Ryerson Press, also both old Canadian (Toronto-based) publishers. The topicality and apparent urgency of its business gave the Ontario Royal Commission a public focus that was useful to cultural nationalists at a time when the new nationalism of the late nineteen sixties was in danger of ceasing to be central to Canadian society. In that sense, the Ontarian focus incidentally confirmed that, if Canada still had much to fear from the expatriation of literary decision-making to New York, then Canada also had something to fear from the centralising of the residual Canadian publishing in Ontario: it is notable that the great growth of 'regional' publishing houses (a term never applied to Toronto presses) occurred after this Commission.

One of the members of the large Applebaum-Hebert Committee was Trent University President, Thomas Symons, who subsequently headed the influential Commission on Canadian Studies. Although this enquiry was not

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<sup>42</sup> Louis Applebaum and Jacques Hebert, Report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services, 1982), 6.



carried out on behalf of the Canadian Government, but rather by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, it influenced public opinion and Government policy and it seized the moment when national self-knowledge was seen to be not only appropriate but urgent. Its findings were published as To Know Ourselves in four volumes beginning in 1976 and a popular paperback synopsis, The Symons Report (like the Kinsey Report, the Hite Report), was published in 1978 with the attention-grabbing endorsements (e.g. 'a shocking report, . . . a scandalous report') prominently displayed on the jacket.

In general, the way in which literature was inserted into the 'national' discourse in Australia was much more informal, occasional, and (apparently) 'personal'. The ubiquitous voice of A. D. Hope whose range of utterances was described in Chapter Three was the most important of several. The tones of Walter Murdoch, H. M. Green, Vance Palmer and Colin Roderick were all influential as well. These public addresses and lectures were significant not only for their influence on ideas about Australian culture but more importantly on the form of thinking about it. The crucial feature of all this talk was its fragmentary nature: Australian cultural debate is a discontinuous narrative. His views were widely and often anonymously disseminated into public attitudes to Australia and its culture. As described in Chapter Three he was the key to a network of opinion-makers.

While much of the opinion-making was indeed personalised and fragmentary in form and in character there certainly were moments when it took on the character of public enquiry. In 1956 Sydney University launched a public appeal for funds to establish a Chair of Australian Literature. The University Senate, in fact, did no more than approve the establishment of the Chair in principle, dependent upon the 80,000 being found for it from public subscription. The community, that is, was required to take responsibility for this academic recognition of its Literature. Because the public was being asked for money, the public had to be satisfied that there was something worth paying for. Again, Australian literature went public. A Preliminary Committee, chaired by the Challis Professor of English, Wesley Milgate, with the noted scholar and publicist Dr. Colin Roderick as Secretary and with a significant membership of non-academic writers (Gwen Meredith, Gavin Casey, and Leslie Rees) began a remarkably active press campaign. Numerous meetings were addressed, lectures given, essays written. The confident prediction of one of these, that 'within the next five or ten years every Australian university will have its Chair of Australian Literature as a matter of inevitable national development' [my emphasis]<sup>43</sup>, was typical of the mood and of the values within which at least one segment of the issue was pursued. Roderick, taking only a slightly different emphasis, argued the virtues of Australian Literature in preserving Australian values in the face of ideological pressures from without. Australian Literature is the nation writ large, its text.

Incalcated [sic] into each succeeding generation through our literature, it will help to keep undesirable alien [sic] influences at bay. . . . The nurture of our native literature in the schools is one means of defeating some of the nauseous cults that have attracted some of the juveniles of our own generation. There is not one branch of Australian industry, not one aspect of Australian life, which either is not or will not be reflected in Australian literature.

It follows, then, that Australian literature is the business of every thinking Australian.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> T. Inglis Moore, 'Australian literature in our Universities,'

Overland, No. 6 (Summer 1955-56), p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> Colin Roderick, 'The Chair of Australian Literature: An Appeal,' Biblionews, 9, No. 5 (May 1956), 14. The Preliminary Committee was charged with raising a considerable sum ( 10,000) from the 'real friends of Australian Literature' before the campaign went public at a meeting opened by the State Governor at the Sydney Town Hall on 28 May 1956.

Thus, the University matter of establishing an academic post appropriated the interest of the nation. Roderick also articulated the view, one that had been registered in Canada too, that the national literature was a homogenising force in the context of the influx of immigrants: the social duties of literature, articulated with persuasive force on occasions like these were, of course, counter to the ideological neutrality of literature that was part of the customary discourse, and may have been part of the process of its deconstruction.

Significantly, A. D. Hope's most extended piece on standards was commissioned for the Current Affairs Bulletin (with an extremely wide distribution in schools and universities) when the campaign for the Chair was launched. The editorial committee of the Bulletin, and Hope himself, were at pains to stress that this was not part of the 'propaganda' campaign for the Chair. 'I recognize the possible implications of an assessment but this is a risk we are quite prepared to take'<sup>45</sup>, wrote the acting editor.

The essay was widely discussed, and usually approved<sup>46</sup>, in the literary magazines of the time. Its values remain alive in the increasing reliance of the Australia Council on the notion of 'excellence' as it trims its budget in line with an economy whose political ideology is increasingly

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<sup>45</sup> E. M. Higgins to A. D. Hope, 18 June 1956, A. D. Hope Papers, Australian National Univ. Library, Folder 1.

<sup>46</sup> See, for instance, John Barnes, 'A Question of Standards,' Meanjin, 16 (1957), 321-23; John K. Ewers, 'A Question of Standards,' Meanjin, 16 (1957), 434-36. The exchange is an interesting and represents a watershed in the argument about the national literature. Barnes, in a review of the 1956 edition of Ewers' Creative Writing in Australia, spends two thirds of his space on a very approving account of the professional rigour of the (then) anonymous 'Standards in Australian Literature' which he contrasts to the unsystematic, ('limited and superficial') work of Ewers. Ewers represents, for Barnes, the critical activity of the past, now outgrown and outdistanced by the sophisticated, 'sustained,' 'informed and precise' practice of the writer of the 'Standards' piece (whose identity, incidentally, would not have been very difficult to deduce).

congruent with that of the period which Hope reflected.

That campaign for funds for a Chair of Australian Literature was not the only focus for arguments about the subject. In 1954 Vance Palmer, a prominent literary figure, writer, reviewer, essayist and columnist for fifty years, published The Legend of the Nineties (originally to be called 'The Australian Dream'), proposing that the eighteen nineties provided the key to Australian literary themes and development. He discussed the way in which the writers of that period, Lawson, Paterson, Dyson, and Furphy, had come to be regarded as expressing the essence of Australia. It was inscribed as a Golden Age. In some ways, Palmer's book was a countervailing tendency to the main thrust of internationalism and the Cold War 'end-of-ideology' in which the hegemonic liberal humanism participated: Palmer, of course, saw himself as something of a literary descendant of Lawson and what he tended to think of as the 'Lawson tradition'. He shared their themes and styles to some extent, and he also shared their preference for a democratic, egalitarian, humanist view of Australia. He praised the famous Bulletin literary editor of the nineties, A. G. Stephens, and pointed to the strong social function of literature. He thus also validated his own position as a socially-conscious man of letters.

In 1958 A. A. Phillips' The Australian Tradition appeared. Though Phillips shared most of Palmer's preferences he expressed them differently. He found a number of other writers to accommodate in the tradition, and in general, was much more inclusive. His was a generous 'commonwealth' of literature and society. Most importantly he established the idea of a tradition as central to discussions of Australian literature. And, very generally speaking and in contrast to the Canadian situation, it has remained central. Phillips also talked more of conscious literary craftsmanship than did Palmer and was therefore more likely to be read in academic circles. He was perhaps the first to attempt to recombine the 'Australian' and the 'Literature' parts of the argument. As Associate Editor of Meanjin he spoke from a position of influence in the crucial period of the fifties and sixties while Palmer, a prolific and central figure for most of the previous three decades had never really had an institutional base from which to speak, although he spoke with great personal authority.

In that same year, Russel Ward's Australian National University Ph.D thesis was revised and the crucial final chapter, 'Two Noble Frontiersmen' which not only offers a comparative perspective but seeks to explain the foregoing empirical material in romantic nationalist terms, was added after the visit to Australia of the American historian, H. C. Allen.<sup>47</sup> It was then published as The Australian Legend. Ward was not directly concerned with literature at all, but his book was about the distinctive features of the images Australians held of themselves. His 'establishment' of the outline of the 'Australian' character had an obvious impact on discussions of the features of 'Australian' literature, and the book has been very widely set as a school text. Clearly its outline of the Australian character has influenced the popular culture very extensively.

The third major contributor to this sense of a continuing debate was Donald Horne's The Lucky Country (1964). This book has also been frequently set as a text in secondary schools. Horne's title, intended more provocatively than is usually understood, has since been inserted into the cliché stock of politicians and brochure-writers. It dealt with the contemporary political and cultural realities, and adopted a breezy, anecdotal style that seemed appropriate to the discussion of Australia that has become the peculiarly Australian mode of appropriating the subject matter of the discourse. Horne was editor of The Bulletin, although it had

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47 I am indebted to Humphrey McQueen for this information.

changed significantly from its original way of presenting itself as Australian culture's radical organ to being an articulation of mainstream international Australia, reflecting changes in hegemonic values.

Between about 1954 and the early nineteen sixties, then, there were several strands of debate about Australian literature. It was a subject for discussion as well as a subject for study. By the late sixties it had extended opportunities as a subject for subsidy as successive governments of both parties dramatically increased the funding of the Commonwealth Literary Fund and its successor, the Literature Board of the Australian Council for the Arts (later the Australia Council). One obvious consequence of both of these developments was that it was now a career-path as well. Clearly the contest to become associated with the dominant paradigm intensified.

The development of increasingly-professionalised literary organisations such as the Australian Society of Authors and the Writers' Union of Canada, described in Chapter Four, needs to be seen against other developments of the time. The vigorous campaign for 'Canadianization' led by Robin Mathews and James Steele was begun almost exactly five years earlier (on 11 December 1968). It demanded huge expansion in the teaching of Canadian studies to Canadian students in Canadian Universities by Canadian teachers.<sup>48</sup> Mathews' efforts were directed especially against University departments dominated, as he documented it, by American academics who impeded this demand. Such a campaign has never been mounted

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<sup>48</sup> See especially The Struggle for Canadian Universities: A Dossier, ed. Robin Mathews and James Steele (Toronto: New Press, 1969) and some of the essays by Robin Mathews, Canadian Literature: Surrender or Revolution? (Toronto: Steel Rail, 1978), and elsewhere as in the interventionist periodical, This Magazine, e.g. 'Profs and Workers: One Struggle,' This Magazine, 7, No. 1 (May-June 1973), 23-25.

in Australia, except in the professional Sociology association which, in 1978, called for the appointment of Australians to counter the pervasive dependence on American models, data and normative expectations. In 1985 the Federation of Australian University Staff Associations is revising its policy on overseas appointments and it is likely that a more 'protectionist' and culturally aware policy will be the result. Other groups articulated a similar perception of the embattled status of Canadian culture, while Northrop Frye characterised Canadian society as exhibiting 'the garrison mentality'<sup>49</sup> and Margaret Atwood found 'victims' in a literature that lauded 'survival'.<sup>50</sup> The metaphoric repository of the 'crisis' in Canadian culture was well-stocked.

Another representation of this new social movement, the Canada Studies Foundation, was set up in 1969, drawing its strength from elementary school teachers concerned about text-book and syllabus depictions of a world in which Canada hardly existed. Its aims were to foster an awareness of the diversity of modern Canada and thus to generate a greater civic awareness.<sup>51</sup> In stressing diversity it anticipated later developments but, in some respects, reacted against the government's policy of fostering national unity at a time when events in Quebec seemed to threaten it. The Foundation adopted Canada Day, begun in a Southern Ontario high school in 1971,<sup>52</sup> and commissioned many reports on the

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<sup>49</sup> Northrop Frye, 'Conclusion,' in The Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English, ed. Carl F. Klinck et al (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 830; rpt. as 'Conclusion to a Literary History of Canada, in his The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination (Toronto: Anansi, 1971), p. 225.

<sup>50</sup> Margaret Atwood, Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature (Toronto: Anansi, 1972).

<sup>51</sup> The Canada Studies Foundation (n.pl.: Canada Studies Foundation, 1972).

<sup>52</sup> Garner, One Damn Thing After Another, 312-13.

Canadian content of school curricula and attitudes towards it. Groups such as CANLIT also found much of their strength in Southern Ontario schools but later turned their attention to what they regarded as the source of the problem, foreign control of the Canadian publishing industry. Although it always seemed that the various nationalist groups and individuals were working in an innovatory, oppositional way, they frequently, as Margery Fee and John Fraser have shown, reproduced dominant myths of the nation that privileged dominant class cultural interests.<sup>53</sup>

But it is not only legislative and official actions of governments that promote the discussion of the national literature as a public matter.

In both Canada and Australia, at the opposite end of the spectrum perhaps, 'grassroots' writers' organizations have exerted influences on public perceptions and on the opinions of the legislators.

In its most active era, the nineteen thirties, the Canadian Authors' Association revived the Association of Canadian Bookmen, a gathering of authors, publishers, critics and booksellers interested in the general area of the reading habits of Canadians. Unfortunately, perhaps, this organization which had the potential collective power and insight to influence the way in which Canadian literature was constituted collapsed (for the second time) in 1938. Although the relationship between the various members of the book industry is, as some have observed, inherently adversarial, the common problems that this Association began to address in the mid-thirties had become so much more strongly institutionalised by the time there was a sufficiently hegemonic power ascribed to Canadian cultural

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<sup>53</sup> Margery Fee, 'English-Canadian Literary Criticism . . . ,'; John Fraser, 'The Production of Canadian Literature,' in In Our House, ed. Paul Cappon (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1978), pp. 148-73.

nationalism in the nineteen sixties for such organisations as the Independent Publishers Association to take the issues to the national policy fora with the apparent endorsement of public opinion. In the thirties, in Canada, that commitment to Canadian national culture was neither a dominant social value, nor a sufficiently pressing economic concern.

In Australia, a similar organisation, The Federation of Australian Literature and Art, was formed in 1947 to combat the flooding of Australia with cheap syndicated foreign material and 'to carry on the fight for the independence of Australian culture against syndication and for Australian authors and artists'.<sup>54</sup> This body united writers' organisations, Trade Unions, and the Returned Servicemen's League. The cultural nationalism that it espoused found a place in Australian culture immediately after the War but was overwhelmed by the internationalism that came with the American influence in the nineteen fifties. It re-emerged in calls to end the British Traditional Market Agreement in the early seventies that contrived to unite cultural nationalism and commercial independence with intellectual internationalism.<sup>55</sup> Only very recently has the call, so familiar in Canada, for Australian control of the means of Australian cultural production become part of the mainstream discourse,<sup>56</sup> such has been the identification of the beneficent British cultural industries with the cultural aspirations of Australian society.

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<sup>54</sup> Fellowship, (April 1948). Clipping in Palmer Papers, NLA MS 1174/30/126.

<sup>55</sup> Max Harris and Rosemary Wighton, 'Ending the British-American Book Monopoly Racket,' Australian Book Review, 11 (December 1972), 31; Max Harris, 'The End of Publishing Colonialism,' Australian Book Review, 11 (April 1973), 63-64.

<sup>56</sup> Mark Rubbo, 'Starters and Writers,' Australian Book Review, New Series, No. 77 (December 1985/January 1986), p. 2.



Since the initial expansion of Government assistance to literature in 1939 through the Commonwealth Literary Fund the amounts given and the way the funds were applied had been fairly consistent. The sums were fairly small. A total of 109 grants ( 147,300) went to writers for typing or research assistance between 1940 and 1967. Publication of selected books was subsidised. Magazines publishing and promoting Australian writing were supported. The Government's role was seldom entirely neutral. There were heated accusations in Parliament that some grants went to writers with Communist sympathies. Fund committees disagreed about what sort of work should be subsidised. Biographies were initially approved but later disallowed: historical novels were favoured (the historical novelist Flora Eldershaw was a member of the Fund Advisory Committee for several years) on the grounds that 'no country is so unacquainted with its past as our own'.<sup>57</sup> Again literature was expected to serve a national purpose and the nation's problems were assumed to be unique. But it was the grants, small though they were, to periodicals that evoked most controversy. Again political considerations were paramount. Overland was consistently deprived of a grant, because of its leftist political sympathies and, later, 'because [its] literary standard wasn't high enough'<sup>58</sup>. Meanjin was threatened with the loss of its grant if it published any further articles the Fund's Parliamentary Committee considered unsympathetic after a 'Trailer'<sup>59</sup> in the final issue of Meanjin aroused the anger of both Menzies and Chifley. There was some effective censorship. But when a real public controversy about the Fund emerged it was over the disbursement of public

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<sup>57</sup> Commonwealth Literary Fund Memorandum, 4 Jan. 1946, Palmer Papers.

<sup>58</sup> Quoted in 'Please Put a Penny,' Overland, No. 11 (Summer 1958), p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> C. B. C., 'Trailer,' Meanjin Papers, 5 (1946), 335-36.

funds to 'Communists' and 'left-wing sympathisers'. This controversy had its culturally-intriguing aspects. It was widely-rumoured that the prime mover was the historian, M. H. Ellis who worked for the once-radical magazine, The Bulletin;<sup>60</sup> the most able defender of the controversial grants in Parliament was R. G. Menzies; the most silent member of the Fund Advisory Board when the issue was being discussed was that great radical nationalist, Vance Palmer;<sup>61</sup> and the attacks continued after Palmer resigned and the new Chairman of the Board was Archibald Grenfell Price, a member of the right-wing Australian Council for Cultural Freedom.

The discussion of literature in Australia has certainly never been limited to academic debates; and the academic debates have never been confined to academics. In Canada there is a tradition of influential reviewing (William Arthur Deacon, William French), of writers with high public profiles (Margaret Atwood, Leonard Cohen, Irving Layton), and of extended radio discussion of literary ideas. As I have argued, it has consistently been regarded as one of the functions of literature in a colonial (or post-colonial) society to provide images of national identity.

In a post-colonial society those images and myths are deeply personal, related to each individual's tentative relationship to his/her environment.

When those images are challenged their psychological importance becomes apparent. The writer does not function solely in the world of imagination.

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<sup>60</sup> This was alleged, inter alia, by Mr. Leslie Haylen in his stinging response to Mr. Archie Cameron (Country Party, Barker), Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives, 8 May 1947.

<sup>61</sup> Palmer had his own problems: he was the subject of some of the most vituperative abuse and his silence was, at least in part, an attempt to preserve the integrity of his position as Chairman of the Advisory Board. He did respond eventually in Letters to the Editor, attempting to rescue the Board's reputation from the attacks of the Parliamentarians, Cameron, Keon and Wentworth. Palmer and Flora Eldershaw subsequently resigned and Kylie Tennant, whose grant was one of the occasions of the original attack, resigned her award.

Texts do not only serve artistic purposes. They are situated, as Edward Said rightly insists, 'in the world'.<sup>62</sup> And they are seldom judged by aesthetic values alone. As Laurie Ricou said, during one of the discussion periods at the Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel -- itself one of the reference points for the publicisation of literary controversy -- 'literature's impurity . . . [is] the very source of its strength'.<sup>63</sup>

The Governor-General's Awards, in associating Canadian Literature with the highest symbolic position in the nation, have provided a focus for the intersection of literary and public discourses. During the years of the Secessionist movement in Quebec several Quebecois writers publicly refused their Awards. There was some criticism that the judges in the non-fiction section in 1982 had overlooked Northrop Frye's The Great Code; there were expressions of shame that Marian Engel's Bear won the fiction Award in 1976; and there was the well-publicised Poet's Award to Milton Acorn by 'his fellow poets' who believed that an injustice had been done when the Governor-General's Award went to George Bowering in 1970. That particular controversy made quite explicit a grievance that had been implied often, that of nepotism and circles of influence. Warren Tallman, one of Bowering's TISH 'colleagues', had been a member of the poetry committee in 1970 and this, according to the controversialists, was the reason he and not Acorn won the Award.

The jury system, for these Awards and for the grants of the Canada Council itself, has often been under attack, but bodies such as the

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<sup>62</sup> Edward Said, 'The World, the Text and the Critic,' in Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism, ed. Josue V. Harari (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1979), p. 163 and passim; see also his 'Introduction: Secular Criticism' in The World, the Text and the Critic (London: Faber & Faber, 1984), pp. 3-4, and passim.

<sup>63</sup> Taking Stock: The Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel, ed. Charles R. Steele (Downsview, Ont.: ECW, 1982), p. 98.

Advisory Arts Panel<sup>64</sup> of the Canada Council reassert its fundamental philosophy -- it embodies, it would seem, many Canadian virtues, avoidance of politics by arm's length, peer-group consensus. It is hard to credit the suggestion that Tallman could have influenced the decision so conclusively. The practice is for a three-member committee for each genre to present a short-list of five books to the Jury consisting of the Chairs of all the committees for a final decision.<sup>65</sup>

There has been, in both Canada and Australia, an intensity of engagement with public and professional controversy<sup>66</sup> in the arts. The vehemence that was apparent in the reviews of E. K. Brown's On Canadian Poetry (1943) and A. J. M. Smith's Book of Canadian Poetry. Another exchange between Smith and John Sutherland in Canadian Forum in 1947 contains some quite caustic comment about the bases upon which the discussion of Canadian poetry (in this case, volumes by Patrick Anderson and P. K. Page) should properly take place. That the contest has not abated may be demonstrated by the polemical nature of many of the articles in the self-regarding revisionist Tenth Anniversary Issue of Essays on Canadian Writing.<sup>67</sup> The three that I refer to particularly seek to suggest, with their ostentatiously borrowed titles and in their hand-wringing tone

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<sup>64</sup> Canada Council. The Future of the Canada Council: A Report to the Canada Council from the Advisory Arts Panel (Ottawa: Canada Council, 1978), p. 15.

<sup>65</sup> Information about this process derived from correspondence about the 1975 Awards in Malcolm Ross. Papers. Univ. of Calgary Library, Special Collections. Ross was the Chair of the Jury.

<sup>66</sup> See Chapter One, above, for a discussion of the theoretical basis of literary polemics in post-colonial literary cultures.

<sup>67</sup> Essays on Canadian Writing, No. 30 (Winter 1984-85). See especially, W. J. Keith 'The Function of Canadian Criticism at the Present Time,' pp. 1-16, John Metcalf, 'The Curate's Egg,' pp. 35-59, and T. D. MacLulich, 'What was Canadian Literature? Taking Stock of the Canlit Industry,' pp. 17-34.

of fin-de-siecle determination to overcome the 'reluctance to face the facts of the discipline'<sup>68</sup> that they see all around them. John Moss's 'Bushed in the Sacred Wood'<sup>69</sup> shares all of these characteristics and in the manner so often used by the cultural nationalists he now deplores he constructs a crisis for which he then articulates the appropriate remedy. These articles do not merely engage with the issues of current critical controversy, they actively seek to dis/place the terms on which the debate takes place.

More pertinent, however, to my concern with the way in which audiences are constructed are some more public examples. Three recent books of critical controversy illustrate the point. In the Australian context, John Docker's work has been well-known for some time for its incisive analysis of the unacknowledged ideological positions in various elements of the influential literary-critical discourse. His work has been insisently polemical in tone, form, and rhetoric and the 1984 collection of his critical essays with its pop-art cover design and its witty title, In a Critical Condition (replacing the projected, rather bland, 'Text and Context'), with its pop-culture scenarios and autobiographical insertions reinforced Docker's contention that the discussion of literature inevitably proceeds from from, and constructs, an ideological position.

Two Canadian books, published in 1985 seem to adopt similar postures. The books have similarly modish designs, although Powe, in particular, would not at all share Docker's enthusiasm for popular culture.

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<sup>68</sup> Keith, p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> In The Human Elements: Second Series, ed. David Helwig ([Ottawa]: Oberon, 1981), 161-78. The opening sentence is 'The resources of English Canadian literary criticism are no longer adequate to the achievement of the literature.'

Paul Stuewe's Clearing the Ground and Brian Powe's A Climate Charged<sup>70</sup> each situate themselves in the revisionist modes in an ostentatious way. Major figures are first placed at the centre of an identified hegemony and then a critique is presented that formally displaces them. Stuewe, however, has also been a frequent reviewer and literary columnist, most notably in The Globe and Mail and in Books in Canada, and has pursued the polemical role more publicly. His Globe and Mail review of Frank Davey's Margaret Atwood: A Feminist Poetics<sup>71</sup> provoked a short spate of responses that presented the role of literary criticism as a matter for public debate, just as Don Anderson's National Times review columns have done.

While Docker's insistence on the ideological bases of criticism and his perceptive analysis of the cold-war 'end of ideology' claims of many of the influential critical positions of the nineteen fifties has been an effective one, its implications often seem to have been defused by some apologists who have illustrated a conceptual bluntness, a scholarly solecism, a hasty synthesising. In the Canadian context his reminders are at least as pertinent in view of the recent attacks on thematic criticism. The terms of some of that debate in Canada are remarkably reminiscent of the rhetoric of American neo-conservatism. Again I take my example from one of the better critics, John Moss. Moss's position is stated with a symbolic force that seeks to impose closure.

It is time to consider Canadian literature as literature and not as another thing. Schools may continue to use art as an exercise in civic awareness or moral development, the Canada Council may continue to endow talent on the basis of regional representation and the influence of referees, the Governor General's Award may continue to pass predictably

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<sup>70</sup> Paul Stuewe, Clearing the Ground: English-Canadian Literature After 'Survival' (Toronto: Proper Tales, 1984) and Brian Powe, A Climate Charged: Essays on Canadian Writing (Oakville: Mosaic, 1984).

<sup>71</sup> Paul Stuewe, 'The New Criticism Steps out,' Globe and Mail, 13 April 1985, Book 12.

among kith and kin, but Canadian criticism must learn to correlate, discriminate, evaluate. The responsible Canadian critic must force the reintegration of taste and judgment in his own work, and demand it of his peers. The literature demands it. Works of Canadian literature must be celebrated for their individual excellence as works of literature. They must be appraised in relation to other works in the Canadian tradition but also to the best works anywhere in their genre, of their kind. Nationality must be recognised as having more to do with nationalism than with art.<sup>72</sup>

What one continues to find in the Australian critical tradition is a persistent claim of non-ideological pragmatics coupled with a polemical intensity that seems to deny it. Recurrently in Canada there is a moralist revival that issues in a resort to purely aesthetic (that is to say, idealist, transcendent) value; a strenuous denial of the 'corrupting' influence of nationality, of the conditions of production -- of literature and of meaning within the culture -- , of ideology, of the function of textual meaning in the world. The rhetorical rigour of Moss's echoings of T. S. Eliot and Matthew Arnold express a felt need to purify the profession of letters from the corruption of the modern world. But the criticism of it, as Keith, Maclulich, Metcalf, and Moss all reveal, is situated in a contemporary, worldly context. The recent publication of the correspondence between the Vancouver writer, Brian Fawcett and bookseller, William Hoffer tenaciously opposes the values of Moss and Metcalf but it reveals the same neo-conservative polemical frame.<sup>73</sup>

Manning Clark's In Search of Henry Lawson (1978) which described Lawson's life and career as one of tragic failure emblematising the Australian experience provoked not only some strongly-worded reviews but

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<sup>72</sup> John Moss, 'Bushed in the Sacred Wood,' in The Human Elements: Second Series, ed. David Helwig ([Ottawa: Oberon, 1981), p. 176.

<sup>73</sup> William Hoffer, A Correspondence (Vancouver: William Hoffer and the Final Judgement Construction Company, 1985).

also numerous debates in 'Letters to the Editor' columns all around Australia. An historian's account of the life and writings of a turn-of-the-century short story writer was a public issue. What was being challenged in the controversy that followed the reception of Clark's book was not his use of a national ideology to account for Lawson's life and career but his use of that particular national ideology. A similar public controversy arose in Canada (though the ideological bases of it were less overt) over the discovery of the 'real' identity and pre-Canadian career of the important novelist, Frederick Philip Grove, by the Kingston scholar, Douglas Spettigue.

There was great interest in the challenge to the awarding of the Archibald Prize to William (later Sir William) Dobell in 1944 for his portrait of Joshua Smith. The objection was that the work was caricature rather than portrait and, therefore, not art. In the same year the poets, Harold Stewart and James McAuley, concocted some poems from quotations, phrases of conversation and other odd sources. They succeeded in having them published in the avant-garde literary magazine, Angry Penguins, under the fictitious name of Ern Malley. Many of the poems are very fine despite their method of composition, but the hoax, which was widely publicised, discredited modern poetry. The challenge to Dobell had a similar effect on innovation in painting. Both cases ended up in court. In the case of the poetry hoax Adelaide police charged the editor, Max Harris, with issuing an obscene publication. There was a major court case with international expert witnesses. The court was asked to determine literary merit and literary meaning. Harris was fined 5.

In fact, throughout the period since 1939 the arts in general have been controversial. They have been matters of public concern and these controversies were often tied up with images of national identity. In Australia these often evoked an anti-intellectual, anti-cultural amusement in the press and some areas of public discussion. The Dobell and Malley controversies each significantly retarded the cause of the moderate modernism that they represented. In Canada, it was not intellectual or cultural values that were felt to be threatened by changes in literary practice but moral ones. In both countries, the censorship and banning enterprise seems to have gathered momentum from the war-time experience. Censorship had been inscribed as a means of defending the national interests and values, and this continued into the post-war period and the cold-war that followed. In Canada, a number of books were removed from public libraries on the grounds that they expressed 'Commie' opinions; in Australia, there was (both before and after the Petrov trial) controversy (referred to above) in Parliament and in the Press about Commonwealth Literary Fund Grants going to leftist writers. If politics were the major issue in the fifties, sex became the issue on which social values needed to be defended in the sixties.

Other controversies concerned the production of literary meaning within the community by challenging the choice of subject matter and form adopted by writers. The most public of these issues were to do with censorship. The Australian 'trials' of Portnoy's Complaint and Lady Chatterley's Lover were, perhaps, the most spectacular, and in Canada Lady Chatterley's Lover also precipitated the public discussion of changes in taste and standards with respect to literature and language. In both countries the major changes in the way the community delegated control over such matters to the legal system were tested and enacted in the early nineteen seventies. The principal value inscribed in the Supreme Court of Canada decisions was the insistence that the 'community standards' by which .pa the obscenity is tested must be 'Canadian standards'<sup>74</sup>.

Those 'trials', ultimately, defended the rights of readers to read



certain kinds of literature and the rights of publishers to sell it. They also problematised the social and moral effect of literature. They were concerned principally with literature as presentation. An important element of these court proceedings (like their cultural, if not legal) antecedent, the 'Ern Malley' Case, was the appearance of writers and critics in a court of law as expert witnesses for the defence. The witnesses in the Portnoy's Complaint case included a normally non-public writer like Patrick White. Similarly, in Canada in 1978, Alice Munro appeared with others at a hearing before the Huron County School Board near her home in Clinton, Southern Ontario to defend (unsuccessfully) a number of books including The Diviners. Hugh MacLennan and Morley Callaghan had their testimony in defence of Lady Chatterley's Lover set aside as 'purely personal opinion'<sup>75</sup> when the novel was declared obscene in Quebec. The authority of authors was not accepted, although at the subsequent successful appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, testimony by F. R. Scott (a poet as well as a noted constitutional lawyer) was accepted.

The Removalists controversy, and others like it -- the banning of Rusty Bugles by the New South Wales Chief Secretary in 1948 and the gaoling of novelist Robert Close in Victoria for the same offence in the same year, and more spectacularly, the acquittal of Frank Hardy on a charge of libel in 1951 -- were concerned with literature as representation, and with the \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>74</sup> Cited in Walter Tarnopolsky, 'Freedom of the Press,' in Newspapers and the Law, by Walter Tarnopolsky, Colin Wright, Gerald-A. Beaudoin, Edith Cody-Rice. Vol. 3, Research Publications, Royal Commission on Newspapers (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, Canada, 1981), pp. 17, 18.

<sup>75</sup> Quoted in Peter Birdsall and Delores Broten, Mind War: Censorship in English Canada (Victoria, B. C.: CANLIT, 1978), p.19.

rights of writers to write about certain things and in certain ways. It was to do with the writerly responsibilities of language and form; and above all, of content. Frank Moorhouse and Michael Wilding have noted<sup>76</sup> how their involvement in the anti-censorship struggles of the late sixties and early seventies was an expression of literary necessities as much as 'ideological' beliefs (though this implies a distinction to which neither they nor I would subscribe). That this involved an intersection of the literary and the political was a step they were happy to take. The lengthy controversy over the censorship of, principally, sexual language in 'literature' and in the press inscribed the use of language as an item on Australian society's agenda. The fact that a minor (once-blasphemous) obscenity, 'bloody' could be generally referred to as 'the Great Australian adjective' is suggestive of a partly-acknowledged nexus between language and nationality, of the right of a culture to 'own' its language.

In the early nineteen seventies several Australian plays were produced in London. One excited the interest of the press and public in Australia.

David Williamson's The Removalists should not, said some, have been performed overseas because it gave a bad impression of Australians.<sup>77</sup> There had been similar reactions to Henry Lawson and Susanna Moodie by some of their contemporaries: they didn't present a balanced view of Australia and Canada. Lawson's publisher George Robertson was of the opinion that 'Henry Lawson's representation of Australia and Australians has done the Commonwealth more harm with the world at large than all the traveller's tales that have ever been told' while A. G. Stephens regretted his 'English personality, alien temperament [and] womanish wail [that]

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<sup>76</sup> Australian Literary Studies, 'New Writing Special Issue,' 8 (1977), pp. 115-26, 181.

<sup>77</sup> Alrene Sykes, 'Australian Bards and British Reviewers,' Australian Literary Studies, 7 (1975), 39-49.

often needs a sturdy Australian backbone'.<sup>78</sup> People have certain expectations of 'their' writers.

In Canada, the issue was focussed a few years later on a couple of more specifically local matters. This confirms a trend in Canadian culture that runs counter to the nationally-appointed commissions and centralised organs of opinion-making. Canadian provincial and local authorities have retained greater control over local activities than their counterparts in the Australian Federation, and it becomes clear that these differences in the power structure are reflected in the paradigms of the discourse. An aspect of this that is pertinent to the present discussion was remarked upon by B. K. Sandwell in 1936:

There is no doubt that over a large part of Canada books have come to be regarded as something peculiarly associated with the process of education, and the process of education as something which is quite adequately looked after by the provincial and district authorities.<sup>79</sup>

In February 1976, a school principal in Southern Ontario, where the book is set and where its author lives, removed Alice Munro's Lives of Girls and Women from the senior students' reading lists: he was publicly criticised by his staff and students. A few months later, Margaret Laurence's The Diviners was attacked by residents of Peterborough, Ontario, close to Laurence's home (and to the concluding setting of the novel). The Reverend Sam Buick of the Dublin Street Pentecostal Church called the book

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<sup>78</sup> Henry Lawson Criticism: 1894-1971, ed. Colin Roderick (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1972), p. xxxii. These reactions to Lawson come, significantly, from people closely associated with him, his publisher, his mentor-editor; two of his disciples, Vance Palmer and Frank Dalby Davison made very similar comments.

<sup>79</sup> B. K. Sandwell, 'A Changing Generation,' Queen's Quarterly, 43 (Spring 1936), 41.

a 'travesty, a blasphemy, . . . immorality, adultery, and fornication'.<sup>80</sup>

A strong Peterborough branch of the Renaissance organisation was formed and its chairman, a Professor of German Literature, argued for the need to defend the Judeo-Christian tradition in the schools. The novel, a Governor-General's Award winner, had been set for study by Grade 13 (eighteen year-old) students at Lakefield High.

At the end of 1984, the controversy emerged again: this time the principal antagonist was a mother of two children at Lakefield High, and a municipal councillor. After three months of campaigning against the inclusion of The Diviners and Jest of God as well as Catcher in the Rye on the syllabus, the banners lost when the County School Board voted to accept the unanimous advice of its textbook review committee to retain them. This time, the committee's clerical members voted in favour of the books, because they wished to avoid further 'dividing' the community. A kind of woolly pluralism was articulated in the interests of preserving the precarious unity of the mosaic.<sup>81</sup>

The attempts to keep The Diviners out of the schools were, in each case, led by fundamentalists and it is interesting to consider the view of literature implied by their reactions to it. Certainly, the reaction was characteristic of those accustomed to regarding the written word as literally true and this was inserted as the basis on which the argument proceeded. However, it also became clear -- especially in the ad hominem abuse that was directed at Laurence and her morality -- that a kind of expressive realism was at the root of the way literature was being

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<sup>80</sup> Quoted in John Ayre, 'Bell, Book and Scandal,' Whig-Standard (Kingston), Weekend Magazine, 28 August 1976, pp. 9-11.

<sup>81</sup> See the account by Mark Czarnecki, 'Margaret Laurence & the Book Banners,' Chatelaine, 58, No. 10 (October 1985), 55, 186-88, 190-91.

constructed in this publicisation of literary discussion. Laurence's fiction was regarded as 'truth', and as evidence of the quality of her mind since it was expressive of the individual's mind. The view is, of course, one in which mainstream academic criticism has participated for most of this century: criticism often says, 'in Laurence', eliding the difference between author and text. The laws of obscenity, and the public conception of authorship have long demanded that someone be responsible for texts.

Since the nineteen seventies decisions about which books should be placed on school curricula in Canada has become much more public, with public hearings replacing the quiet phone-call to the principal preceding the autocratic decision to retain or remove. The change is one that Canadianists themselves influenced when, in the late nineteen sixties and early nineteen seventies, organisations like the Canada Studies Foundation made the issue of which books were used in schools a public and a national issue, a matter for scrutiny and a reflection of public and national values. In Australia, such matters are less often part of the discourse of public controversy, principally because the administration of education remains largely out of local control, and in the hands of State public servants and Ministers.<sup>82</sup>

But there seems to have been another value at stake. The two most public attempts to remove Laurence's novel were made in her own county, by her neighbours. In 1978, a School Board in the Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia, banned Ernest Buckler's The Mountain and the Valley which was set in the Valley, for containing 'swear words'. In 1985, attempts were made to remove Peter Kocan's The Treatment and The Cure from the Year Twelve

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<sup>82</sup> On the other hand, in Australia until 1972, such matters found themselves in court more often than in Canada.

syllabus in NSW. The novels are set in the Morisset Mental Asylum in which Kocan writes: the objectors were a local school-teacher and the local Member of Parliament.<sup>83</sup> In each case the identification of fictional setting and readers' home seems to have been an issue for both the banners and the teachers setting the syllabi. That literature might be related to what the students see around them every day and not be sanitised by distance in either time or place (not written, as Atwood observed, by 'dead foreigners')<sup>84</sup> was clearly what excited the teachers and their opponents. When art is patriated it becomes something that is worth contesting. When literature is brought into the same discourse as contemporary social and community controversies it, inevitably, participates in them. Among the books that school boards in Canada, and State Education Departments in Australia, have been asked to remove is an unusually high proportion of Canadian and Australian books respectively. The list of books that was circulated among members of the Campaign Against Regressive Education in Queensland in 1978 by the moral campaigner, Rona Joyner, fresh from a successful campaign against two widely-used social science programmes, included a large number of Australian titles.<sup>85</sup> It becomes clear that many of the books are not offensive because of their language or their sexual morality but because of their social views, their ideology, because of their bearing upon the construction of nationality. As one of the delegates

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<sup>83</sup> 'Kocan Novels to Stay,' Newcastle Herald, 11 February 1985, p. 6.

<sup>84</sup> Margaret Atwood, Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature (Toronto: Anansi, 1972), p. 15.

<sup>85</sup> The list is cited in 'Rona Joyner: To Sir With Love,' Semper, 15 March 1978, p. 7. Joyner subsequently abandoned this campaign. The list began with Lawler's Summer of the Seventeenth Doll and Seymour's One Day of the Year; it also contained books by George Johnston, Colin Johnson, Frank Hardy, Thomas Keneally, Katharine Susannah Prichard, Donald Horne's The Lucky Country, Nene Gare; there was a sole Canadian representative -- Brian Moore's The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne.

to the convention that banned Hugh MacLennan's Barometer Rising from Manitoba schools in 1960 said, 'This book has no place in society, let alone in schools'<sup>86</sup>. Thus, the appearance on Joyner's list of Seymour's 'The One Day of the Year'. When Marian Engel's Bear won the Governor-General's Award for fiction in 1976, there was also controversy and, one senses, a feeling of embarrassment. Canada itself was constituted in an embarrassing form by the novel, and certainly by the awarding of such a nationally-identified prize to it.

A less public, but equally important influence not only upon taste, but upon the conception of Canadian Literature, was Malcolm Ross's persistent vetoing of Leonard Cohen's Beautiful Losers from the New Canadian Library Series in 1968. Despite continued passionate appeals by Jack McClelland, Ross remained firm and Cohen's book remained out of the New Canadian Library. It appears that Ross's objections were moral ones against the book's 'obscenity'.<sup>87</sup>

Language, then, continually centralises itself as the problematic, either as a so-called 'literary problem' (as it is for Dennis Lee and Robert Kroetsch), as a 'moral problem' (as it seems to be in the issues

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<sup>86</sup> Quoted in Peter Birdsall and Delores Broten, Mind War, p. 19.

<sup>87</sup> The correspondence between McClelland (the General Manager of McClelland & Stewart) and Ross (the General Editor of the New Canadian Library Series) is contained in Malcolm Ross. Papers. Univ. of Calgary Library, Special Collections Division. At this period it seems to have been customary for Ross to retain carbon copies of his letters but the correspondence on the Beautiful Losers issue does not include any of Ross's letters; their contents can only be guessed at from McClelland's replies, which are detailed and lengthy. McClelland had, it seems, given Cohen an undertaking that his book would be included in NCL and, as a publisher, was impressed by the book's popularity -- he notes in one letter to Ross that the paperback edition had sold some 50,000 copies; he also regarded Cohen as a friend. Finally, he claimed that the book was an historical document, trying to appeal to Ross's scholarly instincts over his moral ones. Ross's right of veto, part of his arrangement with McClelland & Stewart, was firmly exercised.

just discussed), or as the ground on which the crucial competitions for the paradigms of nationality take place, in which the discourse about language is at once a way of seizing the language of discourse.

As Tim Rowse aptly points out, 'One of the common tests of whether Australia has a culture has been the status of the Australian language'.<sup>88</sup>

It is, therefore, not surprising to note that the most notable contributions to the literature on the Australian language have appeared in times of resurgent nationalism -- E. E. Morris's Austral English (1898), Sidney J. Baker's The Australian Language (1945, 1966), and G. A. Wilkes's A Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms (1978)<sup>89</sup>. Intriguingly, Canada provides few parallels: there is only (so far as I am aware) A Concise Dictionary of Canadianisms (1973). The enormous public success of The Macquarie Dictionary (1981 which is now identified as 'The National Dictionary' on its cover) is, I think, most closely paralleled by the success of The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985): the Canadian theme being 'to know ourselves' rather than to differentiate ourselves by means of the language we identify as 'ours' and which thereby identifies us. In Canada language is so often regarded as neutral and the concern with theme and content is prior to voice.<sup>90</sup> As Dave Godfrey puts it, 'reticence is the

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<sup>88</sup> Rowse, Arguing the Arts, p. 68.

<sup>89</sup> Others that should be mentioned are G. W. Turner, The English Language in Australia and New Zealand (1966, 1972), W. S. Ramson, Australian English: An Historical Study of the Vocabulary 1788 - 1898 (1966), W. S. Ramson, ed. English Transported: Essays on Australasian English (1970); and most influentially of all, 'Afferbeck Lauder' [Alistair Morrison], Let Stalk Strine (1965) and others.

<sup>90</sup> W. H. New cogently argues against this assumption in 'New Language, New World,' in Awakened Conscience: Studies in Commonwealth Literature, ed. C. D. Narasimhalah (New Delhi/ Hong Kong: Sterling/Heinemann, 1978), pp. 360-77.



natural form'<sup>91</sup>. But, as in Australia, the laconic projects and protects lacunae, and the absences and silences are part of the discourse's disguise.

In Australia (and, on those rarer occasions, in Canada) the 'national language' has often been deployed in the role assigned to it in the Imperial scheme of things -- comic deflation (McCulloch's Stepsure Letters, Leacock, Haliburton, 'Sarah Binks', C. J. Dennis, Barry Humphries, Chips Rafferty, Paul Hogan): it is also redeployed by the nationalists, not as a part of the performance, but as a badge of membership (though not, it should be noted, of the nation but of the perceived dominant class, the working class as in The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll and They're a Weird Mob, the rising male middle-class as in Williamson, Romeril, Hibberd). Divergence from Standard English becomes a sign of cultural activism which serves ultimately only to confirm one's otherness -- as in the ambitious use of Paul Hogan to sell Australia to United States tourists. In Quebec Literature the use of joual is overtly ideological and the new critical interest in, and increasing literary practise of, macaronics reflects (too?) neatly the eventual adoption of bi- or multi-lingualism as part of the national project within which the literature is inscribed and to which it inevitably subscribes.

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<sup>91</sup> 'Dave Godfrey,' in Eleven Canadian Novelists, by Graeme Gibson (Toronto: Anansi, 1972), p. 164.

## CHAPTER SIX

### The Political Economy of Culture

It follows, then, that Australian Literature  
is the business of every thinking Australian  
Colin Roderick<sup>1</sup>

If the national literature inscribes parts of the national project, it also subscribes the political economy with which it inevitably intersects. It would be too easy to see the growth of the number of Australian and Canadian books written, published, read, and valued merely as a sign of the 'success' of Australian and Canadian Literatures. Just as literature operates within the parameters of public discourses about, and of, culture/s, so it is, in certain ways, enabled by the parameters of the political economy of that culture to speak: to speak, that is, in particular ways in particular places at particular times. While the national literature subscribes to the 'national interest' in the old ecclesiastical sense of assenting to a body of beliefs so it also 'underwrites' the hegemonic version of that interest in its various phases by lending its authority to that project. That authority derives from the 'natural authority' of authorship, which is to say the authority of the possession of the languages of discourse, but also from the testing and

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<sup>1</sup> Colin Roderick, 'The Chair of Australian Literature: An Appeal,' Biblionews and Australian Notes & Queries, 9, No. 5 (May 1956), p. 14. (emphasis added).

validation of that authority by the audience which, in the case of the national literatures, is the nation, the 'folk' whose voice is appropriated by the text and on whose behalf it speaks.

For these reasons, and for those that emerged in the discussion of the intersection of literary polemics and the 'national' discourse in Chapter Five, it is not at all surprising to discover that the national literatures are, to some extent, nationalised industries. It is also not surprising to discover that they are nationalised to the very extent that they 'express' the 'national interest'. The O'Leary Royal Commission on Publications (1961) puzzled over this relationship. Required to recommend 'possible measures which . . . would contribute to the further development of a Canadian identity through a genuinely Canadian periodical press'<sup>2</sup>, the Commission found itself confused by the uses to which the term 'Canadian culture' was put in the contemporary discourse of emergent cultural nationalism and preferred to eschew it in favour of the equally arguable, but apparently less polemical (and therefore neutral and objective) terms 'the Canadian experience' and 'Canada's national identity'<sup>3</sup>: terms that might be beyond political debate. As Richard White has observed in relation to Australia, the terms change in response to changes in the perceived threat to 'the national interest'.<sup>4</sup> But the changing terminology can never conceal the fact that the production of literature, certainly in

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<sup>2</sup> M. Grattan O'Leary, Report of the Royal Commission on Publications ([Ottawa]: The Queen's Printer for the Royal Commission on Publications, May 1961), terms of reference.

<sup>3</sup> O'Leary, Report of the Royal Commission on Publications ([Ottawa]: The Queen's Printer for the Royal Commission on Publications, May 1961), p. 74.

<sup>4</sup> Richard White, Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980 (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1981, pp. 158ff; see also John Docker, 'Cultural History and the Philosophy of History,' Arena, No. 52, (1979), especially p. 22.

Canada and Australia, is a nationalised industry. This chapter will consider the extent to which the production of literature in the two nations has reflected imperial interests, emergent national interests of the state, and the interests of the political economy in which it is situated.

The relations between community, culture, art, and the political economy are nicely represented in significant confusion in a report on the future of the Canada Council from its Advisory Arts Panel. The Introduction to that report, the writing of which shows the influence of the writers Harold Horwood and Sharon Pollock, constitutes itself as an arts statement by adopting the form of a prose-poem with a visually ordered text. It begins by articulating essentialist and liberal romantic-nationalist constructions of the place of art in the national culture. 'Art', it begins, 'is the visible tip of the iceberg that comprises CULTURE',<sup>5</sup> a theoretical position with which a number of recent Australian discussions of arts policy<sup>6</sup> grapple. But if its definition of art is unproblematised, its conception of culture is even more interesting.

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<sup>5</sup> The Future of the Canada Council: A Report to the Canada Council from its Advisory Arts Panel (Ottawa: Canada Council, 1978), p. vii.

<sup>6</sup> Glenn Withers, 'Principles of Government Support for the Arts,' Australian Cultural History, No. 1 (1981), 53-58 ;Judith Brett, 'Cultural Politics and Australian Literary Magazines,' Meanjin, 43 (1984), 423-28; Judith Brett, 'Literature and the Australia Council,' Meanjin, 44 (1985), 284-86; Tim Rowse, Arguing the Arts: The Funding of the Arts in Australia (Ringwood: Penguin, 1985; John Frow, 'Class and Culture: Funding the Arts,' Meanjin, 45 (1986), 118-28.

It embodies -- or should embody

the  
C O L L E C T I V E  
IMAGINATION  
of a  
P E O P L E.  
T H E C O L L E C T I V E I M A G I N A T I O N

assembles  
sums up  
spins out  
extrapolates from

the attributes    desires    hopes

of  
ALL THE INDIVIDUALS  
living in a given community  
(a society)  
and its  
G E O G R A P H I C A L  
C L I M A T I C  
R E L I G I O U S  
A N D P O L I T I C A L  
C O N T E X T.

. . . . .  
. .  
.

That final typographical ikon is a clue to the constructs that actually underlie this model of the relations of artistic production: it is an inverted iceberg; its submerged 'toe' is the singular conception of 'context', an unfractionalised conception of community, an undifferentiated constitution of audience, and a totalising resumption of the collectivity of the imagination. It complies with the liberal romantic notion that all members of the community (which is not the same thing as a society, i.e. Gemeinschaft rather than Gesellschaft) have equal access to the formation of its artistic superstructure. It goes on to talk of art as cultural work that 'withstands time', thus objectifying judgement; of art as an 'essential indicator' of culture; of art as necessary to the survival of a 'people' through its 'authentic self-image'. Taking this romantic-nationalist base and superstructure model it arranges a shot-gun marriage between it and the Marxist one, erecting an argument designed to convince the national Government of the link between culture and economics. After referring to the external pressures of cultural imperialism ('the AMERICAN GIANT'), internal pressures of disintegration ('the eventual separation of Quebec'), and the pressures of environmental and demographic destiny (the geographic 'dispersal' and ethnic and linguistic 'diversity' of its population), it culminates in an appeal to the Government:

to raise to an equal footing  
C U L T U R E  
and  
E C O N O M I C S <sup>7</sup>

Its tactical espousal here of encouraging the centralist government of Pierre Trudeau (a government that conceived of itself as being under severe pressure from powerful dis-integrative forces) to adopt culture as an instrument of integrationist national policy seems to sit uneasily with its later indignant castigation as 'flagrantly political'<sup>8</sup> of the Government's offer, in the previous year, of funds for cultural programmes

that contributed to national unity. In adopting, and seeming to urge, this tactic, however, it was hardly telling the Trudeau Government anything it did not already know or want to hear. It was standing on the high ground of the Canadian cultural tradition which had, from the very polemical sources of the Council in the commissioning of the Massey Report and (as Margery Fee<sup>9</sup> has shown) indeed much earlier, stressed the relation between the common weal of the nation and its literary culture. That tradition had regularly asserted the necessity for state support of the culture upon

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<sup>7</sup> The Future of the Canada Council: A Report to the Canada Council from its Advisory Arts Panel (Ottawa: Canada Council, 1978), p. x.

<sup>8</sup> The Future of the Canada Council: A Report to the Canada Council from its Advisory Arts Panel (Ottawa: Canada Council, 1978), p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Margery Fee, 'English-Canadian Literary Criticism, 1890 - 1950: Defining and Establishing a National Literature,' Ph.D Thesis, Univ. of Toronto, 1981, Introduction, especially pp. 2-3; Chapter One.

whose health the survival of the state depended.

It is very difficult to assess the precise degree to which the production of literature is dependent on state support. It is possible to point to the extent of much of the direct, and some of the indirect, subsidy to literature; and it is also possible to observe the frequent homology between formations and events in the political economy and literary phenomena. Certainly, the grants to writers and publishers from the Canada Council and the Australia Council (and its forerunners, the Australian Council for the Arts and the Commonwealth Literary Fund) are quantifiable and not only public but frequently publicised. The present Director of the Literature Board, Tom Shapcott, has continually insisted upon the relationship between the quantifiable and the perceived quality of recent Australian writing: it is probably not his job to question the Board's role in the formation of those perceptions. His optimism is millennial and the numbers seem to affirm it: 'in twelve years of funding over 1000 writers have received grants or fellowships, . . . Over 1000 books have been subsidised'.<sup>10</sup> They are, however, supplemented by numerous other forms and programmes of state support. The money that is made available to writers to fund writer-in-residence programmes is a significant means of support for some writers and is, of course, considerably augmented by the contributions to these programmes by the institutions (usually Universities) with which they (and their interests) are affiliated.<sup>11</sup> The growth of Canadian Studies and Australian Studies, referred to in the previous two Chapters, has frequently been a matter of

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<sup>10</sup> Tom Shapcott, 'The Literature Board in Action,' Notes & Furphies, No. 16, (April 1986), p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> See Bronwyn Drainie, 'The New Patronage of Literature,' The Globe and Mail, 16 Nov. 1985, p. E1, E8.

public policy (and, therefore, demonstrably congruent with other public policies) and has had a direct effect on the number of Canadian and Australian titles prescribed as texts and purchased for the libraries of educational institutions. There are, in both countries (but more particularly in Canada), grants also for reading and promotional tours and speaking engagements, and writers who have academic or other professional appointments are often granted funds from national, Provincial/State, or institutional sources other than the Canada and Australia Councils.

National or State/Provincial government literary prizes are another source of direct subsidy to writers and, in a few instances, publishers as well. Public Lending Right, introduced in Australia in 1974, and debated in Canada for nearly twenty years and agreed to in 1986, is a significant source of Federal funding to both Australian authors and publishers; this payment is made for all books, irrespective of whether they serve the national interest or meet anyone's definition of literature. Australia has also had, since 1969, the Book Bounty, a form of direct industrial subsidy for the printing industry: in 1972-73 it was worth almost three million dollars; in 1974-75 it was 5.9 million dollars.<sup>12</sup> In Canada there have been direct, and sometimes very large, grants or low-interest loans to 'bail out' publishing houses in financial straits. Increasingly, State and Provincial governments make grants to writers and, in the case of the Ontario government in particular, to publishers as well. There is also support for literature from the Departments of Foreign/External Affairs through their various book-buying, promotion and distribution schemes. The Canada Council's 'Book Kits' of about two hundred titles (most often

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<sup>12</sup> Pocket Compendium of Australian Statistics, No. 61, 1976 (Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1976, p. 121. In the 1986 Budget all bounties were reduced and an Industries Assistance Commission recommendation for a reduction from twenty five to twenty percent was to come into effect on 1 January 1987.



literary) were distributed to selected libraries to encourage the growth of Canadian studies through the nineteen seventies; this programme was cancelled in the early nineteen eighties, but a similar scheme was instituted by the Cultural Affairs Section of the Department of External Affairs. In 1980, the Australia Council put together a 'Book Pack' to be distributed to overseas institutions and to individuals likely to influence or stimulate the growth of the reading and study of Australian Literature. These latter schemes are selective in terms of what is provided and in terms of to whom it is provided: they construct both subject and audience.

In the budgets of State and Provincial governments the amounts are often concealed in the expenditure of Departments of culture, recreation and leisure and in municipal spending programmes in similar ways, as well, of course, as being a large part of the library votes of municipal administrations. Significantly, literature is named in different ways in different periods and in different jurisdictions. As Frank Pasquill, who examined cultural funding patterns in Canada, pointed out<sup>13</sup> there are large and growing discrepancies in cultural funding as the responsibility for funding cultural activity is increasingly localised. It is also increasingly obscured and mystified in these junior departments of 'odds and ends' and by a debate about 'elitist' and 'popular' cultures that is frequently manipulated in fairly cynical ways to confuse what John Frow has usefully distinguished as questions of value and questions of equity.<sup>14</sup>

Writers depend as much as any other artistic producers upon an

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<sup>13</sup> Frank T. Pasquill and Joan Horsman, Wooden Pennies: A Report on Cultural Funding Patterns in Canada (York University: Programme in Arts Administration, 1973), pp. 24-26.

<sup>14</sup> John Frow, 'Class and Culture: Funding the Arts,' Meanjin, 45 (1986), 124-25 and passim.

audience, but it seems that less is known about the audience for books in Australia than about the audience for other cultural forms. Frank Thompson, who changed the University of Queensland Press from a small, conventional academic press into a major innovative publisher of Australian books, has said that the publishing industry 'must know less about [its] customers than any other industry'.<sup>15</sup>

The Australian Bureau of Census and Statistics stopped issuing its annual bulletin of publishing statistics in 1972, the very year that Statistics Canada began to do so: this hardly aids comparisons. Australian library statistics are not kept, on a national level, in a particularly systematic way either. One of the decisions of the Committee for the Review of Commonwealth Functions (the so-called Lynch 'Razor Gang') which reviewed federal government expenditure in Australia in the late nineteen seventies, was to take the collection of statistics relating to libraries away from the Bureau of Census and Statistics: a function it had only just been given. This occurred despite the fact that in 1976 The Industries Assistance Commission had begun the Report of its enquiry into the Australian publishing industry by highlighting the lack of data on publishing, buying, and reading in Australia. At about the same time, in 1978, Statistics Canada conducted the largest survey of reading habits ever undertaken.<sup>16</sup> Canadian library statistics have been recorded since 1920<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Frank Thompson, 'Downhill all the Way: Publishing in the 80s,' Australian Library Journal, 30 (May 1981), 55-58.

<sup>16</sup> For a brief account see Robert Fulford, 'Culture Quantified: the News from Statistics Canada,' Saturday Night, 95, No. 6 (July/Aug. 1980), 15-16.; for an extremely thorough analysis of the material see James Lorimer and Susan Shaw, Book Reading in Canada: the Audience, the Marketplace, and the Distribution System for Trade Books in English Canada (Toronto: The Association of Canadian Publishers, 1983).

<sup>17</sup> Delores Broten and Peter Birdsall, Studies in the Book Trade (Victoria, B. C.: CANLIT, 1980), p. 9.

but they, like the Australian ones, are limited in scope. Some Australian library statistics are kept but they relate to the size of library staffs, and total bookstocks:<sup>18</sup> almost nothing is recorded centrally about the reading and borrowing habits of library users, apart from those in University libraries. Even they reveal almost nothing about what is read or even what is acquired.

School libraries, which probably provide library experience for the largest percentage of the population, are not surveyed well either. Most states do not collect school library data; others do (notably South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania), but do not publish it.<sup>19</sup> Once again Canada is much better served. The Statistics Canada surveys that began in 1920 separated school, academic, and public libraries from 1974. The Yearbook of Australia has a minute section of bland and uninformative prose which tells readers that there are a lot of libraries in Australia and that they are very good. No statistics or analysis are offered. A report prepared for the Australia Council on Australians' Attitudes to the Arts in 1980<sup>20</sup> provided profiles of those people who like to go to the various 'public' cultural forms, music, visual, and performing arts, but not of those who identify themselves as readers. The discussion of 'audiences' in the arts has consistently, and understandably, focussed on those that can be identified as 'place communities' almost to the exclusion of those (most notably readers) that are 'non-place' or 'mind

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<sup>18</sup> See the annual review of the Australian Advisory Council On Bibliographical Services, Library Services for Australia: The Work of AACOBS; and also the statistics for University and Special Libraries in Australian Academic and Research Libraries (since 1970).

<sup>19</sup> D. H. Borchardt and John Thawley, 'The Present State of Library Statistics in Australia,' Australian Library Journal, 29 (1980), 132.

<sup>20</sup> Kenneth Tolhurst, Australians' Attitudes to the Arts: A Report Prepared for the Australia Council (North Sydney: Australia Council, 1980).

communities',<sup>21</sup> upon those who 'go through the turnstiles' rather than those who consume their culture in private. The distinction made here between 'place' and 'non-place/mind' communities is derived from the terms of one made by the nineteenth century German sociologist, Ferdinand Tonnies, though it cannot really bear the subsequent evolution of those terms as instruments for explaining different kinds of community organisation. It is important to observe that the fact that the community of literary consumers is an implied community of interests but seldom a community of coordinated action serves to obscure its status as a community and therefore its influence.

Public libraries have a long and important history in Australia and in several parts of Canada.<sup>22</sup> From the private libraries of collectors that were made available to writers to the libraries of the Mechanics' Institutes and later the Workers' Education Associations that provided access to those who, perhaps, did not normally buy books, and the circulating libraries that catered to yet another segment of society and which gradually faded in both countries as the municipal libraries began to grow in the nineteen fifties and develop into the 'mass' public library systems of the nineteen sixties and the resource centres of the nineteen seventies. The effect of these developments has been an assimilation of the previously segmented or differentiated audience for books. Although

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<sup>21</sup> Ralph E. Anderson and Irl Carter, Human Behavior in the Social Environment: A Social Systems Approach, 3rd ed. (New York: Aldine, 1984), p. 63.

<sup>22</sup> See Margaret Beckman, Moshie Dahms, Lorna Bruce, 'Libraries,' Canadian Encyclopedia (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1985), 1003-05; Delores Broten and Peter Birdsall, Studies in the Book Trade (Victoria, B. C.: CANLIT, 1980), pp. 50 - 52; Alan Brissenden, 'Culture and the State: the Case of South Australia,' Australian Cultural History, No. 1, 1981, 43-52; Derek Whitelock, The Great Tradition: A History of Adult Education in Australia (St. Lucia: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1974)

reading statistics are not readily available, various surveys have indicated that about thirty per cent of Australians use a public library regularly,<sup>23</sup> while another twenty per cent use one occasionally. Of the fifty per cent who do not, many presumably use school, university or specialist libraries. The figure given for usage of public libraries in Canada is about twenty-nine per cent though it is, for historical reasons, higher in British Columbia. The number of library books per head of population is often used as a test of a nation's interest in books. In 1962, Australia had 0.917, the United Kingdom 1.455, the U.S.S.R. 3.581 and the U.S.A 4.21. The figure for Canada in 1953 was 0.57.<sup>24</sup>

When asked about their leisure activities in a 1980 Australia Council report on attitudes to the arts, people gave interesting responses.<sup>25</sup> Listening to music (or radio) at home was rated as an important leisure activity by the largest number of respondents, with reading books a fairly close second; watching TV came eighth. However, householders in general spent about three times as many hours watching TV as they did reading books. Reading seems to be closely correlated with level of education and

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<sup>23</sup> Australia. Committee of Inquiry into Public Libraries, Public Libraries in Australia, p. 13 estimates municipal library usage at about 25-30% of the population. Quoted in Borchardt and Thawley, 'The Present State of Australian Library Statistics,' p. 132. Kenneth Tolhurst, Australian's Attitudes to the Arts: A Report Prepared for the Australia Council. (North Sydney: Australia Council, 1980), p. 132 arrived at similar figures based on a survey in Sept. 1979 of 1,698 respondents. He found that 29.3% used a public library regularly, while a further 18.7% belonged to a library but didn't use it regularly.

<sup>24</sup> These figures are cited in John D. McLaren. Libraries for the Public: A Report to the Nation (Melbourne: Hill of Content, published for the Australian Library Promotion Council, 1969); The Canadian figure is cited by Hilton Smith, 'Libraries,' in Writing in Canada, ed. George Whalley (Toronto: Macmillan, 1956), p. 117.

<sup>25</sup> Kenneth Tolhurst, Australian's Attitudes to the Arts: A Report Prepared for the Australia Council. (North Sydney: Australia Council, 1980).

with household income and there are grounds, then, for seeing it as being to some degree a class-specific activity. The surveys also revealed that school experience had a positive effect on what one of the surveys unproblematically called 'the appreciation of good books'. University education seems to increase the reading of Australian books, and of Australian literature in particular: class-specificity is maintained but it is a slightly different fraction from the 'general' reading one. The Canadian statistics certainly show that education certainly increases book reading but whether the proportion of Canadian books also rises is not clear. Overall reading rates would appear to be higher for Australia than for Canada. It is also the case that rural readers read more Australian books than city-dwellers and that, among the capital cities, Brisbane has by far the highest reading incidence. One possible explanation for this apparently surprising statistic is that Australian writing has been a part of the school and University reading experience in Queensland longer than in most other parts of Australia.

According to another Australia Council report, book-buying was slightly more frequent than book-borrowing. The book industry is a large one. The number of titles published in Australia has grown from 495 in 1940 (including Government publications) to 612 in 1961 to 2790 in 1980.<sup>26</sup>

The value of Australian publishing doubled between 1961 and 1965: by comparison, the publishing industry in Great Britain increased by only six percent in that period. In 1965 the Australian retail book trade was worth about six million dollars, with a further million being earned in export

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<sup>26</sup> Figures from various sources including Annual Catalogue of Australian Books; Australian National Bibliography; Ideas About Books and Bookselling; Andrew Fabinyi, 'The Australian Book,' Meanjin, 17 (1958), 312-14. It should be noted that precise comparisons between various years is difficult because the basis for calculating the number of books has varied.

sales.<sup>27</sup> Australian publishing doubled again by 1970, and yet again between 1975 and 1979. By 1985, the value of the retail book trade was 722 million dollars.<sup>28</sup> In a similar period, the Canadian book trade also doubled but Canadian publishing declined by 7%.<sup>29</sup> By 1980 the Australian domestic book trade was worth 540 million dollars, with Australian-published books accounting for just over forty per cent of that figure,<sup>30</sup> the percentage Canadian-owned publishers had held in 1965. 1983 was the first year in which over half of the books sold in Australia were published by Australian publishers, though one must be cautious in using book industry statistics. The basis of calculation often varies and comparison and precise statement are difficult.

The Australian book market has always been a large one when per capita reading and book buying habits have been measured. And its continued domination by English publishers, for whom it was a very lucrative market as well as an apparently (in the language of imperialism) 'natural' one, ensured the survival of British cultural imperialism long after its political dominance had been formally ended. In 1936, Stanley Unwin, Vice-President of the International Publishers' Congress, observed that

Australia is a big consumer of English books . . . New Zealand, with its one and a half million inhabitants, is a

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<sup>27</sup> Ideas About Books and Bookselling, 17 Oct. 1966, p. 15: United States publishing increased by 57% in the same period. The 1985 figure is cited by Laurie Muller, 'Australian Book Industry Statistics, Prepared for National Plan for the Promotion of Australian Literature Seminar,' Brisbane 3 Dec. 1986, p. i.

<sup>28</sup> Geoffrey Dutton, Snow on the Saltbush: The Australian Literary Experience (Ringwood: Viking, 1984), p. 235.

<sup>29</sup> Paul Audley, A Report on English-Language Book Publishing in Canada (Toronto: Independent Publishers Association, Dec. 1974), Table 4. Similar material is presented in his Canada's Cultural Industries (Toronto: James Lorimer in association with the Canadian Institute for Economic Policy, 1983).

<sup>30</sup> Ideas About Books and Bookselling, August 1982, p. 36.

wonderfully steady buyer of English books . . . Japan is one of the most dependable foreign markets for English books . . . In proportion to its population Canada is a disappointing market.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to the, presumably, unwitting affirmation of the nexus between economic and cultural imperialisms, the observation is consistent with many other remarks about the state of the Australian book market. In the nineteen fifties and sixties, a statistic celebrated in several discussions of culture in Australia as a sign of its 'real' underlying sophistication was that Australia was the world's largest importer of books per head of population. In the mid-nineteen fifties, Australia was still the largest export market for British books.<sup>32</sup> In 1960, Canada absorbed about two-thirds of the print exports of the United States.<sup>33</sup> Literature, for Australians as for Canadians, was an imported commodity. In 1962, Australia imported 23,000 titles from Great Britain and a further 12,000 from other countries. These figures don't reveal how many books by Australian writers were published elsewhere and then imported back to Australia. Of the Australian writers whose works appeared on the best-seller lists<sup>34</sup> for fiction in Australia in the nineteen sixties most -- notably Patrick White, George Johnston, Morris West, Russell Braddon, Jon Cleary -- were published overseas: it is a phenomenon that remains remarkably consistent across all 'levels' of the Australian literary culture. For Australians then, by and large in contrast to Canadians, Literature was written by their compatriots but had to be validated

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<sup>31</sup> Quoted in 'Canada -- An Illiterate Nation,' Queen's Quarterly, 43 (Spring 1936), 38.

<sup>32</sup> Andrew Fabinyi, 'The Australian Book,' Meanjin, 17 (1958), 313; Overland, No. 6 (Summer 1955-1956), p. 19.

<sup>33</sup> Delores Broten and Peter Birdsall, Studies in the Book Trade (Victoria, B. C.: CANLIT, 1980), p. 61.

<sup>34</sup> Throughout this section I refer to the lists printed in the monthly book-trade magazine, Ideas About Books and Bookselling.



elsewhere and reimported. The same phenomenon was to be observed in other institutions as well -- especially theatre, music, film, and higher education (where 'higher' often seemed to be the opposite of 'here!'). It is a phenomenon that post-war Australian governments, committed to a rapid expansion of the link between domestic consumption and domestic production after the externally-directed production of the war years and the decades of rural supremacy, attempted to deal with through such strategies as the creation of the Australian National University (1946), the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust (1954), the National Institute of Dramatic Art (1958), and the concomitant insertion into public discourse of a concern with the 'brain drain'; all were designed to return Australia's attention to itself, to increase its power to generate its own consumption. The campaign to retrieve its cultural and intellectual capital was a way of giving cultural affirmation and validation to the campaign to increase manufacturing capital. 'Australia Unlimited' (the title of a long-running series of 'educational' supplements promoting the achievements of Australia that appeared annually in the Sydney Morning Herald) became one of the slogans for R. G. Menzies' successful 1958 election campaign.

The most profitable exception to the residual power of foreign validation in publishing was John O'Grady ('Nino Culotta') whose They're a Wierd Mob, published by Ure Smith in Sydney in 1957, outsold all other titles, Australian or otherwise, for over two years and stayed on the best-seller lists for longer than any other title in the post-war decades.

It displaced such notable titles as Peyton Place in 1958 and Dr Zhivago in 1959. The other really durable Australian big seller was George Johnston's My Brother Jack which was published in London by Collins. It not only sold well, it was also the winner of the 1964 Miles Franklin Award, usually regarded as the most prestigious literary award in Australia was serialised on Australian Broadcasting Commission television in 1965, and was later set on secondary school English curricula in most parts of Australia. For this purpose a special school edition was prepared. If one compares the Australian best seller list with the Canadian one,<sup>35</sup> one finds that while all of the best selling books in Canada for 1958 were non-Canadian about one third of those on the Australian list were by Australian authors. A reading public was being well-prepared for the reception of Australian books. The booksellers' trade magazine, Ideas About Books and Bookselling, frequently carried short pieces on how to make Australian books sell. Australian books, especially non-fiction, have become the mainstay of the bookselling trade; publishers, including foreign-owned ones, vigorously promote their Australian titles with special 'Australian' brochures and offers. The proportion of overseas-published Australian titles has decreased significantly.

Until 1974 the British Publishing Traditional Market Agreement gave British publishers automatic, privileged access to the Australian market, preventing Australian publishers from publishing many American books or from importing others. The Agreement actually came to an end under pressure from the Australian publishing and bookselling industry which seized upon the momentum provided by the new nationalism of that period. It was, in any case, a time when British books were selling (or at least were being imported) at particularly favourable prices because of the very low value of Sterling against the Australian dollar in 1973. The Traditional Market Agreement was initiated in 1947 by Sir Stanley Unwin who, as his remarks quoted above indicate, was as aware of the value of the Australian book market as he was scornful of the Canadian one. In the Agreement, Canada (as a book market) was ceded to the Americans, while Australia was the exclusive territory of British publishers. Under the terms of the

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<sup>35</sup> List in Ideas About Books and Bookselling, 39 (8 Oct. 1958), 1032.

Agreement, a British publisher buying rights from an American publisher automatically obtained rights to the whole British Empire (except Canada); the United States publisher was then obliged to cease supplying the book to Australia and to refuse to sell the rights for an Australian edition to any Australian publisher. The British publisher had two years to exercise the rights; the Agreement depended on the existence of the rights and not on the existence or availability of a British edition.<sup>36</sup>

Canada was subject to an even larger number of foreign interventions in its free book market. It had suffered from Imperial interference long before the writing of the Traditional Market Agreement that drew a Papal Line of Demarcation through the English-reading world. From 1889 to 1894 the British Parliament annually vetoed Ottawa's Copyright Act; when an amended version was finally allowed in 1900 it contained the provision for licensing foreign book imports that guaranteed the domination of the Canadian book industry by the agency system and, consequently, a very low level of indigenous publishing. The direct response from Canadian writers was the establishment of the Canadian Society of Authors in 1899. Under the agency system it was much cheaper for a Canadian publisher to import a foreign book than to publish a Canadian one, and as Jack McClelland later pointed out, the more foreign agency titles imported the less space there was for Canadian books in the market. A similar effect was caused by the intrusion into the market of mass paperbacks from the early nineteen thirties,<sup>37</sup> a business for which Canadian publishers were in general,

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<sup>36</sup> An account of the Agreement and a vigorous argument against it are contained in Max Harris and Rosemary Wighton, 'Ending the British-American Monopoly Racket,' Australian Book Review, 11 (Dec. 1972), p. 31; Max Harris, 'The End of Publishing Colonialism,' Australian Book Review, 11 (April 1973), 63.

<sup>37</sup> James Lorimer and Susan Shaw, Book Reading in Canada: the Audience, the Marketplace, and the Distribution System for Trade Books in English Canada (Toronto: The Association of Canadian Publishers, 1983), p. 421.

undercapitalised. This system was strengthened by amendments in 1921: this extended copyright protection to the exclusive agency agreements between Canadian agents and original foreign publishers and removed the requirement of Canadian manufacture. By gazettal this protection was extended two years later to United States publications despite the absence of any reciprocal protection for Canadian publications in the United States and that country's refusal to sign the international copyright agreements. On this occasion, writers with a need to protect themselves in Canadian and foreign markets responded by setting up the CAA in 1921. This uneven situation between American and Canadian publishing interests lasted until 1962. In 1955 the United States signed the Universal Copyright Convention and, in so doing, altered its rigorously protectionist manufacturing requirements as they applied to fellow-signatories. Canada, however, did not sign the Convention until 1962 when it was vigorously urged to do so in the Report of the O'Leary Royal Commission on Publication<sup>38</sup>. The copyright protection thus granted to Canadian books was not, however, retrospective. Moreover, Canada, having dropped its manufacturing clause and its tariff protection in order to qualify to sign these various international agreements, opened its markets to the dumping of remaindered foreign editions of Canadian books, a not uncommon practice. On one occasion this led to members of the Writers Union of Canada picketing one of the Coles Bookstores chain. The Federal Government responded by reinstating the customs prohibition on the import of foreign editions of books copyrighted in Canada. Since this was prohibited by the Berne Convention it was only useful against imports from the United States (which was the principal problem anyway) since it had still not signed the Berne Convention. For \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>38</sup> O'Leary, Report of the Royal Commission on Publications ([Ottawa]: The Queen's Printer for the Royal Commission on Publications, May 1961), p. 78.

these reasons Canadian book production has historically been an embattled one, small by comparative standards<sup>39</sup> and a necessary focus for continual economic stimulation and cultural polemics.

Recognising the value of the Australian book trade and perceiving the shift towards the buying of Australian books, several British-owned publishing firms set up branches in Australia. Penguin, Nelson, Collins, Allen & Unwin have since that time made significant contributions to Australian writing. The devolution of Angus & Robertson in the period after its take-over by Gordon Barton's Ipec Group in 1970 left something of a vacuum into which the more astute branch-plants rushed. One particular consequence of the change in Angus & Robertson's corporate focus was the move of some of its senior editors to other publishers, one effect of which was to bring to an end the traditional loyalty (and contractual obligation) which writers had appeared to owe to publishers. Many writers moved with the editors and a new need or opportunity for the careful negotiation of contracts that became apparent as a consequence of this change in the relations of production hastened the professionalism of Australian writing. It was made manifest in the Australian Society of Authors' Guide to Book Contracts in 1967 and in the increased number of active literary agents working in Australia.

The case of Penguin is an interesting one.<sup>40</sup> The decision to found a branch of Penguin in Australia was made by the firm's head, Sir Allen Lane, \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>39</sup> Delores Broten and Peter Birdsall, Studies in the Book Trade (Victoria, B. C.: CANLIT, 1980), p. 1 quotes 0.07% of Gross Domestic Product compared to an average for developed countries of 0.2%.

<sup>40</sup> A detailed, but undocumented, account of Penguin's move into Australia is given by Geoffrey Dutton in his Snow on the Saltbush: The Australian Literary Experience (Ringwood: Viking, 1984), pp. 256-75: Dutton was involved in the project from the beginning as editor and consultant.

during a visit to Australia in 1961. Penguin had just begun issuing their editions of Patrick White's novels in England, Australian painters were receiving favourable attention in London (White's Penguin covers were almost all by Sidney Nolan, identifying them immediately as Australian Culture), the teaching of Australian literature in University courses was beginning to spread, and in that year given a more visible presence with the establishment of the Sydney University Chair in Australian Literature, and it was also beginning to appear more widely in secondary schools. At the time of the decision Australian culture had, as noted later in this Chapter, been foregrounded by the London cultural establishment and there were apparently clear signs that Australian Literature was about to become an area of interest in some British Universities as well. (It was part of the Masters level Commonwealth Literature course at Leeds University from 1959<sup>41</sup> and was introduced at the University of Exeter three or four years later.) Lane gave several reasons for Penguin's move into Australia. Some sounded noble, if a little patronising: 'to assist the development of Australian writers, to help expand the local literary field, to assist in a wider knowledge of Australian writings and authors, both in and beyond Australia'<sup>42</sup> but Sir Allen Lane had judged the market well and gave as his final reason for creating an Australian publishing programme for his firm that it was 'to identify Penguin Books with the anticipated tremendous expansion in Australia of high quality paperback literature'. Penguin's strengths were in its fiction list and in its efficient inventory and \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>41</sup> A. Norman Jeffares, 'Introduction,' in Commonwealth Literature: Unity and Diversity in a Common Culture, ed. John Press (London: Heinemann, 1965), p. xvii; Peter Quartermaine, Foreword, Readings in Australian Arts. Papers from the 1976 Exeter Symposium (Exeter: Univ. of Exeter, 1978), p. vii.

<sup>42</sup> Penguin Press Release, 20 March 1962, quoted in Geoffrey Dutton, Snow on the Saltbush: The Australian Literary Experience (Ringwood: Viking, 1984), p. 260.

marketing systems. As the professional interest in Australian Literature developed further in the direction of romantic nationalism, fiction was increasingly centralised in discussions of the national tradition and Penguin titles secured their places on course lists in secondary and tertiary institutions both in Australia and, even more particularly, abroad. The retreat of Angus & Robertson from its traditional nationalist high ground is, from this historical perspective, all the more surprising.

It was, then, for reasons which Allen Lane was no doubt astute enough to recognise but also for some others which emerged after the decision was taken, an auspicious time for Penguin to make such a move into Australia but the early history of Penguin Australia was marked by frequent doubts from Penguin headquarters about the saleability of such extraordinary successes as Donald Horne's The Lucky Country. Nevertheless, Penguin and most of the other 'foreign' publishers who set up in Australia became active in initiating new Australian titles and, on the whole, did so with increasingly little reference to their corporate chiefs in London. Those foreign publishers, along with the Australian branches of Heinemann, Oxford University Press, Macmillan, and Nelson which had a longer local history, all developed a strong local identity. They have, in many cases, shown greater initiative in publishing new Australian books than the long-established firms whose names were so 'naturally' identified with the Australian industry. It is significant that they did this largely from the mid-nineteen seventies once the nationalism of the Gorton and Whitlam campaigns had become entrenched and after the ending of the Traditional Market Agreement had made it institutionally necessary for British publishers who wished to retain a stake in the Australian book market to establish a physical and fiscal presence within the market. They did not do this in the nineteen sixties when the cultural nationalism was part of an emerging element of the culture of resistance rather than part of the dominant hegemonic culture.

One of the most interesting attempts to specify an audience was that made by the Australasian Book Society.<sup>43</sup> The ABS was formed in 1950, published its first title in 1952, and by 1978 it had published eighty four books. It depended for its survival on the subscriptions of its members, who numbered 3,000 at its peak in 1961, at a time when Australian writing began to be quite successful commercially. The workers for the Society included writers, unionists, and members of the Communist Party of Australia, though its relationship with the Party was variable and unstable. It found a large audience for its books among workers, drawing consciously and explicitly on a strong radical reading tradition in Australia: an article in Overland, for instance, pointed out that in the development of free public libraries and Mechanics' Institutes Australia had led the world and that there had been libraries in the great shearing sheds of the eighteen nineties,<sup>44</sup> the spiritual source of the Australian labor movement. This appeal for validation to a kind of historical populism is extremely important in Australia. Australian history is the national text writ large.

When the budget of the Commonwealth Literary Fund was enlarged in 1939 one of its declared aims was to encourage the reprinting of out of print books. An Australiana reprint was one of Angus & Robertson's first three titles in 1888 and one of the first resolutions of the Association for the

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<sup>43</sup> There is an excellent and thoroughly documented account of the formation and history of the Australasian Book Society in Jack Beasley, Red Letter Days: Notes from Inside an Era (Sydney: Australasian Book Society, 1979), pp. 129-68.

<sup>44</sup> Janet Howard, 'The Urban Tradition,' Overland, No. 9 (Autumn 1957), p. 26.



Study of Australian Literature, at its second conference in Canberra in 1979, was a call for the reprinting of more books that have become unavailable. In 1986, yet another Reprint Series, the Colonial Texts Series, has been announced.<sup>45</sup>

Early discussions about teaching Canadian Literature, at the Canadian Writing Conference at Queen's University for instance, referred frequently to the difficulty caused by the fact that so many of the texts that should have been taught were out of print: a call for subsidised republication of 'significant works, after the Australian practice' was one of the resolutions adopted at the Conference.<sup>46</sup> The establishment of the New Canadian Library, under the General Editorship of Malcolm Ross, was not merely a remedy to this problem but a statement about the subject's place in the culture. The series has reprinted over one hundred and fifty titles, a majority of which have been 'recovered' from the nation's 'lost' past. Nevertheless, the experience of this Series is emblematic in many ways of the history of Canadian culture in the period. The books were, for many years, printed in England; later the words 'The Canadian Publisher' appeared under the firm's name on the title-page and in advertising. The firm's owner and publisher certainly found the cultural-nationalist credentials he established with this series and with his very public support for contemporary writing useful when he sought urgent financial backing from the Ontario provincial government in 1971 and 1978.

As might be expected, the Canadian response to the relative unavailability of texts has been more energetic and certainly more systematic than the Australian one. But although the New Canadian Library

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<sup>45</sup> In 'Publications,' Notes & Furphies, No. 16 (April 1986), p. 15.

<sup>46</sup> Cited in F. R. Scott, Introduction, in Creative Writing in Canada, ed. George Whalley, p. 9.



has most visibly-focussed the dimensions of the problem, it has not been the only solution attempted. Macmillan's Laurentian Library, Hurtig's Canadiana Reprints and Coles Canadiana Collections (both mainly social history), the Carleton Library, the University of Toronto Press's Reprint Library of Canadian Prose and Poetry and Literature of Canada (1972- ), have all since entered at various points of what clearly seems to be a quite segmented field.<sup>47</sup> The burden of scholarly texts has been taken up in a suitably professionalised corporate manner as a 'mega-project' by Professor Mary Jane Edwards' Centre for Editing Early Canadian Texts based at Carleton University with a very large grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (1981-1991). The Ontario Royal Commission on Book Publishing in 1973 recommended an annual grant for the reprinting of out-of-print Canadian books: this was the Canadiana Reprint Programme.<sup>48</sup> That Commission, established just after the sale of Gage and Ryerson Presses to United States interests in 1970 and panicked by the threatened sale of McClelland and Stewart on the eve of its first sitting, had as its first term of reference 'the publishing industry in Ontario and throughout Canada with respect to its position within the business community'.<sup>49</sup> One might observe that English Literature was confronted by the same situation and solved it in similarly segmented fashion with the Everyman Library, the curiously-named World's Classics and later Penguins; and then through such scholarly series as the Oxford Standard Authors

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<sup>47</sup> For contemporary discussions of some of these segments, see George Woodcock, 'Reprints and the Reading Public,' Canadian Literature, No. 57 (Summer 1973), pp. 98-107; W. H. New, 'Canadian Reprints,' WLWE, 13 (1974), 99-102.

<sup>48</sup> Canadian Book Publishers' Council. A Response to the Royal Commission on Book Publishing: Canadian Publishers and Canadian Publishing (Toronto: Canadian Book Publishers Council, 1973), p. 8.

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Morris Wolfe, 'The Royal Commission,' Canadian Literature, No. 57 (Summer 1973), p. 108.

(wherein it is not made clear whether it is the texts or the authors who are standard) and the plethora of Shakespeares.

The trade in Australia's heritage has been particularly prominent, though less systematic than in Canada. The newly-announced Colonial Reprint Series just mentioned is to join the Sydney University Press's Australian Literary Reprint Series, Rigby's brief Colonial Poets, Currency Press's National Theatre (now in association with Australasian Drama Studies), University of Queensland Press's Portable Australian Authors, Penguin's Colonial Facsimiles, a now-discontinued Sun Books reprinting initiative, Angus & Robertson's Classic Paperbacks, and the Australian Pocket Library selected and sponsored by the Commonwealth Literary Fund.<sup>50</sup> In the sponsored series, 'The Australian Pocket Library' in the nineteen forties, in Lloyd O'Neil's 'Australian Classics' series from about 1970, and in some of the reprinting initiatives of Angus & Robertson, Currency, University of Queensland Press, and Penguin the signals of Australian heritage have been prominent. The covers are usually decorated with Australian scenes or, more significantly in the case of Lloyd O'Neil, 'classic' Australian paintings to denote their status as items of culture. Establishing an audience and a product at the more scholarly end of the market the University of Queensland Press 'Portable Australian Authors' Series, under the General Editorship of L. T. Hergenhan, presents carefully chosen copy-texts and a certain amount of editorial apparatus which is also a

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<sup>50</sup> This list, of course, contains all of the forms of textual 'recycling' -- scholarly edition, facsimile, carefully chosen copy-text, photographic reprint, antiquarian re-issue, modern resetting. The most thorough and recent study of the rather confused issues of the state of the status and availability of Australian texts is L. T. Hergenhan, 'Texts and Contexts: Problems of the Availability and Editing of Australian Texts,' Australian Literary Studies, 12 (1986), 392-97. The most recent call for more editions is Dorothy Green, in 'Defence Academy Library Exhibition,' Notes & Furphies, No. 16 (April 1986), p. 9.

declaration of the status and academic value of the subject: the covers of these books are almost always presented with 'period' photographs that represent them to be part of the history that validates them. The promotion, and enormous success, in Australia of such expensive volumes as the collected works of 'Banjo' Paterson, Xavier Herbert's huge novel Poor Fellow, My Country, and the new collections of Henry Lawson and 'Steele Rudd' have depended very much upon the way in which they were declared to be necessary cultural possessions. They are each monumental in more ways than one.

In Canada, this appropriation of the culture has taken an intriguingly different form. The books in General Publishing's 'New Press Classics' (formerly 'Paperjacks', a series reprinting mostly 'modern' titles that began in 1971) also have cover designs that declare them to be part of contemporary Canadian 'high' culture rather than part of bookstand culture. They have rather fine reproductions of contemporary Canadian paintings on them. That this is achieved in the Canadian case by emphasising the work's contemporaneity, and in the Australian by emphasising its historical heritage, is a reflection of the differences in the ways in which the two cultures validate meaning. Even the major reprint series is called the New Canadian Library. The way in which the arguments about Canadian Literature have been pursued confirms, I believe, the future-orientation of that culture. The Canadian cultural confidence of the nineteen sixties and seventies was characterised as a renaissance and as in the historiographical construction of other renaissances the efflorescence of culture was in part proven by frequent and obsessive reference to a logically (even if not historically) prior dark ages. The model, that is, required a stress on the discontinuity of Canadian cultural history. A startling exemplum of this general foregrounding of the contemporary is in a speech by Margaret Atwood at Dalhousie University in 1980. A typical remark in literary discussions of the nineteen fifties was that the great Canadian Literature was just around the corner.<sup>51</sup> Atwood could not be more precise.

. . . there was no visible evidence in 1959 that any Canadian, let alone me, could ever become a great writer . . . Looking back, I can see that my delusions must have come from reading too many Mary Marvel comic books, because they certainly didn't come from anywhere else in the culture that surrounded me. . . . I spoke of the establishment of the small literary and/or nationalist presses in the mid-sixties, the sudden explosion of creativity, first in poetry and then, beginning in about 1969, in the novel, the creation of an audience for new Canadian work.<sup>52</sup>

Note the preciseness of the remark, 'beginning in about 1969 in the novel, the creation of an audience for new Canadian work'. 1969: it's the year in which Atwood's first novel, Edible Woman appeared. Not 'apres moi le deluge' but rather 'post tenebris lux mea'. It seems that, while a certain kind of Australian literary history needs to place the writer in a tradition (discovering ancestors) a certain kind of Canadian approach to literary tradition needs to place the writer at the head of one (establishing descendants). As the House of Anansi Press history (with just enough irony) says, 'this was the Golden Age, when rebel writer-publishers stood up to the oppressor and invented a national literature'.<sup>53</sup>

The most potent sign of the increased interest in Australiana in the nineteen sixties, though, came not from 'literature' but from non-fiction, and in general this is true of Canadiana as well. Although Australian

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<sup>51</sup> See, for example, Desmond Pacey, Creative Writing in Canada (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1952), p. 4; Robert Weaver, 'The Economics of Our

Literature,' Queen's Quarterly, 60 (1954), 482; William Arthur Deacon, 'Our Emergent Literature,' Globe and Mail, 4 Jan. 1958.

<sup>52</sup> Margaret Atwood, 'An End to an Audience,' Dalhousie Review, 60 (1980), 419. It also inscribes the absence discussed in Chapter Two.

<sup>53</sup> James Polk, Anansi at Fifteen: A Spider's Life (Toronto: Anansi, [1982]), p. [3].

books made frequent appearances in the best-selling fiction lists<sup>54</sup> in Australia in that decade, they were much more prominently represented in the non-fiction lists. In December 1961 half of the best-selling non-fiction titles were Australian; in mid-1964 the five top non-fiction titles were Australian; at the end of 1965 all of the titles on the non-fiction list were Australian. The Canadian situation is very different. In 1958 all of the titles on the Canadian best-seller list<sup>55</sup> were non-Canadian (in the same year about one-third of the titles on the Australian list were Australian); at the end of 1980, two of the titles on the Canadian best-seller list<sup>56</sup> were Canadian. Some publications have separate best-seller lists for Canadian books to compensate for their non-appearance on the regular lists. (This is rather like the special awards in the Canadian Football League for 'The Best Canadian Player' given after the 'Best Player' awards have gone to American imports.) Since about 1958 approximately one-third to one-half of the best-selling fiction in Australia has been by Australian writers; over the same period the Canadian figure ranges from zero to one-third with a peak of 40-50% in the midst of the new nationalism in 1974.<sup>57</sup> Literature then, insofar as the product is defined by readers is, for Canadians an imported product, for Australians it is both local and imported. Until very recently,<sup>58</sup> the cultural

<sup>54</sup> Here again I refer to the lists printed in the monthly book-trade magazine, Ideas About Books and Bookselling.

<sup>55</sup> Ideas About Books and Bookselling, 39 (8 Oct. 1958), 1032.

<sup>56</sup> Maclean's Magazine, 93 (29 Dec. 1980), 48. (The two Canadian authors represented were Mordecai Richler and Hugh MacLennan: they occupied sixth and seventh positions out of ten.)

<sup>57</sup> 'Ownership and Control in Publishing in Canada,' IPA Newsletter, Dec. 1974, p. [8].

<sup>58</sup> See 'Starters and Writers,' Australian Book Review, No. 77 (Dec. 1985-Jan. 1986), p. 2. This was raised in some earlier discussions as well: see Andrew Fabinyi, 'The Australian Book,' Meanjin, 17 (1958), 312-18.

nationalist argument in the Australian discourse has been about the nationality of the author: in Canada it has been first and foremost about the nationality of the publisher. One fact that has masked this issue has been the direct involvement of a number of the most prominent Canadian authors in cultural-nationalist publishing: Dave Godfrey and Dennis Lee started Anansi Press (Godfrey later founded New Press and Press Porcepic) and led the move to establish the strongly nationalist Independent Publishers' Association (1971, later the Association of Canadian Publishers); Margaret Atwood was an Anansi editor, and Graeme Gibson was also associated with the Press; Atwood and Gibson were among the founders, and were later chairpersons of the Writers' Union of Canada (Gibson in 1974, Atwood in 1981); Survival ensured the survival of two other cultural-nationalist enterprises, Anansi and the newly-opened Longhouse Bookshop.

These sorts of considerations are important. The debate about literature, about Canadian literature, is part of a larger cultural discourse that has inevitable and inescapable intersections with the political economy. The Royal Commissions,<sup>59</sup> the activities of the Australia and Canada Councils exemplify this at one level. It is continually argued that Canadian control of the means of literary production and distribution would mean that more Canadian books would be published and distributed. As the 1949 Brief from the University of Toronto Press to the Massey Commission stated, 'publication is part of the Canadian cultural problem'.<sup>60</sup> The evidence in favour of this argument is very convincing in the Canadian context. It is even more convincing when the comparison is made with Australian publishing. The Australian film

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<sup>59</sup> See Chapters One, Four, and Five above.

<sup>60</sup> Canada. Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts Letters and Sciences. 1949-1951. Briefs and Transcripts. Reel 19, Brief 419, p. 9.

industry is an even more potent exemplar. The impasse facing Australian film-makers was broken when they obtained fair access to the distribution network and privileged access to investment capital. It became clear that the problems inhibiting the development of film-making in Australia were economic rather than artistic. There is a residual gentility in literary studies that prefers to erase an issue that was, in fact, central to the origins of the discipline, a concern with a dominant set of social relations concealed by the professionalised and specialised practices enshrined in the notion of literary value.<sup>61</sup>

This national self-awareness, like so many other features discussed here, gathered momentum and was deliberately fostered in the nineteen fifties, as it has been in other periods of high immigration and economic stress. The need for national cultural icons upon which to project the national unity at a time of pressing heterogeneity was great. In Canada, the CAA had observed ingenuously to the Massey Commission the opportunity Canadian Literature offered for the more rapid and assimilation of new Canadians.<sup>62</sup> The great success of John O'Grady's They're a Weird Mob (1957), and other similar volumes, was a timely response to the national policy of assimilation and 'naturalisation'. While the 'Nino Culotta' novels celebrate the idiosyncratic and the humorous aspects of Australian language and customs, they nevertheless declare it to be 'natural' and the immigrant culture to be foreign and 'other' as they valorise the valiant (and good-natured) attempt of the hero to 'make himself' Australian. Works

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<sup>61</sup> For discussions of the development of 'English' as a discipline, see Brian Doyle, 'The Hidden History of English Studies,' in The Re-Reading of English, ed. Peter Widdowson (London: Methuen, 1982), pp. 17-31; D. J. Palmer, The Rise of English Studies (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965); and Stephen Potter, The Muse in Chains (London: Cape, 1937).

<sup>62</sup> Canada. Royal Commission . . . Briefs and Transcripts. Reel 5, Brief 103, p.2

in which the immigrant voice spoke itself, and on behalf of itself, such as Judah Waten's Alien Son (1952), David Martin's The Young Wife (1962) were noticeably less successful but were, significantly, reprinted in an epoch which celebrated diversity by praising the contributions of immigration to the 'Australian Way of Life'. Other works, like the 'Afferbeck Lauder' 'Strine' volumes and the 'Bazza' Mackenzie strips and scripts, were devices for retaining Australian identity through the 'Brain Drain' and throughout the subsequent period of customary extended overseas travel. The Canadian response was necessarily less ostentatious but the ubiquitous Maple Leaf badge was a defence against the linguistic confusion of Canadians with 'Americans'. The ease with which 'Canadian' is linguistically assimilated in this way has probably precluded 'Canajun' from being developed into a national linguistic ikon in the way that joul or strine were.

It is in this period too, as Richard White so pertinently reminds us, that the competition between the two great economic interests, the pastoral and the manufacturing, issued itself, in part, in the greatest promotion of competing images of the national identity, competition for, that is, the credentials of being able to re/present the 'real Australia'.<sup>63</sup> Even the advertisements in the literary magazines, surely not a commercially- productive place to advertise, reflect this need on the part of big business to identify itself with the national culture, to appropriate its authority but also (through the advertising 'subsidy') enabling it to speak. The advertisements in the early issues of Quadrant certainly articulate this need, identifying their interests with those of the nation (BHP, MLC, GMH, Ampol) but also attempting to validate the values of 'big business' (Nestle's, Esso), 'Private Enterprise' (Ampol) and technology

<sup>63</sup> Richard White, Inventing Australia: Images and Identity, 1688 - 1980 (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1981), p. x.



(Australian Paper Manufacturers, British Tobacco Company): one of the BHP advertisements candidly foregrounds the economic-cultural contest and, not surprisingly, identifies the making of steel to be crucial to progress 'on the land or in the cities'.<sup>64</sup> In an editorial 'Comment', Quadrant affirmed the nexus between 'big business' advertising and the view of 'a free society'<sup>65</sup> which informed its mode of speaking in the structure of the cold war ideological contest.

But the nineteen fifties were notable for the way in which Australia projected itself internationally as well. Certainly, in an era in which new export markets (and new foreign policy alignments) needed to be developed, an internationalist view was likely to be part of the hegemonic world-view, and this was reflected in the advertising, and of course the 'literary' content as well. It was also the dominant mode of literary criticism in that period: national maturity was 'inevitably' demonstrated by the shift to 'sophisticated' urban and international (that is, industrialised and consumerist) outlooks. Overland and the Australasian Book Society maintained what looked increasingly like a rearguard action in defence of 'traditional Australian values' that Jack Beasley identifies as one of the main reasons for its decline.<sup>66</sup> The fifties was the decade in which the radical nationalists (in the books of Vance Palmer, Russel Ward, and A. A. Phillips) succeeded in placing their view of the Australian

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<sup>64</sup> Quadrant, 2, No. 3 (Winter 1958), 73.

<sup>65</sup> 'Comment: How Many Flowers Shall Bloom?', Quadrant, 2, No. 1 (Summer 1957-1958), 5.

<sup>66</sup> Ian Turner, 'Editorial,' Overland, (Dec. 1960), p. 8 noted 'a contradiction between what has been accepted as the Australian character, and the sort of society we now live in'; Jack Beasley in Red Letter Days: Notes from Inside an Era (Sydney: Australasian Book Society, 1979), pp. 144-45 acknowledges 'that the books tended to be "old-fashioned" . . . and the Australian traditionalists and those who wrote in their image were being challenged'.

tradition at the centre at the very moment that the socio-economic forces that were bound to displace it were in the ascendant.

In that decade the Olympic Games were held in Australia (Melbourne, 1956) with a rather poorly-organised cultural festival on its outskirts; the Prime Minister, R. G. Menzies, briefly attained international prominence during the Suez crisis (although Lester Pearson was a more successful player on that stage, and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for it in 1957); there was a well-noticed major exhibition of Australian art, ingenuously masquerading as a neutral 'survey' under the title 'Recent Australian Paintings', at the Whitechapel Gallery in London following earlier exhibitions of Drysdale, Nolan, and Tucker; the design for the Sydney Opera House was selected after a well-publicised international contest and a subsequent spectacular public quarrel linking aesthetics and economics in such a manner as to have the same effect on architecture as the 1944 Archibald Prize controversy and the 1945 'Ern Malley' hoax (and the consequent trial in each case) had on Australian painting and poetry respectively; novels by Patrick White and Randolph Stow received high acclaim abroad, and at home; Joan Sutherland's star was rising and June Bronhill achieved some international notice. During the Olympic year there were numerous feature articles, profiles of the Australian way of life in many overseas magazines and newspapers; during the years that followed there were special issues of many cultural magazines on Australian Literature.<sup>67</sup> Culture gradually became a budget item for Department of Foreign Affairs posts abroad, though the extent of funding for cultural development was always related to the rated importance of the post as a

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<sup>67</sup> London Magazine, New Series, 2, No. 6 (Sept. 1962); TLS gave its customary late-summer glance to the culture of the colonies; Alistair Cooke and James Morris both toured and wrote feature articles; Texas Quarterly, 5, No. 2 (Summer 1962); The Literary Review, (Winter 1963); Literary Criterion, 6, No. 3 (Winter 1964).

trading partner: the same has also been largely true of the much more impressive Canadian cultural initiatives abroad.

In a small but significant way, Australian culture became an export item as well as an accompaniment to it. Ray Lawler's Summer of the Seventeenth Doll was a considerable success in London, and also in New York; the Whitechapel Exhibition selected by Bryan Robertson was widely noticed; and the Nolan covers on the White novels confirmed an Australian culture in an obvious way at a time when Assisted Passage migration from the United Kingdom was being pursued with renewed vigour (as the proportion of British immigrants was falling) and when attempts were being made, after the Murray Report into Australian Education to reverse the 'Brain Drain'. Australia was to be sold to would-be adoptees and to Prodigal Sons as a sophisticated, cultured place as it was to be again after the Whitlam election victory of 1972: it was O.K. now to go home. But there was also a complicity between the apparent reassurance offered by this international notice and the internationalism that it promoted in Australia. Even Bernard Smith proclaimed that 'the quality of a culture is best judged, in the long run, by informed critics separated from it in both time and space'.<sup>68</sup>

In Canada, these developments are more apparent in the nineteen sixties. The 1967 Centennial provided an obvious focus for Laurier's contention that the Twentieth Century belonged to Canada and also inclined the national gaze inwards. The significant decade for this Canadianisation of Canadian life and the sense of a nation (at last) beginning to attain a \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>68</sup> Bernard Smith, 'The Myth of Isolation' in Antipodean Manifesto (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1976), p. 57. But in that lecture (The J. M. Macrossan Lectures for 1961, Univ. of Queensland), Smith also points to the casually pernicious way in which those critics perpetrated myths of Australian culture which were damaging to it; he gives evidence of ways in which their authority as judges was based on an ignorance that should have disqualified their opinions about its characteristics and its history.

unified identity was marked by the Centennial in 1967, the Montreal Expo in Centennial Year, and the election of Trudeau in its wake in 1968. It was symbolised in the opening of the National Arts Centre in 1969; made necessary by the revolution tranquille and the subsequent secessionist pressure; and brought to an end by the Parti Quebecois victory in 1976. This decade of confidence was preceded by years in which the international prominence of Glenn Gould, Gordon Lightfoot, Leonard Cohen, Sonny and Cher, Arthur Erickson, Marshall McLuhan, and Northrop Frye not only reassured Canadians of their intellectual and cultural worth but also gave some credence to the notion that it could be exported. But more significantly these figures all worked from a Canadian base instead of 'going abroad (or South)' to make their marks. The idea that Canadian culture could be a going concern was, for the first time, after decades of continentalism and of ready assimilation into North American or trans-Atlantic markets, beginning to be widely-held. But the much-touted aggressive Canadian cultural initiatives abroad were themselves, in considerable measure, a response to internal political problems. One of the Lesage Government's measures as part of its attempts to establish a Quebecois cultural and economic autonomy during the Quiet Revolution was to engage in extensive promotion of 'Quebec' writers in France; which the Canadian Government tried to counter by re/claiming them as 'Canadian' -- the promotion of Canadian culture and Canadian studies abroad began as part of the debate about the survival of the Confederation.

But arguments about the nature and quality of Australian literature did not occur in cultural isolation. It was clearly a time for self-examination: the sixties and early seventies saw the publication of a large

number of autobiographies:<sup>69</sup> an individual's self-examination. It also saw many profiles of Australia,<sup>70</sup> books that set out to describe Australia and its people, customs, institutions etc. Indeed many of the autobiographies focussed as much on Australian society as they did on the individual (George Johnston's My Brother Jack, Donald Horne's Education of Young Donald, Hal Porter's Watcher on the Cast-Iron Balcony) who was frequently either metaphoric or metonymic for that national self-examination. These books, Horne's The Lucky Country, and other non-fiction books about Australia became major sellers for Australian publishers and booksellers. It should not be surprising that this kind of nationalism has been most noticeable in Australia shortly after periods of economic recession: the eighteen nineties, the nineteen thirties, and the nineteen sixties. Increased home consumption is a useful means to economic recovery and is,

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<sup>69</sup> In the third volume of his autobiographical trilogy, The Extra (West Melbourne: Nelson, 1975), p. 189, Hal Porter names Xavier Herbert, Jack Lindsay, Peter Hopegood, Katharine Susannah Prichard, George Johnston, Robin Eakin, Donald Horne, Graham MacInnes, Rose Lindsay, Alec Chisholm, Patsy Adam Smith, Roland Robinson, and John Hetherington; he might have added Barbara Hanrahan, Lionel Lindsay, Joan Lindsay, Martin Boyd, Myrtle Rose White, Lesley Rowlands, Alan Marshall, Miles Franklin, Nene Gare, Tom Ronan, Daryl Lindsay, Niall Brennan, Lord Casey, Douglas Stewart.

<sup>70</sup> These anatomies of Australia included many feature articles in overseas magazines but also the following books: George Johnston and Robert Goodman, The Australians (Adelaide: Rigby, 1966); Donald Horne, The Australian People: Biography of a Nation (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1972); John Gunther, Inside Australia and New Zealand (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972); Henry Williams, Australia: What Is It? (Adelaide: Rigby, 1972); John Fisher, The Australians (Sydney: Seal, 1972); Peter Coleman, ed. Australian Civilization (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1962); Robin Boyd, The Australian Ugliness (Ringwood: Penguin, 1961); Ronald Conway, The Great Australian Stupor: An Interpretation of the Australian Way of Life (Melbourne: Sun, 1971); Donald Horne, The Lucky Country (Ringwood: Penguin, 1964) and Australian People (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1972); Craig McGregor, Profile of Australia (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1966); A. L. McLeod, ed. The Pattern of Australian Culture (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1963); A. F. Davies and Sol Encel, Australian Society (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1965, 1970); Craig McGregor, People, Politics and Pop (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1968). J. D. Pringle's Australian Accent (London: Chatto & Windus, 1959) seemed to be something of a prototype; widely-regarded at the time, it was little more a collection of essays by a visitor: in that sense, it came near the end of a long and seldom noble tradition.

in any case, a concomitant of the development of a large manufacturing base, and national corporations have fostered and subsidised national literary (as well as other cultural) activities.

This movement was part of an Australianisation movement that was quite widespread, and, consistent with the manner in which ideas are customarily inserted into the Australian polemical consciousness, particularly noticeable in the popular culture and validated there. (It is perhaps this formation in the history of ideas in Australia that explains the phenomenon that J. P. Matthews pointed to in Tradition in Exile: the predominance, in Australia, of the 'Popular Tradition'.<sup>71</sup>) Barry Humphries' characterisations were a part of it (especially 'Bazza Mackenzie'); so too were Rolf Harris and Paul Hogan and, as mentioned above, 'Nino Culotta'. Its commercial manifestation was the great 'Buy Australian' campaign, the Made in Australia labels, the Australia Unlimited Supplements that appeared in the major newspapers every year with elaborate corporate sponsorship, and the See Australia First promotions.

More recently an emerging regionalism has been fostered by commercial and political interests as Federalism reproduces in varying forms its essential cyclic strains and inherent tensions. The pressure on State and Provincial Governments to justify themselves manifests itself in the campaigns by those governments to assert a regional identity that can be set against the homogenising forces of nationalism. The 'Queensland Made' and 'Buy Ontario' logos appeared at the peak of the respective 'New

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<sup>71</sup> J. P. Matthews, Tradition in Exile: A Comparative Study of Social Influences on the Development of Australian and Canadian Poetry in the Nineteenth Century (Melbourne/Toronto: Cheshire/Univ. of Toronto Press, 1962). It seems to me that Matthews' suggestion, that the Popular tradition dominates, accepts too readily the (then recent) view of the Australian literary tradition advanced by Vance Palmer. The values that are lauded in the Australian tradition are, to be more precise, grounded in the popular tradition.

Nationalisms'; the most recent Expos (Vancouver, 1986; Brisbane, 1988) are bring held in the more regionalised parts of the two countries (and quite evidently in reaction to centralist issues) where strong populist agrarian socialist governments have articulated themselves as quasi-nation states. The expanding number of local cultural Festivals, and the increasing amount of public money that is made available to them, reflects the awareness of culture's place in the political economy. Adelaide's Festival has so entrenched itself in the State identity that automobile numberplates in South Australia now carry the slogan, 'The Festival State'. This regionalism is, inevitably, also reflected in literary discussion at various levels. An interest in the precise depiction of local place has been observed in many writers: 'it could have been set anywhere' is not now the term of approval it was in the internationalist epoch of the nineteen fifties and early nineteen sixties. Literary magazines associated with particular regions are increasing in number and in circulation; regional publishers have begun to appear (earlier, of course, in Canada than in Australia) and to do well.

The Maritimes and the Prairies, in particular, have strong publishing activities closely-identified with the region. The Atlantic Provinces Book Review began in 1973 and there are Canadian Book Information Centres and Canadian Learning Materials Centres in Vancouver, Toronto, and Halifax to promote the use, especially in schools, of Canadian publishers' products. While Canadian book publishing is (though decreasingly) overwhelmingly centred in Toronto, periodical publishing in the regions has a long and increasingly vigorous history. The metropolitanism of the forties, with its concentration of literary activity in Toronto and Montreal through Canadian Forum and the succession of Montreal literary magazines (First Statement, Preview, and Northern Review) has been effectively countered by the strength of such regionally-based magazines as Fiddlehead (New Brunswick), Antigonish Review, Pottersfield Portfolio (Nova Scotia), Malahat Review, West Coast Review, Prism International, Capilano Review and Tish (British Columbia), Edge, NeWest Review, Dandelion, Camrose Review and Dinosaur Review (Alberta), Wascana Review (Saskatchewan). The Nova Scotia Writers' Federation is the most active in Canada in the promotion of local writers' work in the community through its extensive reading-circuits and its writer-in-community scheme. The earliest regional Arts bodies were in the pioneering West, the regions where, according to the evolutionary historians, art should have taken longest to be recognised as part of the community's production. The Alberta Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation Cultural Development Branch was established in 1946; the Saskatchewan Arts Board was created in 1948, one year before the Federal Government established the Massey Commission which eventually recommended the creation of a like body nationally; by contrast, Quebec and Ontario did not set up similar organisations until 1961 and 1963, respectively.<sup>72</sup>

In its more recent manifestation, from the later nineteen sixties onwards, Western literary regionalism is both a reaction to the Ontariocentricity of the Canadian literary establishment and of the new forces of change and a result of the 'Western alienation' that was a response to the strongly centralist Trudeau administrations. More specifically it was (like that 'alienation' that was so potently inserted into the discourses of politics, economics and culture) much influenced by the failure of the Western economies, especially Alberta's, after the National Energy Policy and drew strength from, as well as in resistance to, the highly differentiated and even idiosyncratic western provincial

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<sup>72</sup> Considerable detail on numerous cultural funding bodies is presented in Frank T. Pasquill and Joan Horsman, Wooden Pennies: A Report on Cultural Funding Patterns in Canada (York University: Programme in Arts Administration, 1973), Appendix A.

governments. But it was also associated with a number of Western-born writers and academics (and a distinctly important number of those who speak with the authority of both voices) who returned to work in (and sometimes for) the region: Robert Kroetsch, Rudy Wiebe, W. H. New, George Bowering, Jack Hodgins, Dave Godfrey, Earle Birney (who established Canada's first Department of Creative Writing -- at the University of British Columbia), Aritha van Herk, Laurie Ricou, Ian Adam, Dorothy Livesay, Doug Barbour, Dick Harrison, E. D. Blodgett, Daphne Marlatt (though born in Melbourne, she grew up on the West Coast), and (despite his own strong internationalism) George Woodcock.

In Australia, the literary regionalism is mostly observed in areas where political separatism has been articulated -- the West, the far North, the Hunter Valley and Tasmania. In most cases it has seemed, as a literary phenomenon, to be factitious. The Hunter Valley regionalism articulated by Norman Talbot was derived from his conviction that a region should have a voice, a conviction growing out of his own origins in East Anglia and influenced by the Welsh poet, T. Harri Jones who was working in Newcastle when Talbot arrived there in 1962. Hunter Valley regionalism, though its literary manifestation has flourished long since the failure of the separatist movement of the early-nineteen sixties, has never seemed to be part of the public or literary polemics of Australian literary nationalism of the later nineteen sixties and seventies. Its antecedents, as I have noted, were a genial Anglo-Saxon folk-culture and its conscious literary models were contemporary American. There has certainly been a strong commitment to local place as poetic material (which may come to be seen to be more significant to critical praxis in the near future) but not to seeing that place as part of an argument about nation. In this context, Newcastle's literary activity, though the roots of its energy are anti-metropolitan (i.e. Sydney), continues to direct that energy inwards towards its own audience and its hinterland; the publishing remains concentrated in Talbot's Nimrod Press, a successor to Nimrod (the University of Newcastle's literary magazine); and theatre, which is astonishingly active, nevertheless largely remains similarly localised rather than regionalised.

Western Australia's literary regionalism is much more effective. For a start, it objectifies itself in relationship to Australian Literature; it is strongly associated with the University of Western Australia and its new Centre for Studies in Australian Literature (which declares a bi-focal interest in region -- framed nationally as Western and globally as South East Asia) as well as the now broadly-national literary magazine, Westerly, and with the Australian Studies Centre at the Western Australian Institute of Technology which was also the site of the foundation of the Australian Studies Association and the Journal of Australian Cultural Studies: it therefore has an academic and institutional wing, while the Hunter Valley regionalism merely has an institutional presence. It has, thereby, a considerable institutional status and is proven by the existence of anthology, history, and bibliography.<sup>73</sup> It also has a strong regional press, The Fremantle Arts Centre Press (1976- ), which has published Western Australian work extensively (notably in its West Coast Writing series) and promoted it widely and effectively. This Western regionalism is quite precisely traceable to the Western Australian Sesquicentenary celebrations in 1979. As part of those celebrations, a considerable number of books, by Western Australian writers and about Western Australian subjects, was issued as a Sesquicentenary package complete with the official Sesquicentenary logo. It is not an embattled regionalism, but

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<sup>73</sup> Wide Domain: Western Australian Themes and Images, ed. Bruce Bennett and William Grono (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1979); Bruce Bennett, The Literature of Western Australia (Nedlands: Univ. of Western Australia Press, 1979); Bruce Bennett, John Hay and Susan Ashford, Western Australian Literature: A Bibliography (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1981).



rather celebrates the sunny optimism and developmentalism of its hegemonic political economy, that of the successful America's Cup yachting challenge, asserting its centrality in a reoriented Australia looking outward to the Indian Ocean instead of nervously over its Nullabor shoulder.

While the literary activity of Queensland has been considerable, it seldom objectifies itself as a region, preferring to maintain its privileged marginality to the Sydney-Melbourne axis. This is a position which is, I think, most profitably described in terms of David Malouf's imagery of 'the edge':<sup>74</sup> the perspective that offers the opportunity for 'critical variants'. Thus, many of the most important elements of the new nationalism of the early nineteen seventies found a ready Queensland base: Brisbane theatres had an excellent record for first performances of new Australian plays;<sup>75</sup> Makar Press was the most consistent of the new poetry publishers; Australian Literary Studies retained its broadly non-partisan national centrality when its editor moved to Brisbane from Tasmania in 1970;<sup>76</sup> it was joined later by Australasian Drama Studies (1982- ); the University of Queensland Press occupied the rising ground with its Paperback Poets Series (1970-73, 1974-81), its Paperback Prose Series (1972-78), the innovative Poets on Record (1970-75), and with its scholarly

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<sup>74</sup> This has been analysed by Martin Leer, 'At the Edge: Geography and the Imagination in the Work of David Malouf,' Australian Literary Studies, 12 (1985), 3-21.

<sup>75</sup> Alrene Sykes, Introduction, Three Political Plays (St Lucia: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1980).

<sup>76</sup> Australian Literary Studies effectively moved to the University of Queensland with its editor in 1971, although it continued to be published by the University of Tasmania until May 1976 when the University of Queensland Press became its publisher and the University made a contribution to its costs; since 1979 the journal has been published from the English Department, University of Queensland. The journal is sponsoring a New Literary History of Australia to be published in the Bicentennial Year in conjunction with the Association for the Study of Australian Literature and Penguin Books.

intervention, the Portable Australian Authors Series (1976- ). This is consistent with Queensland's literary history which has persistently contributed to the mainstream Australian literary debates through writers such as Clem Christesen and Meanjin, William Lane, Jack Lindsay, David Malouf, Vance Palmer, Tom Shapcott, Peter Porter, A. G. Stephens, and P. R. Stephensen. To that extent, Brisbane, or at least South East Queensland, has been part of radical and nationalist Australian literary polemics somewhat against the hegemonic forces of the separatist agrarian-socialist political economy in which it is situated. The years I have referred to, the mid-seventies, were the ones in which Queensland situated itself in the national discourse as the location of anti-Federalist activism: Hugh Lunn's biography of the Queensland Premier, Joh (later Sir) Bjelke-Petersen, sold an extraordinary 20,000 copies in hardback before becoming a paperback best-seller as well. The Premier was more or less responsible for bringing down the Federal Labor Government of Gough Whitlam in which the new nationalist project had been so explicitly inscribed as a cultural and political phenomenon in such notable events as the famous 'Artists for Whitlam' rally at the Sydney Opera House in 1972.

Queensland writers have taken that concern with the preciseness that is a concomitant of awareness of the particularity of place<sup>77</sup>, an awareness that issues from the experience of the margin, into the context of mainstream literary debate. Both of the addresses to which I refer here were, indeed, at its symbolic institutional centre, Sydney University's Herbert Blaiklock Memorial Lectures: Thea Astley's 'Being a Queensland: A Form of Literary and Geographical Conceit' and David Malouf's 'A First

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<sup>77</sup> For a consideration of 'particularity' in the context of the terminology of the debates about literary nationality see above, Preface, p. 18.

Place: The Mapping of a World'.<sup>78</sup> The other key-text in the consideration of the particularity of place in Australian Literature was Professor Leonie Kramer's 'Islands of Yesterday' which was, significantly in this context, given as a Murdoch Lecture at Murdoch University in Western Australia in 1979:<sup>79</sup> the margins are either the source or the site of the new.

The relationship between culture and society may be thematic but it is also part of the political economy. An analysis of the constitution of literature as a cultural product and its enmeshing in the networks of patronage and national policy has always been as necessary to the understanding of what literature is written and read and valued in any society and time as considerations of aesthetic value have been. English literature was the subject of the famous Newbolt Report in 1921;<sup>80</sup> Canadian and Australian literatures have, as I have shown, been part of a public discourse about culture that itself intersects with other patterns of the social and political histories of their places and times. The appropriation of the arts, by patronage, education, and commerce, is an almost ubiquitous phenomenon. And we, as literary scholars at the same time as we are members of those cultures and participants in their discourses, need to be cognisant of these things because they determine, in many and complex ways, what is produced, the value that is assigned to it,

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<sup>78</sup> Thea Astley, 'Being a Queenslander: A Form of Literary and Geographical Conceit,' Sixth Herbert Blaiklock Memorial Lecture, Sydney: Wentworth Press, 1976, rpt. in Southerly, 36 (1976), 252-64, rpt. in The Blaiklock Lectures 1971 - 1981 (Sydney: Univ. of Sydney, 1981); David Malouf, 'A First Place: The Mapping of a World,' Fourteenth Herbert Blaiklock Memorial Lecture, 26 Sept. 1984 (Sydney: Wentworth Press, 1984), rpt. Southerly, 45 (1985), 3-10.

<sup>79</sup> Leonie Kramer, 'Islands of Yesterday: The Growth of Literary Ideas,' (Sixth Murdoch Lecture, Murdoch University, 20 Sept. 1979), Westerly, No. 2 (June 1980), 89-96.

<sup>80</sup> Sir Henry Newbolt. The Teaching of English in England (London: The Board of Education, 1921).

its place in history (which is itself, of course, constructed by the same changing forces), and what we read and teach. This is being written as Canada begins the formal preparations for 'free trade' negotiations with the United States, with only an Acting-Minister of Communications (the portfolio which includes responsibility for cultural matters), and with a radical uncertainty about whether Canadian culture is to be negotiable commodity; and revised as the Australia Council has just appointed a consultant to investigate the feasibility of a National Plan for the Promotion of Australian Literature.

## CONCLUSION

### Contesting Cultural Traditions: The Rhetoric of Recognition

Much is alike and yet a slight precise  
disparity seems intended and arranged

Vivian Smith<sup>1</sup>

'Recognition' has been used in this thesis to draw attention to three different but related activities. Firstly, it refers to the acknowledgement that something, in this case the national literature, exists, something whose existence is worth acknowledging, whose existence it has become necessary to acknowledge. Its second function is to draw attention to re-cognition, to the way in which things are re-known, known in new and 'different' ways; that is, with the revaluations, recuperations and re-readings of Australian and Canadian Literatures. Thirdly, as I suggested in Chapter Two, it is 're:cognition', a way of reflecting on how we know things 'in' our cultures, in terms of our cultures; something not sufficiently considered in discussions of national literatures. In this way, it sees the arguments about the existence of the literature, those about national identity, those re-readings and re-visions, and those reflections about forms and theories and cultural codes as parts of the

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<sup>1</sup> Vivian Smith, 'At an Exhibition of Historical Paintings,' in The Oxford Anthology of Australian Literature, ed. Leonie Kramer and Adrian Mitchell (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985), p. 472.

same process; as parts, indeed, of what Miriam Waddington called 'a series of revolts against authority'.<sup>2</sup>

This thesis has been concerned to examine the processes by which the terms, Australian Literature and Canadian Literature, have become intelligible, as part of the knowledges and discourses of those societies.

It has shown how the subjects 'represented' by those terms have been constituted and into what systems of discourse, professional interest, cultural formation, and political economy they are inserted. It has shown that these aesthetic practices, professional activities, systems, institutions and the economy constitute a nexus of acts and circumstances in which the re/cognition of national literatures 'takes place'. It sees the national literature as an institution discursively constructed rather than a 'body' of texts having attained a measurable standard, or having certain themes, preoccupations or content. It is in the process of becoming a structure (institutional, linguistic, cognitive, formal) that Australian (Canadian) writing becomes Australian (Canadian) Literature. Hence I have concentrated on the infrastructure of literary institutions and the ways in which the manifestations of ideology change within the institutions.

More specifically, it proposes that the recognition of national literatures depends upon the activities of cultural elites (writers -- preferably 'major', and contentious, figures; critics, who will produce clusters of contending arguments about texts and contexts; scholars to whom the custodial function is visibly delegated; reviewers who respond, whether favourably or not, to the writing as 'national' writing); upon readers \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>2</sup> Miriam Waddington, 'Canadian Tradition and Canadian Literature,' Journal of Commonwealth Literature, No. 8 (Dec. 1969), p. 126.

trained to respond to the notion of nationality in literature; upon systems of education which not only train in readership, but also find a place for the national literature in that training; upon national communication networks which not only disseminate the national literature but which establish the rhetoric of national cultural communication as central; upon the availability of particular modes of expression, such as book and periodical publication. To varying degrees some or most of these have been acknowledged by other writers on the growth of national literatures, though their inter-relatedness is not so often noticed.

It also identifies the importance of a congruence between the languages and issues of public discourse and that of the discussion of the national literary culture: the arguments that will prevail are those which are 'in the national interest'. Similarly, it shows how the forms of literature and the ways in which they are addressed are dependent upon an economy that can use it. It is clear, for instance, that cultural nationalism is strongest and the public contest for and in it most noticeable at two quite clearly identifiable kinds of historical periods. Firstly, at times of economic recession (the eighteen nineties, the nineteen thirties, the early nineteen sixties and the present in Australia; the eighteen sixties and seventies, the nineteen twenties, and the later nineteen sixties and the present in Canada); and secondly during (or often just after) periods of high immigration. These periods often coincide. They are significant because they represent a culture under threat; they therefore provoke a re-thinking (at its best) or a re-assertion of the culture's understanding of itself.

But this thesis asserts more strongly than other discussions of post-colonial national literary cultures have done, the necessity of creating a national cultural polemic. For a national literature to exist, it must be worth arguing about or, in the more common corollary, if there's something worth arguing about it must exist. I have therefore identified the clusters of cultural phenomena that are indicators of this polemic -- the synchronicity of scholarly histories, of tendentious cultural anatomies, or of propositions about poetry.

Within the space marked by literature and life, by time and space, by tradition and presence, these movements enact their own distinctive moments of intersection, recurrent but never quite repetitive. The national literature, as I have examined it here, is not a storehouse but a site. It is defined by the existence of the contest that takes place on and for its body, and constituted by the terms of that contest. The contest is to decide, among other things, who owns it (the nation?), who are its custodians (teachers, scholars, critics), and who inherits it (writers).

But, if the national literature is not itself a storehouse, it certainly pays tribute to one. As parts of a continuing 'series of revolts', these movements, institutions, and critical rhetorics 'find' themselves in relation to particular contexts. They thereby embed, in a characteristic rhetoric, a 'natural' repository of images. In this way, values are crystallised out of the conflicts and into the nation's lexicon.

The thesis has been concerned to identify the range of social and cultural domains that must be analysed if the histories of national literatures are to be understood. It also isolates some particular characteristics of Australian and Canadian cultures and examines the ways in which these have been inserted into the discussions of literary nationality. These include a concern for language and history in Australia, and a tradition of valuing the present and place in Canada -- and its articulation in the predilection for the national enquiry, Canadian

culture's concern for moral and cultural principles and Australia's tradition of utilitarian pragmatism.

But the particular modes of the national in the period discussed here as part of the development of Australian and Canadian literary cultures not only 'contained' controversies and contentions, they were also a revolt against the authority of internationalism. Moreover, in a post-colonial culture, this was significantly a revolt against the authority of the colonising culture as well. The reading, writing, and writing about national literatures was, and is, a part of a project in cultural politics. The competing nationalist heterodoxies -- in Australia, the competition to define the tradition; in Canada, the competing claims of region, myth, and form -- have, in becoming orthodoxies, exposed themselves as positions of authority to be deconstructed, by virtue of the very institutions their presence has caused to cement.

It is therefore essential to see these as inevitably on-going features of the field of activity that is a national literature. The most persistent and pernicious fallacy of the period up to the late nineteen fifties was a sort of 'materialisation' fallacy the belief in the transforming moment of someone else's values, the magical power of one single classic/masterpiece that would make it all OK, that a process could be resolved by a product: in the words of A. D. Hope, the change from colonialism to an independent and autonomous tradition would be 'sudden, brilliant and permanent'.<sup>3</sup> That there is a single solution to the 'problem' of national literatures is rendered ridiculous by the evidence of the continual contest, but the potency of the temptation to seek one is exposed by the same phenomenon. Those inclinations towards the single

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<sup>3</sup> A. D. Hope, 'The Australian Scene: Literature and Drama,' ABC Radio Talk. 'The Search for Values' Series, 25 May 1953. Typescript in A. D. Hope Papers, Australian National University Library.



'great work', the single tradition, the totalising theme, are pervasive in the two cultures and each made futile by the essential polyphony and fractured histories of post-colonial societies. Thus the monistic kind of nationalism is ultimately of a piece with the imperialising impulses of universalism, and shows itself to be so in its use of the images and metaphors of that centralising tradition. Post-colonial societies are inherently eclectic and polysemous: they do not find themselves comfortably inside the cultural baggage<sup>4</sup> that comes with English standards, American models, or European theories.

Because nationalism is, or can be, an imperialising monism, it is the site of two kinds of contest. Firstly, there is the competition for the hegemonic power that exposes itself, for instance, in the contest between divergent hypotheses about the culture, the literature, or a writer or theme. This kind of contest is on-going as heterodoxy becomes orthodoxy. The second kind of contest is the resistance by fragments within, which reassert difference, which retort that there are other traditions, other readings, silences to be spoken. The source of the energy for cultural contest is therefore twofold. It derives from specialisation (and therefore power and interest); and it derives from differentiation.

Because nationalism inherits many of its images from other totalising systems, it is often a device for re-colonisation, for the colonising of those fragments that cannot be appropriated to the dominant tradition. This is especially true in Australia: which is why the challenge of multi-culturalism is greater to Australian images than to Canadian ones. In Canada, multi-culturalism can be endlessly re-inscribed, and absorbed, into

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<sup>4</sup> Barbara Godard, 'Why Jacques Derrida Likes Canada: The New New Criticism of Canadian Literature,' Paper presented at the ACSANZ Conference, Griffith University, Brisbane, 14-16 May 1986.

the mosaic.

In working comparatively, I have sought to illuminate structural features of each country's recent cultural history rather than concentrate on producing a history of particular practices. Therefore the thesis has preferred to notice similarities in structure that are not so often noticed in monocultural studies. I have been concerned to emphasise the former as a way of proceeding towards a model of the recognition of post-colonial national literatures. In identifying those elements which are part of the structure, I have tried to relate ideas in literary criticism and historiography to the paradigms and constructs of post-colonial cultural experience -- time/place, authenticity of language, the concern with origins, with absences, and with discontinuities. In discussions of literature, language has particular power: in post-colonial cultures, language is one of the agencies of colonising power, and therefore demands particular attention. For both of these reasons, this thesis has focussed on ways in which the nation, the society, its culture and the literature are figured; and attempted to show how these figures are grounded.

These images, both in and of the literatures, show themselves to be both durable and adaptable. While the thesis has emphasised the way in which these images are cognitive codes that, in large part, derive from the situation of the culture, it does not propose a deterministic model of the operation of ideology in national literary cultures. There is, I believe, considerable interpenetration as images and metaphors are exchanged between the discourses. For instance, the figuring of the lands as empty, slips to images in the writing of 'a land without ghosts' and a country 'without songs, architecture, history,' and to demonstrations of cultural inadequacy (no masterpieces, 'we've been too busy for culture'). This is the frame of mind out of which naturally arises the search for texts which, in their theme, subject, or achievement, seem to transcend the place of cultural inadequacy.

And the trade in images is a two-way one. The 'two solitudes', the 'garrison mentality' (which started out as an aside), the 'cultural cringe', 'the Australian legend', and the 'lucky country' are all inserted into the public lexicon with unacknowledged supplements. The concern with time and history and language in Australia, and with place and presence and voice in Canada slip and slide into various formations in the culture, in literary texts, in the construction/s of literary history and in various parts of the public discourse. While there is considerable interconnection between the 'different' parts of the culture, it is usually unconsidered; and ideas and values often move with, and deform, as the images are exchanged. These images are cognitive codes. They do more than frame the world of our vision: they represent it to us. Thus the importance of polemics can be concealed in two cultures that are customarily characterised by images of egalitarian mateship and sweet-natured blandness.

In 1985-86, Canada was considering whether Canadian culture would be on the agenda of its 'Free Trade' talks with the United States, and, if not, how it might be separated from the things that were; in 1986-87, the Australia Council is contemplating a National Plan for the Promotion of Australian Literature. Having observed that the terms of the national debate are often intensified and go through one of their characteristic historical shifts at times of recession, ethnic reconstitution (increased immigration), and economic protectionism one would predict that the period ahead is likely to be one of re/vision of the national project, a re/newal of the struggle on the ground of cultural nationalism as the debate is reworded.

The likely effect of this development is not clear at the moment. Nevertheless, it seems that the recent refutations and recantations (in Canada in particular, but in Australia as well) are of a different order to the revisions and revaluations of the sixties and seventies. The neo-conservatism of the eighties with its acerbic demystification of national myths, its capitulation to homogenising trans-national objective 'market forces', and its 'dry' appeal to the self-sufficiency of cultural and personal phenomena dis/place some versions of the national from the agenda.

It is likely, for instance, that the national governments will withdraw financial support from many of the institutions in which it has inscribed itself and from which it has drawn some authority. At the same time, discussion of art which has already moved into discussion of culture becomes discussion of cultural industries. Aesthetic power is demystified, the creator becomes a producer, and in some readings and in some technologies disappears altogether to be replaced by the authority of the consumer. The metaphors change, but they continue to be strategies for figuring conceptions of the national.

Having, as colonies, been convinced of their 'difference' for so long, Canada and Australia have tended to believe (as I have noted often), that they were therefore unique. In attaining some form of cultural self-hood they have become inward-looking, unwilling to believe that others have had similar experiences, similar problems. The reflex glance 'back' to the UK, Europe or the US has only served to affirm the otherness of Canada and Australia, and has prevented their gaze from taking in more enlightening views. In the phrase that I have adapted from an observation of Terry Goldie's, we often believe that 'if its not US or UK, it must be Unique'. In Australia, for instance, the work of the Committee to Review Australian Studies in Tertiary Education and the discussions about the National Plan for the Promotion of Australian Literature proceed as though the same issues had not been addressed in Canada over a decade ago. What seems, but is not, remarkable is that similar 'solutions' are being found.

There is evidence that this averted glance is beginning to be redirected, that the potential of those unacknowledged similarities might be recognised. The growth of comparative studies; the co-operation in trade and diplomatic controversies in 1986 (American wheat deals, British refusal to impose sanctions on South Africa: economic imperialism and racial domination, a replaying of the practices of colonisation); and bilateral contacts in many fields, all hold promise that, at last, the Australian-Canadian chord may be seen to offer a 'natural' perspective to re/place the Americo- and Anglo-centric axis that continually draws the gaze towards the 'centre', and sustains the importance of the idea of 'centre'. It may even be a way of breaking out of the circle altogether. During the August 1986 'crisis' over South African sanctions, newsmagazines speculated about the power/centre of the Commonwealth moving to either/both of Canada and Australia. The notion of the centrality of Britain to the conception of the Commonwealth, to post-colonial cultural and political experience, and to the use of 'English', was, I suggest, broken at that very moment.

The break in history that is characteristic of all post-colonial societies produces certain discontinuities in their cultures. The stridency of some of the more annexing kind of nationalisms in both Australia and Canada cannot conceal, and may be enabled by, the reticences in each of the cultures, the discontinuities and silences that they protect. While I have stressed the way that history/tradition is used to validate things in Australia, I would want to insist that while it may have a sense of history, it is nevertheless a country without a strong historical sense. Canada's present-centredness inscribes the same problem.

It is the discontinuities in cultural debate that allow assertion in place of analysis. Ultimately, as in Canada, it is the concern with empty

land, virgin space, the fresh start that focusses continually on beginnings.

The discontinuities that have been observed disclose certain absences in the literary commentary, and in the production of knowledge in both Canada and Australia. The job of creating a tradition has often been entrusted to people who didn't know that they were, thus, a part of a tradition. Scholarly recuperation will rectify that to some degree, though there is much to be done -- especially in Canada where it is still resisted. But to theorise that contested, but unproblematised, term 'national literature' is a more difficult task. It will depend upon a much more thorough understanding of the relationship between the post-colonial cultural grounding and the production of meaning in texts; in other words -- the ones current in the forties and the fifties -- the relationship between literature' and 'life'.

We need a 'disciplined' understanding of the inter/play between aesthetic and social structures that is specifically grounded in post-colonial cultural knowledge; a theory of cultural production that will show how the codes of cultural experience become rhetorical gestures and formal and modal acts in texts.<sup>5</sup> We need ways, that is, of making intelligible those 'decisive modes of relatedness' of which Warren Tallman so long ago spoke so tantalisingly. To see these as modes offers, I think, the opportunity to see how they are moderated from one form of discourse to another, to see them as in/forming different types of cultural expression. If we see our literatures and our literary cultures in this way, as \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>5</sup> See Russell M. Brown, 'Critic, Culture, Text: Beyond Thematics,' Essays in Canadian Writing, 11 (Summer 1978), pp. 151-83; Barbara Godard, rev. of Configuration: Essays on the Canadian Literatures, by E. D. Blodgett, ARIEL, 16, No. 3 (July 1985), 108-12.

systems, we can see how they have been constructed -- and there is a 'con' involved in all this. All of those images, the structuring metaphors, take the name of something, and they do not take it in vain.

In neither country has the history of ideas been particularly well investigated. We suffer from 'genesis amnesia':<sup>6</sup> we don't know where the voice is coming from, whose experience and what views of the world are contained in the codes we use, the institutions which constitute our 'realities' and the language we use to explain them. The perception that much that is significant is common to these two national literary traditions draws us towards an understanding of post-colonial literatures generally. In that sense, the attention given to the ways in which the literatures have been recognised and constructed has been a way of beginning to do this.

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<sup>6</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture (London: Sage, 1977), p. 9.

## APPENDIX 1

### Comparative Australian-Canadian Literary Studies:

#### A Bibliography

As this Bibliography demonstrates, comparisons of Canadian and Australian Literatures in English and of particular texts from those two traditions has been a relatively, and perhaps to some a surprisingly, frequent critical and literary-historical strategy. For that reason, this bibliography omits the even larger number of books and articles -- such as general Commonwealth studies and some historical surveys of the Australian and Canadian literary traditions -- which make passing (though sometimes illuminating) references to the significant similarity and/or differences between these two literatures. This Bibliography was completed in the (Northern) Fall of 1985; some items scheduled for publication shortly after this have been included where sufficient details were available. A version of this Bibliography will appear in Australian/Canadian Literatures in English: Comparative Perspectives, ed. Russell McDougall and Gillian Whitlock (Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986). That collection will substantially increase the range of Australian-Canadian comparisons, as will the projected selection from the Badlands Conference on Canadian and Australian Literatures: Interculture/Intertext, University of Calgary, 25-29 August 1986. That selection will be edited by Charles Steele and Alan Lawson. The other recent development in comparative studies of the two literatures is the transformation of the once small social science journal, Australian Canadian Studies, into a general periodical covering the whole field of Canadian Studies, but with a preference for comparative work.

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